

# THE NAOS OF ‘BASTET, LADY OF THE SHRINE’ FROM BUBASTIS

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Although the period of the Thirtieth Dynasty is characterised by conflicts between the peoples of the Mediterranean world and the Persians, Nekhtnebef (I) and Nekhthorheb (II) were able to implement an extensive building programme, which is reflected in construction work throughout Egypt. Bubastis in the Eastern Delta benefited from this programme: Nekhthorheb II renewed the rear part of the Great Temple of Bastet and—in the course of these building activities—dedicated a couple of granite shrines. Recently discovered shrine fragments from Tell Basta allow a reconstruction of the architecture and decoration of the naos of ‘Bastet, lady of the shrine’ in its original context: the naos was provided with an additional inner niche, whose socle was decorated with the icon of the ‘unification of the Two Lands’ and seems to have housed a processional image of Bastet. The shrine offers promising insights into a sphere which has not yet been satisfactorily studied.

IN the western part of the Great Temple of Bastet at Bubastis/Tell Basta, across an area of approximately 60×60 m, are the remains of a building erected under Nekhthorheb II as the sanctuary of the temple as a whole. While Naville, who documented Tell Basta in the 1880s,<sup>1</sup> considered the temple to be an unfinished hall, attached to the complex built by Osorkon I and II, Habachi, who worked at Tell Basta in the mid twentieth century,<sup>2</sup> proposed that the structure erected by Nekhthorheb II was not merely a hall but rather a completed temple. Naville had already recognized that the whole building was dedicated to the goddess Bastet and contained at least one, if not two, shrines. The fragments of these naoi were sent to museums in Cairo<sup>3</sup> and London.<sup>4</sup>

Naos fragments recently discovered by the Tell Basta Project,<sup>5</sup> in work since 2001, further our understanding of these Late Period shrines and improve our knowledge of the Thirtieth Dynasty Sanctuary. In all, it is now possible to identify four distinct types of shrine in the Nekhthorheb area, on the basis of their architecture, decoration or function.<sup>6</sup> One of these naoi, probably the main naos of Bastet erected

<sup>1</sup> É. Naville, *Bubastis, 1887–1889* (MEEF 8; London, 1891); id., *The Festival-Hall of Osorkon II in the Great Temple of Bubastis, 1887–1889* (MEEF 10; London, 1892).

<sup>2</sup> L. Habachi, *Tell Basta* (CASAE 22; Cairo, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Cairo Museum CG 70016 and CG 70013. CG 70013 is a completely preserved naos dedicated to Bastet and Harsaphis: G. Roeder, *Naos* (CGC Nos 70001–70050; Leipzig, 1914), 44–5, pl. 13.

<sup>4</sup> British Museum EA 1005, EA 1080, EA 1078, EA 1079, and EA 1106. Unfortunately Naville gives only limited information about the original location of these shrine fragments within the temple of Bastet, see N. Spencer, *A Naos of Nekhthorheb from Bubastis: Religious Iconography and Temple Building in the 30th Dynasty* (BMRP 156; London, 2006), 39–40 and 53.

<sup>5</sup> The Tell Basta Project is an Egyptian–German Joint Mission, attached to the University of Potsdam (Germany) and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. Thanks are due to these two institutions for permission to use material from the excavations at Tell Basta/Bubastis.

<sup>6</sup> See the dissertation D. Rosenow, *Das Tempelhaus des Großen Bastet-Tempels in Bubastis* (PhD thesis, Humboldt University of Berlin; Berlin, 2007), to be published shortly.

in the centre of the sanctuary, has been discussed *in extenso* by Spencer.<sup>7</sup> The same publication mentions a second naos,<sup>8</sup> that of ‘Bastet, lady of the shrine’, according to its inscription. The architectural and iconographical reconstruction of this shrine can now be considerably improved in light of the newly discovered fragments.<sup>9</sup>

This article discusses five new blocks found in grid squares B/4, B/5, and C/5 in the westernmost part of the Nekhthorheb structure (fig. 1),<sup>10</sup> which, with a fragment now in the British Museum<sup>11</sup> as well as a further block discovered by Naville at Saft el-

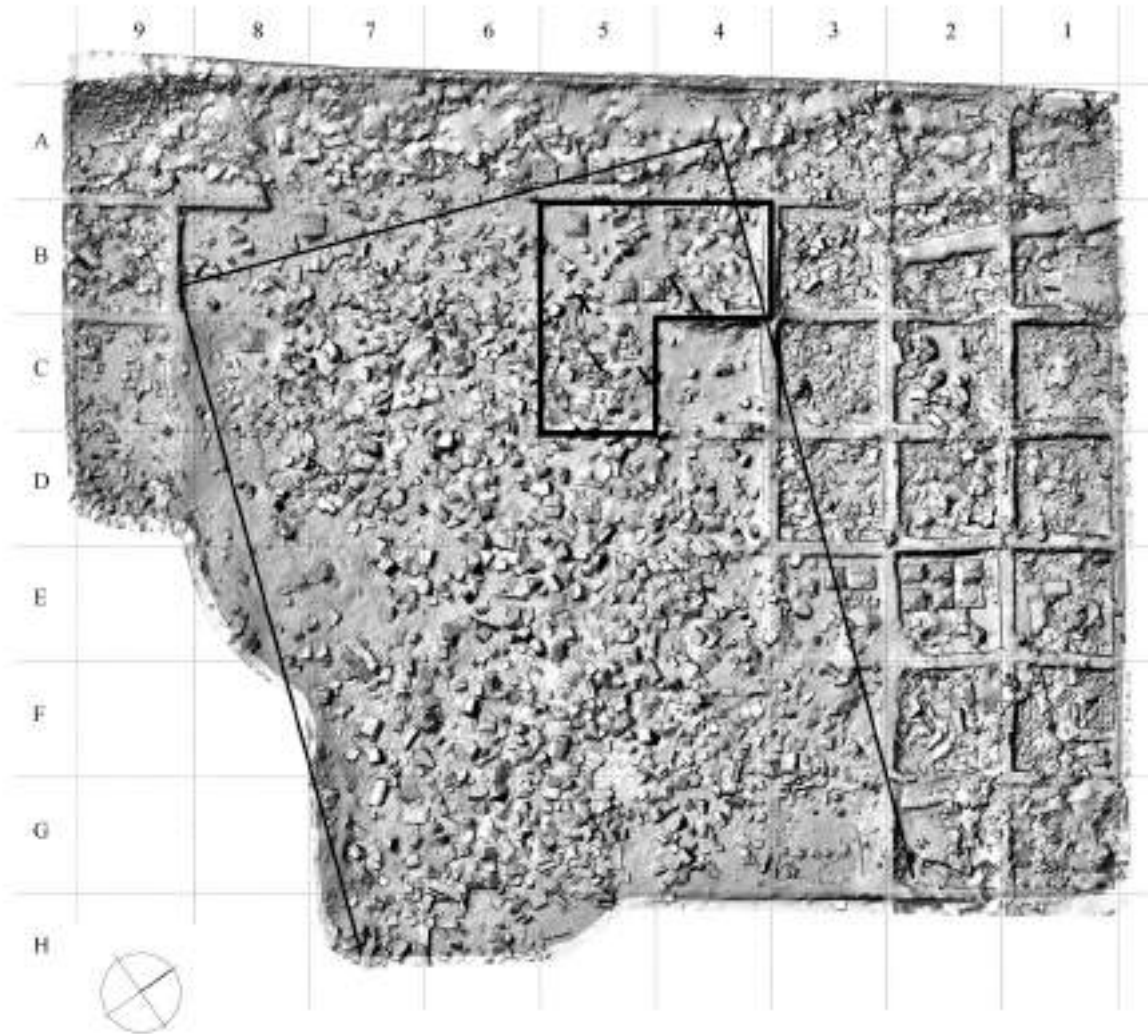


FIG. 1. 3D plan of the area of the Nekhthorheb II temple building at Tell Basta; grid squares B/4, B/5 and C/5 marked (Object Scan GmbH Potsdam, Tell Basta Project).

<sup>7</sup> Spencer, *Naos*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–6.

<sup>9</sup> A proposed reconstruction has already been made by Charles van Siclen mixing fragments of these two naoi: C. van Siclen, ‘Nectanebo II’s Great Naos for Bastet’, in B. M. Bryan and D. Lorton (eds), *Essays in Egyptology in Honor of H. Goedicke* (San Antonio, 1994), 321–32.

<sup>10</sup> The blocks are catalogued as B/4.1, B/4.3, B/5.6, C/5.11, and C/5.15. These codes represent the numbering system assigned to the temple area by the Tell Basta Project: the first part gives the relevant grid square, in which the fragment lies, with the final number part of a consecutive series indicating individual fragments.

<sup>11</sup> British Museum EA 1106. I was able to study the shrine fragments in London during a research trip, funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, to whom I am grateful for this opportunity. Furthermore, I

Hennah,<sup>12</sup> form part of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine', whose reconstruction can now be undertaken with greater certainty.

### The architecture

Taking these seven fragments into consideration, it is now possible to offer the following reconstruction of the naos' architecture (fig. 2). Fragments British Museum

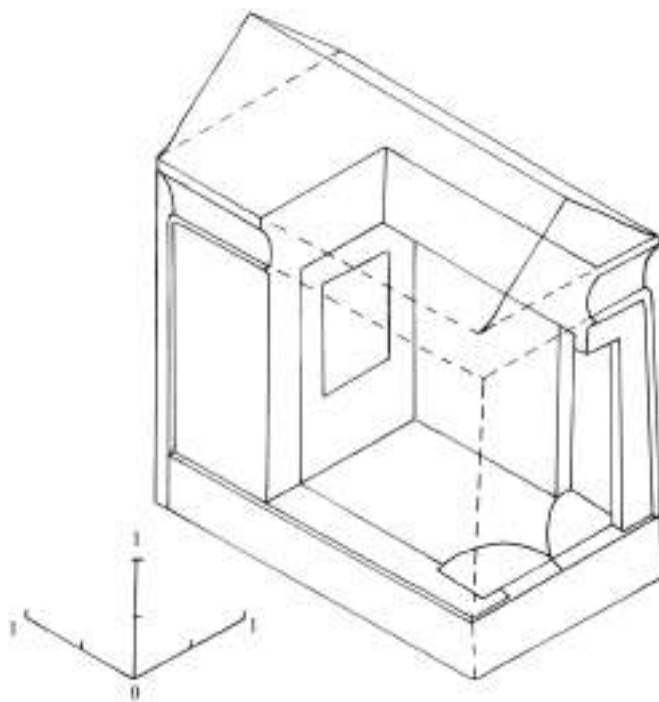


FIG. 2. Reconstruction of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' with hypothetical depth of the naos (author).

would like to thank Vivian Davies, Keeper of the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, for permission to use photographs and drawings of EA 1106, and Neal Spencer for a number of discussions about Thirtieth Dynasty buildings in general and this naos in particular. Finally, I would like to thank him for reading and commenting on a draft of this article.

<sup>12</sup> É. Naville, *The Shrine of Saft el Hennah and the Land of Goshen*, 1887 (MEEF 5; London, 1887/88), pl. viii C1 and C2. Although discovered at Saft el-Hennah, it is likely that this fragment belongs to the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine': many blocks have been removed from Bubastis to nearby villages such as Bilbeis, Aulâd Seif, Dundît, el-Alâqma or eq-Qinâyât, where they were reused; see Habachi, *Tell Basta*, 123–40. Naville describes the block as a granite slab that was used as a corner stone. Thus the material may be consistent with that of the Bubastis shrine, fashioned in red granite—in contrast to all shrines from Saft el-Hennah, which are made of dark granite. The block is decorated on two opposite sides (see figs 12 and 15) and its decoration fits perfectly with the decoration on British Museum EA 1106 and one of the blocks discovered at Tell Basta, C/5.15, discussed below. However, Nekhthorheb is only characterised as 'beloved of Onuris' in the cartouche of the block from Saft el-Hennah, whereas at Bubastis he normally has the more extensive epithet 'beloved of Onuris, son of Bastet'. But this apparent problem can be resolved: both writings of the king's name are used on this naos from Tell Basta. On the British Museum fragment the king is named as *Nh.t-Hr-hbj.t mry-ḏnhr.t* without the epithet 'son of Bastet', while the Tell Basta fragment C/5.15 features his cartouche including the *ss-Bst.t* qualification, typical of his monuments at Tell Basta. As this Bubastis-related writing seems to have been created at a time when the naos for 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' was built, both variations are reflected upon the monument. It is thus very possible that the Saft el-Hennah block also originally belonged to the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'. If this was the case, it would provide evidence that the naos' interior walls were also decorated. Indeed, there are traces of decoration on the return inside edge of British Museum EA 1106 as well, but only a few centimetres of the *p.t*-sign and a sun-disc below are still visible today. Even if the Saft el-Hennah fragment did not belong to the Bubastite naos, the Saft el-Hennah shrine was obviously so similar in its decoration that this fact is noteworthy, and implies a similar reconstruction of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'.

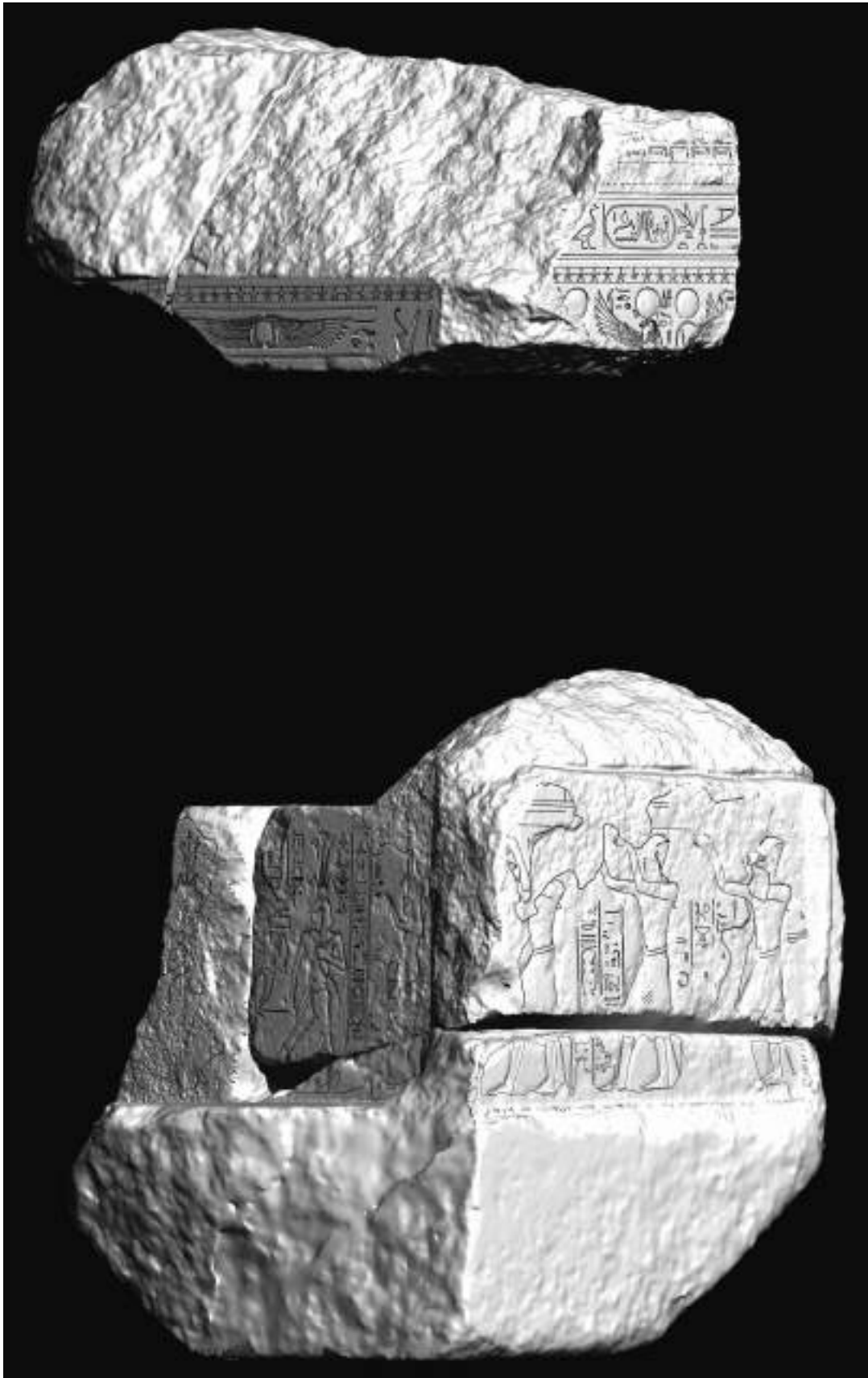


FIG. 3. 3D reconstruction of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'; right side and front (Object Scan GmbH Potsdam, Tell Basta Project).

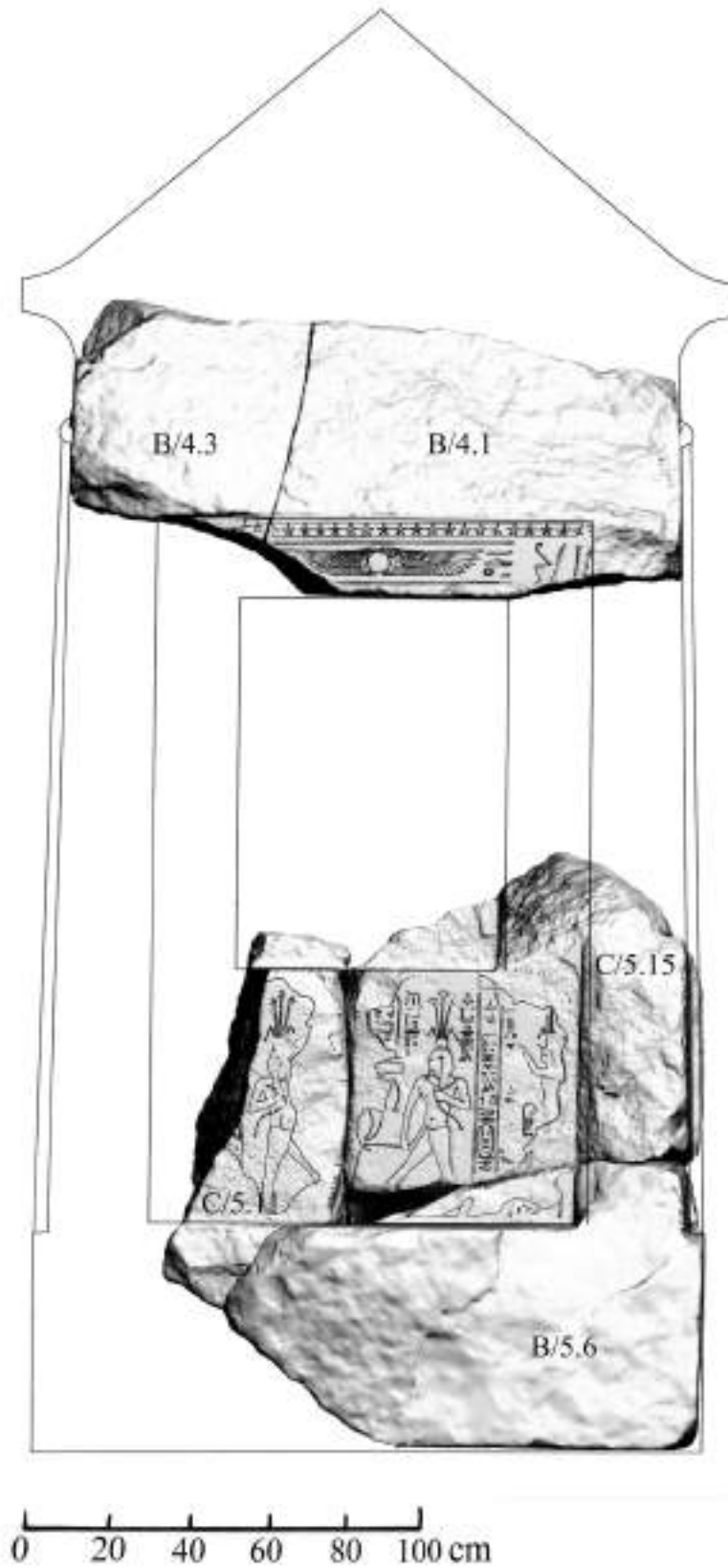


FIG. 4. 3D reconstruction of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'; front (Object Scan GmbH Potsdam, Tell Basta Project).

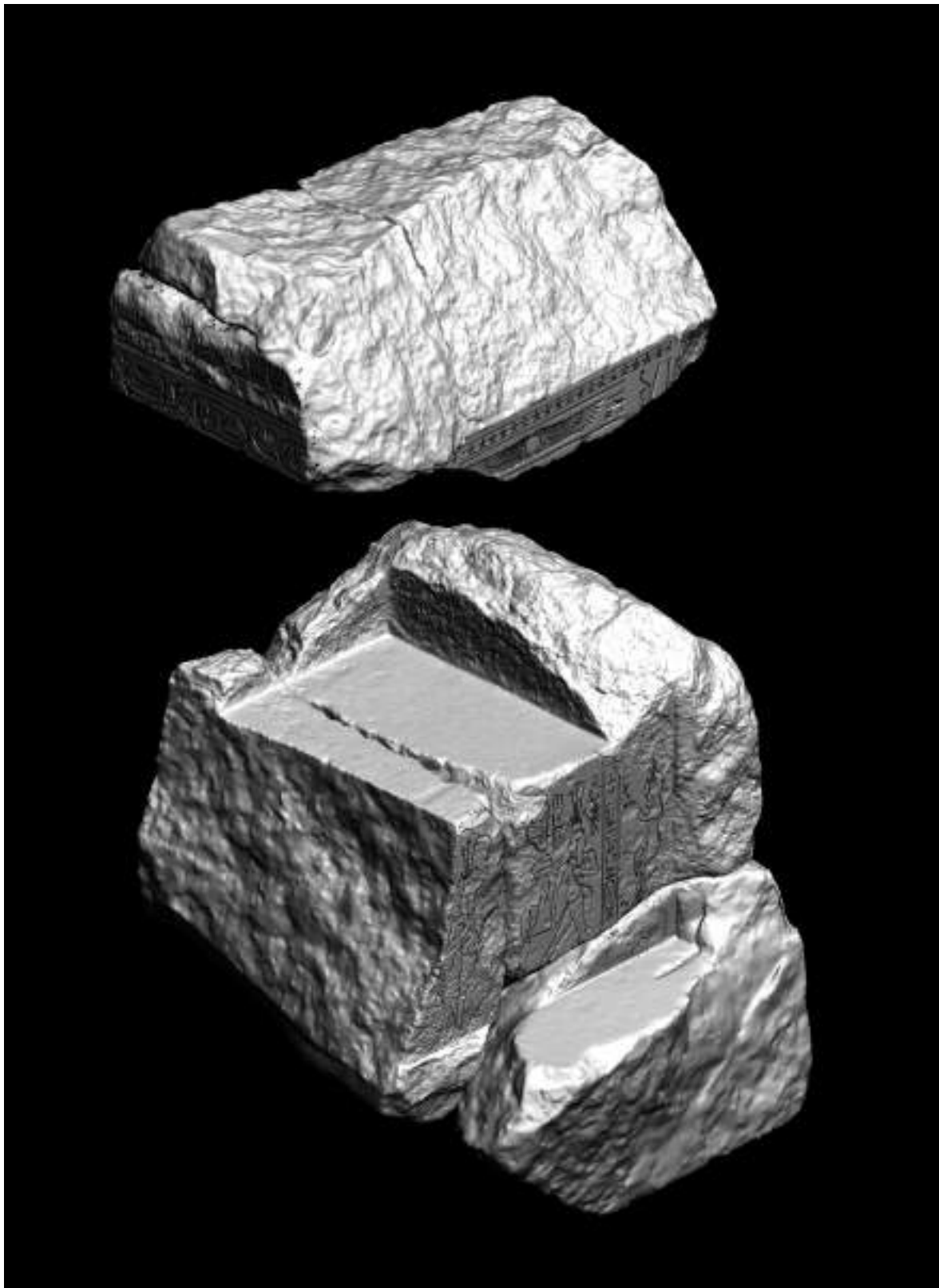


FIG. 5. 3D reconstruction of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'; diagonal view (Object Scan GmbH Potsdam, Tell Basta Project).

EA 1106,<sup>13</sup> B/5.6, C/5.11, and C/5.15 evidently fit together and form the pedestal, the rear parts of the side walls and an inner niche of this shrine (figs 4 and 5).<sup>14</sup> EA 1106 (a) (fig. 6) and C/5.15 (b) (fig. 3) both show figures of the king holding up the heaven sign *p.t.* While EA 1106 represents the left outer wall, C/5.15 is part of the right outer wall (from the viewpoint of someone approaching the naos from the front). The fragment B/5.6 (fig. 7) can be placed exactly below C/5.15 since the feet, belonging to the king's figures from C/5.15, are visible here. Due to its architecture and decoration C/5.11 can be placed exactly to the left of C/5.15. Fragments B/4.1 and B/4.3 also join to form parts of the right and left outer walls of the naos, the lintel and ceiling of an inner niche, and the roof (fig. 4). Fragment B/4.3 belongs to the left side of the shrine; B/4.1 is part of its right side.

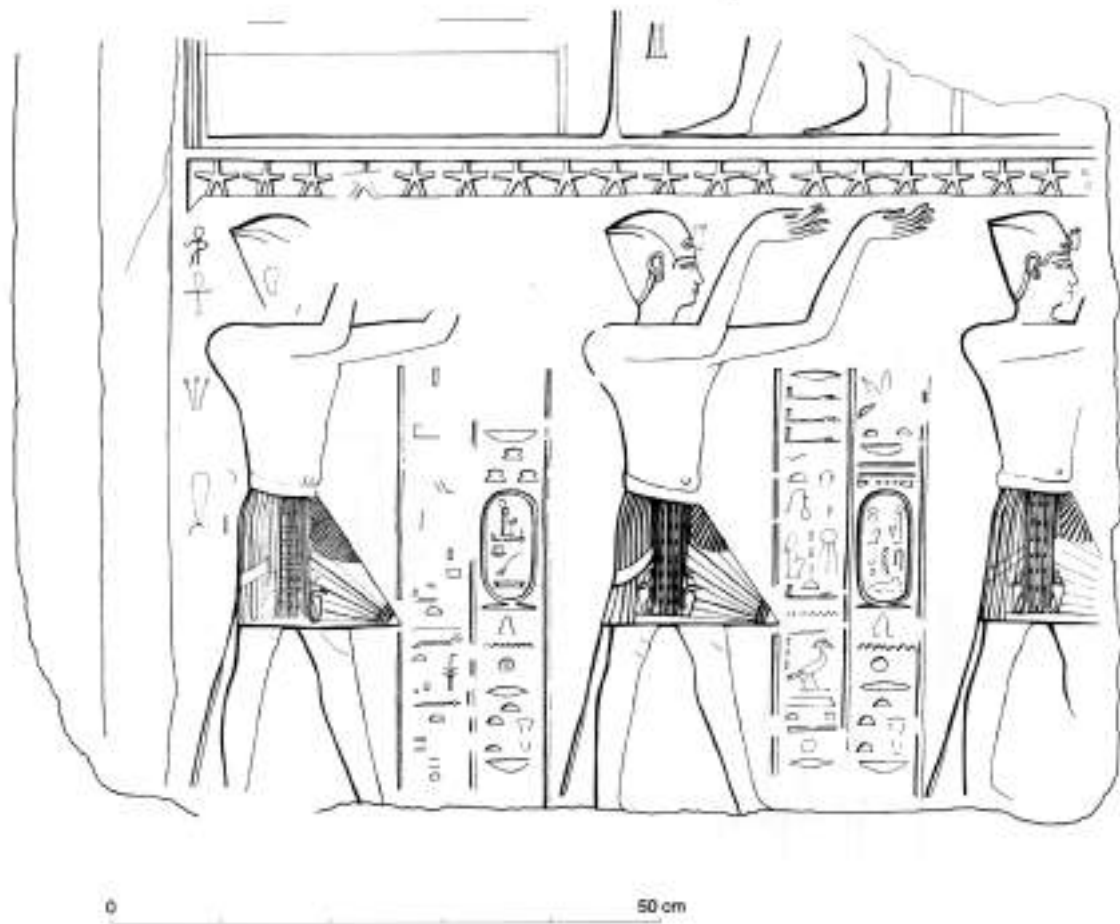


FIG. 6. Lower register of fragment BM EA 1106: The king 'supporting the sky'; left outer wall (drawing by Claire Thorne, British Museum, London).

<sup>13</sup> This fragment has not yet been scanned, and so is not included in the 3D reconstructions given here.

<sup>14</sup> If the Saft el-Hennah block indeed belonged to the Bubastite shrine, it must also have formed part of the left wall. This can only be judged by its decoration, as the fragment's present whereabouts are unknown and Naville's publication does not give exact information concerning the block's architecture and measurements.

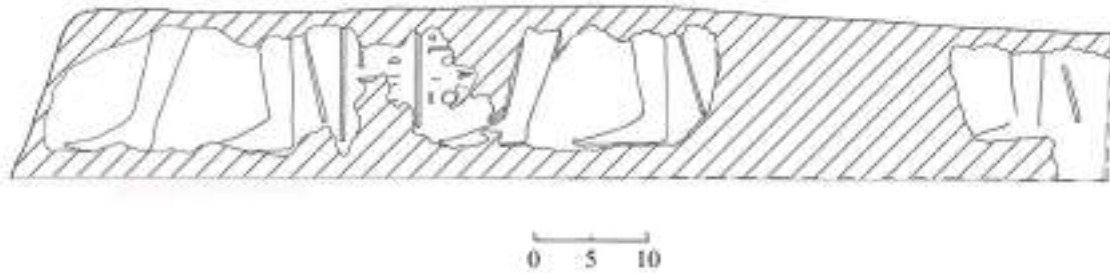


FIG. 7. Fragment B/5.6: The feet of the king 'supporting the sky'; right outer wall (drawing by author).

The pedestal of the shrine is 52.5 cm high (one Egyptian cubit) and surpasses the width of the side walls by 4.5 cm. It was polished, but undecorated. The outer walls were battered and limited by a vertical and a horizontal torus moulding. Above the latter was a decorated cavetto cornice.

The British Museum fragment EA 1106, and both B/5.6 and C/5.15, are covered with images and inscriptions on two sides. These second reliefs give, on account of their position, an important clue as to the architecture of the whole naos: they are positioned at right angles to the first relief sides, but cannot represent the front face of the naos, because their outer walls projected further forward of this surface, as attested by the broken edges (figs 8 and 9). Thus the shrine must have possessed an additional inner niche with this second side being the decoration on the inside return before the cavity. In fact the naos forms a double shrine, although this was not visible from the outside. The inner niche was undecorated apart from its ceiling, which was carved with a number of small stars. While EA 1106 (b), B/5.6 (b), C5.11 and C/5.15 (b) form part of the inner niche's pedestal, EA 1106 (c) (fig. 10) represents the niche's left door jamb; B/4.1 (b) and B/4.3 belong to the niche's lintel.

The outer walls of the shrine were 26 cm thick, exactly half an Egyptian cubit. The rear wall of the naos was about 18 cm thick and was undecorated both inside and outside. The inner niche was originally about 78 cm deep and 65 cm wide. The thickness of the entire outer wall, including the walls of the shrine's cavity, was 46 cm. Altogether the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' was almost 1.80 m wide and 3 m high. Since fragments from the shrine's outer niche are lacking,<sup>15</sup> its depth cannot be ascertained with certainty.

Thus two architectural questions remain unanswered: how deep was the entire shrine, and what form did the roof take, as no parts of the original roof survive? Other Bubastis naoi, such as the central naos of Bastet,<sup>16</sup> or two naos fragments belonging to shrines for minor deities of Bubastis,<sup>17</sup> feature a pitched or gabled roof with the vertical front surface adorned with a frieze of uraei. Thus a flat roof can probably be excluded for the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Except for the Saft el-Hennah fragment, which cannot at present be integrated into the reconstruction of the shrine.

<sup>16</sup> See Spencer, *Naos*, 1–5.

<sup>17</sup> British Museum EA 1080 (fig. 17) and C/5.17.

<sup>18</sup> Suggested by van Siclen, in Bryan and Lorton (eds), *Essays Goedicke*, 327–8 (figs 2–4).





FIG. 8. British Museum EA 1106: Lower fragment (courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).



FIG. 9. Fragment C/5.15: Right rear corner of naos (author).

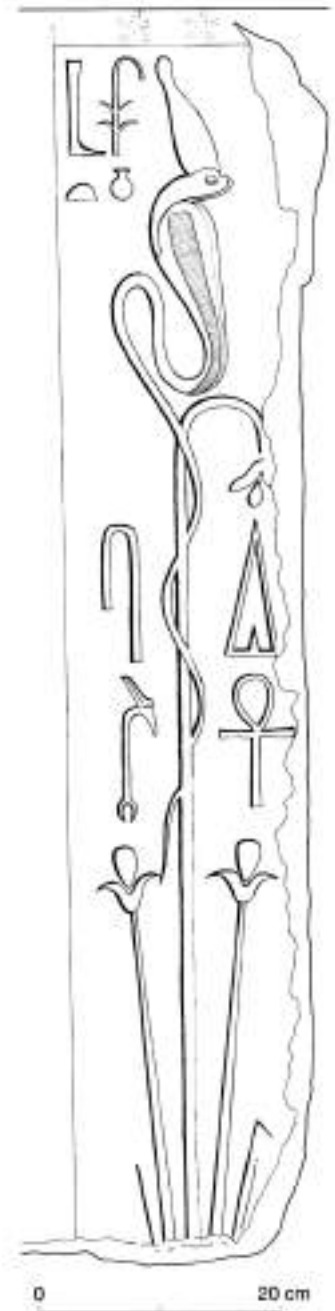


FIG. 10. Fragment EA 1106: The goddess Nekhbet on the left jamb of the naos' inner niche (drawing by Claire Thorne, British Museum).

### The decoration

The decoration of the outer walls of this naos was divided into three registers, separated from each other by rows of stars (fig. 11). The lower register was decorated with figures of the king with a bull tail supporting the sky (*tw3-p.t*).<sup>19</sup> In front of each figure two columns of inscription are given, the right ones giving the name of the king himself (BM EA 1106, fig. 6; and B/5.6, fig. 7):

*nszw.t-bj.t nb t3.wy: Sndm-jb-Rc stp-n-ḥnr.t jw3.n=(j) hr=t B3st.t nb(.t) [hn]<sup>20</sup> | rdj r.wy=f hr tw3 psd.t (r)dj n=f 3h.w m p.t hr Rc<sup>21</sup>*

‘King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the Two Lands *Sndm-jb-Rc stp-n-ḥnr.t*, (I) have come to you Bastet, lady of the [shrine], | one who gives his arms supporting the ones who shine/the shining ones(?) (= stars), one to whom transfiguration (*3h.w*) is given<sup>22</sup> in heaven through (*hr*) Re.<sup>23</sup>

The leftmost columns are less well preserved, but the following can still be read:

*[s3-Rc] nb hr.w: Nh.t-Hr-ḥbj.t mry-ḥnr.t jw3.n=(j) hr=t B3st.t nb(.t) [hn] | [...] dj.t n=f nswy.t ʕ3.t t3.wy [...]*,

[Son of Re], lord of appearances *Nh.t-Hr-ḥbj.t mry-ḥnr.t*, (I) have come to you Bastet, lady of the [shrine] [...] | to whom a great kingship of the Two Lands has been given.

This *tw3-p.t*-scene is often found on barque stands or naoi, e.g. the stand of Seti I in Vienna<sup>24</sup> or two Ptolemaic granite naoi from Philae,<sup>25</sup> which was dedicated to the goddess Isis.<sup>26</sup> According to Kurth,<sup>27</sup> the *tw3-p.t*-scene is simply an offering scene, but here the offering is not an object such as food or the Maat-figure, but rather an abstract demonstration of the following idea. Each primary deity of a temple is interpreted as the creator god, he or she has to support heaven, as every king has to uphold the heaven of the temple. Through performing this cult action the particular god, in this case Bastet, is satisfied and willing to enter his/her temple. Thus ‘supporting the sky’ can symbolically be regarded as a necessary act to erect and preserve a temple.

The middle register of exterior decoration depicts the king worshipping the enthroned Bastet (fig. 11).<sup>28</sup> As the accompanying label indicates, the king adores

<sup>19</sup> See British Museum EA 1106 (a), B/5.6 (a), C/5.15 (a), and probably the Saft el-Hennah block (Naville, *Shrine of Saft el Henneh*, pl. viii C2) (fig. 12).

<sup>20</sup> Preserved on the recently discovered fragment B/5.6, see below.

<sup>21</sup> The sign for Re is not visible on EA 1106 (fig. 6), but is preserved on block B/5.6 (fig. 7), which belongs to the opposite site of the shrine.

<sup>22</sup> There is no longer a difference in Late Middle Egyptian between a perfective and an imperfective participle.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer, *Naos*, 54 translates this passage ‘The Dual King, lord of the Two Lands *Sndm-ib-rꜥ stp-n-In-Hr*. (I) come (*iw*) to you [Bas]tet lady of the shrine/chest (*k3r/hn*). His arms are lifting/ supporting (as) Tuwait, glories are given to him in satisfaction, before ...’

<sup>24</sup> Vienna, Ägyptische Sammlung des Kunsthistorischen Museums, inv. 5106.

<sup>25</sup> British Museum EA 1134 and Louvre D 30. While, on EA 1134, two figures of the king support the sky, on D 30 four figures of the king perform the act of *tw3-p.t*. In both cases these scenes are carved on the front of these monuments, directly below the shrine’s cavities. On the Bubastite naos of ‘Bastet, Lady of the Shrine’ this place is adorned with a *smb-t3.wy*-scene, see below.

<sup>26</sup> Here the two figures of the heaven-bearers are depicted directly below the shrine’s cavity.

<sup>27</sup> D. Kurth, *Den Himmel stützen: Die «Tw3 pt»-Szenen in den ägyptischen Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Epoche* (Rites Égyptiens 2; Brussels, 1975), 136.

<sup>28</sup> See British Museum EA 1106 (a) and Saft el-Hennah block (Naville, *Shrine of Saft el Henneh*, pl. viii C2).

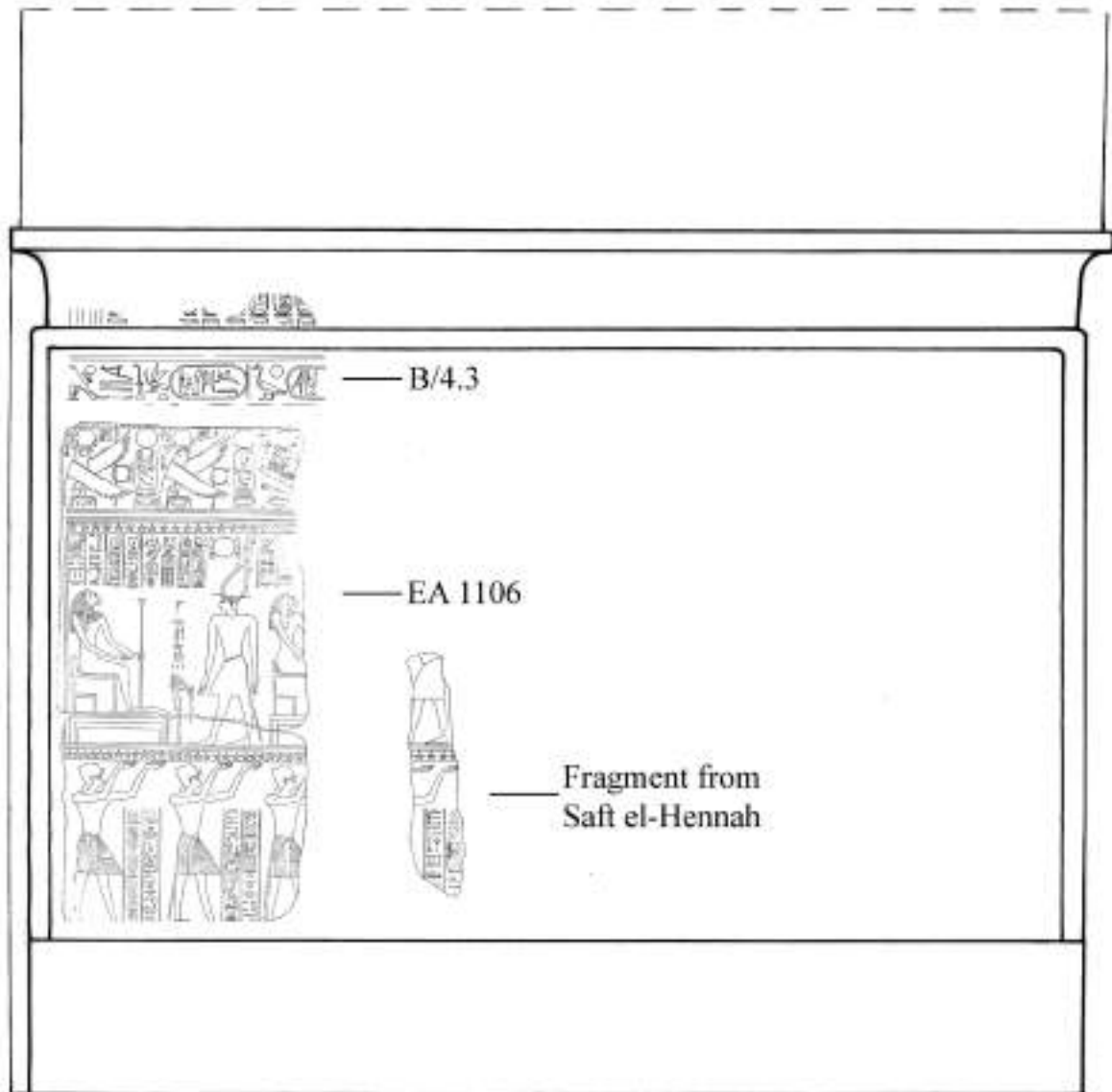


FIG. 11. Reconstruction of left outer wall indicating the position of B/4.3, EA 1106, and (possibly) the shrine fragment from Saft el-Hennah (drawing by author).

the goddess four times (*dw3 ntr sp 4*).<sup>29</sup> Above Bastet four columns of inscription are associated with the goddess, who is called *nb(.t) hn*, 'lady of the shrine' here:

<sup>29</sup> Incorrectly copied by Naville as *dw3 ntr sp 3*, but correctly published by Spencer, *Naos*, fig. 12a.

*dd md.w dj.n=(j) n=k nswy.t ʕ.t m ʕw(.t)-jb*  
 | *dd md.w dj.n=(j) n=k hʕs.wt nb(.wt) hr tb(.w)=k*  
 | *Bʕst.t nb(.t) hn<sup>30</sup> jr.t Hr*  
 | *hnt.t sh.t-ntr nb(.t) p.t hn.t ntr.w nb(.w)*

Words spoken: (I) give to you a great kingship in joy  
 | Words spoken: (I) give to you all the foreign lands under your sandals  
 | Bastet, lady of the shrine and eye of Horus  
 | pre-eminent of the god's field,<sup>31</sup> lady of heaven, mistress of all the gods.

On the right side another depiction of Bastet attests that a second scene with the goddess and the king once existed, probably performing a different cult action.

The uppermost register consisted of a frieze of falcons, protecting the king's cartouches, each embellished with sun-discs and *nbw*-signs. The falcons are identified in the accompanying inscription as 'the Behdedite, he gives life like Re'. These three registers were topped by an inscription that ran around the naos, orientated towards the front and probably proclaiming Nekhthorheb's complete nomenclature (his Horus-name, his nomen, and prenomen are still preserved). The edges of the decoration were delimited by vertical bands (evident on fragments B/4.1 (a) and B/4.3 (a)). A horizontal, 4.5 cm thick torus moulding topped the exterior faces, above which was the cavetto cornice, decorated with cartouches on *nbw*-signs. The left and right outer walls were also adorned with a 6 cm thick torus moulding.

The decoration of the pedestal, the jambs and the lintel of the inner niche can be reconstructed through studying the fragments British Museum EA 1106 (b) and (c), B/5.6 (b), C/5.11 and C/5.15 (b) (fig. 13). The base of the inner niche depicts the 'unification of the two lands' performed by two Hapy figures, each crowned by the heraldic plants of Upper or Lower Egypt. The cartouche of Nekhthorheb was carved above the bound plants. The *smʕ-tʕwy* motif was flanked by a depiction of the Upper and Lower Egyptian Meret-goddesses (*Mr.t Šmʕw.t* and *Mr.t Mhy.t*), holding their arms in their typical pose, the *hnw*-gesture. In front of her, a badly damaged column of hieroglyphic inscription is partially preserved, mentioning *r jr sʕ n Hr jmj ʕh=f nb tʕ.wy Sndm-jb-Rʕ stp-n-ʕnhʕr.t* 'undertaking protection of Horus in his palace, lord of the Two Lands *Sndm-jb-Rʕ stp-n-ʕnhʕr.t*' (fig. 14). The Meret-goddesses probably acted here as representatives of the Two Lands, as they do during the sed-festival, the Opferläufe or the ceremony of recording the king's regnal years.<sup>32</sup> Between the Meret-goddesses and the Hapy figures, Bastet is cited and qualified as 'lady of the shrine and eye of Horus'.

<sup>30</sup> There is an issue about the exact reading of this sign since only the logogram of the shrine is visible on this fragment. That its true reading must in fact be *hn* is demonstrated by the recently discovered new shrine fragment C/5.15, which will be discussed in detail below. There the word is written phonetically. It can mean 'chest', 'library', or even 'cenotaph' (L. Habachi and P. Ghalioungui, 'The "House of Life" of Bubastis', *CdE* 46 (1971), 59–71) but in this context—depicted on a shrine—the appropriate translation should be 'shrine/naos'. The epithet *nb.t hn* is discussed in J.–C. Goyon, 'Les cultes d'Abydos à la Basse Époque d'après une stèle du Musée de Lyon', *Kēmi* 18 (1968), 41–4. C. Leitz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, IV (OLA 113; Leuven, 2002), 92 gives in all seven references for the epithet *nb.t hn*, three referring to Bastet, one to the goddess Menhit.

<sup>31</sup> The *sh.t-ntr* 'god's field' is a toponym especially associated with the nome of Bubastis, and can be found numerous times in the temple: Habachi, *Tell Basta*, 121.

<sup>32</sup> See W. Guglielmi, *Die Göttin Mr.t. Entstehung und Verehrung einer Personifikation* (PdÄ 7; Leiden, 1991), 201–11.



FIG. 12. Fragment of naos found at Saft el-Hennah; outer wall (from Naville, *Saft el Hennah*, pl. viii C2).

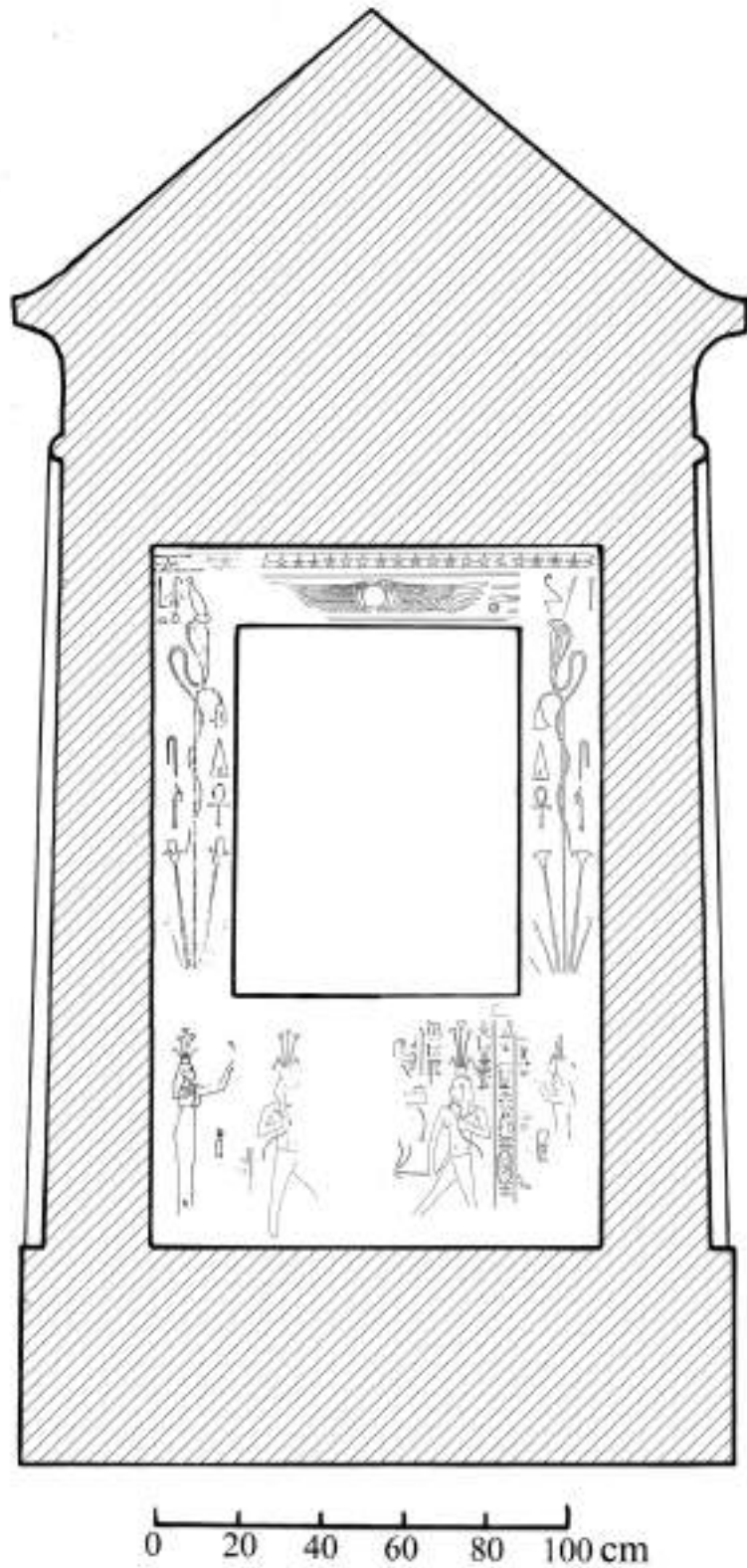


FIG. 13. Reconstruction of front side inner niche (drawing by author).

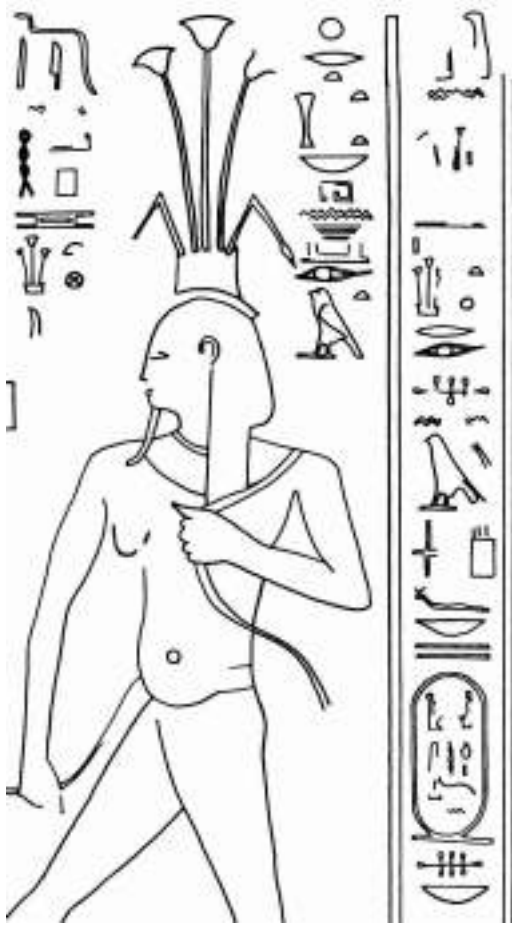


FIG. 14. Detail of C/5.15 (a) showing the Lower Egyptian Hapi and columns of inscription (drawing by author).



FIG. 15. Fragment of naos found at Saft el-Hennah; inner wall outer niche (from Naville, *Saft el Hennah*, pl. viii C1).

The inner left jamb (BM EA 1106 (c): fig. 10) was decorated with a figure of the Upper Egyptian tutelary goddess Nekhbet as a snake wearing the white crown, coiled around the emblematic lotus plant of Upper Egypt. She is labelled as *Nhb.t dj=s nh w3s* 'Nekhbet, she gives life and dominion'. The right jamb would have borne a complementary image of the goddess Wadjet shown as a snake coiled around the papyrus plant of Lower Egypt and wearing the red crown. The head of the snake and the hieroglyph *w3d* are still visible on fragment B/4.1 (b). The same block preserved a winged sun disc with its familiar annotation *Bhd.tj*, 'the Behdedite', and a row of stars which formed part of the decoration on the inner niche's lintel (fig. 13). The ceiling of the shrine cavity was decorated with small stars. A horizontal line is all that has survived from the outer shrine's ceiling, which may have been decorated in a more elaborate manner, e.g. with vultures.

As already discussed, the Saft el-Hennah fragment probably belongs to this naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'; it can be placed directly next to EA 1106. This proves that the shrine's interior walls were decorated too, at least as regards the outer niche. This decoration can be reconstructed as follows (fig. 15): the lower register features a row of large vertical cartouches of Nekhthorheb, while the upper register was decorated with figures of the king, perhaps offering to or worshipping Bastet, or

performing another royal ceremony. Both registers were separated with an extended star-filled *pt*-sign.

The most remarkable feature of this naos, in terms of iconography, is the depiction of a *sm3-t3.wy*-scene. This motif can be interpreted in relation to the act of *tw3-p.t*, whose principal aim was to maintain the key result of the creation process: the separation of heaven and earth. Thus the *sm3-t3.wy* scene recalls the instance when the history of Egypt began, through the unification of the Two Lands. Both ceremonies (*sm3-t3.wy* and *tw3-p.t*) are therefore closely related to each other, as their content and purpose partly overlap; it is therefore logical that they should be positioned in close proximity upon monuments such as this shrine.<sup>33</sup>

A second level of interpretation can be proposed for this *sm3-t3.wy* scene. If a *sm3-t3.wy* scene is depicted upon royal monuments (other than statuary thrones), it alludes to the coronation, as the act of *sm3-t3.wy* was part of this ceremony since the First Dynasty.<sup>34</sup> The link between the two ceremonies (*sm3-t3.wy* and *tw3-p.t*) is often emphasized through the accompanying texts of the gods or fecundity figures who perform the *sm3-t3.wy*. Thus in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, Thoth states: '[...] I have united for you the Two Lands in order that (you may) take possession of the Two Lands in triumph (*r jtt t3.wy m m3'-hrw*)',<sup>35</sup> while Horus says: 'I unite the Two Lands under you [...]. Your person is established on the *srh* as Atum is strong in Heliopolis [...].'<sup>36</sup> The depiction of the *sm3-t3.wy* in the temple of Hibis,<sup>37</sup> where the ceremony is again performed by Thoth and Horus, is accompanied with the following speech of 'Amun-Re, lord of Hibis': '[...] I join (*hnm*) for you Upper Egypt, I unite for you Lower Egypt. I link (*dmd*) for you the double crown [...] forever', and 'I unite for you all lands as one entity (*m jh.t w'.t*). I assign to you the throne of Geb, the office of Atum, the years of Shu and Tefnut, for ever and ever'.<sup>38</sup>

The tomb of Ipy at Deir el-Medineh shows Horus and Seth performing the ceremony,<sup>39</sup> but here the coronation and the *sm3-t3.wy* are not only linked by annotations, but explicitly by a certain gesture: the king kneels on the *sm3*-sign, Horus and Seth perform the ceremony of *sm3-t3.wy* with one hand, while they hold their other hand up towards the figure of the king, almost touching the king's crown.

In Ptolemaic times, it is particularly clear that the rituals of coronation and the 'unification of the Two Lands' were fused: the *sm3-t3.wy* chamber in the temple of Dendera shows the icon of the 'unification of the Two Lands' performed by the Upper and Lower Egyptian Hapi. The inscription informs us about the presentation of the red and the white crown to Horus by Nekhbet and Wadjet.<sup>40</sup> As both textual

<sup>33</sup> E.g. as on the barque emplacement of Atlanarsa in the Meroitic temple B 700 at Gebel Barkal: G. Reisner, 'The Barkal Temples in 1916', *JEA* 5 (1918), 104–6, pl. xiv.

<sup>34</sup> The Palermo Stone mentions a *sm3-t3.wy* for king Djer: W. Barta, *Untersuchungen zur Göttlichkeit des regierenden Königs: Ritus und Sakralkönigtum in Altägypten nach Zeugnissen der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches* (MÄS 32; München, 1975), 48.

<sup>35</sup> J. Baines, *Fecundity Figures: Egyptian Personification and the Iconology of a Genre* (Warminster, 1985), 261.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>37</sup> N. de G. Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis, III: The Decoration* (PMMA 17; New York, 1953), pl. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Baines, *Fecundity Figures*, 270.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 262–3 (fig. 154). TT 217: N. de G. Davies, *Two Ramesside Tombs at Thebes* (PMMA Robb de Peyster Tytus Memorial Series 5; New York, 1927).

<sup>40</sup> É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Dendara, I* (MIFAO 1; Cairo, 1934), 170, pls 144 (drawing) and 145 (photo).

and iconographical content cannot be read separately in Egyptian temples, the identification between the two ceremonies at this period is therefore unequivocal.

Few sources relate to coronations in the Late Period: the Hermopolis Stela<sup>41</sup> and the Naucratis Stela,<sup>42</sup> along with the copy of the latter from Herakleion,<sup>43</sup> hint at Nekhtnebef's coronation at Memphis and Sais. Furthermore, the naoi from el-Arish<sup>44</sup> and Saft el-Hennah<sup>45</sup> refer to the coronation of divinities. The coronation stelae of the Napatan kings Tanutamun,<sup>46</sup> Aspelta,<sup>47</sup> and Irike-Amanote<sup>48</sup> should also be mentioned.

The place of Nekhtorheb's coronation is unknown, as is any knowledge about the exact nature of this ceremony.<sup>49</sup> Even the specific Egyptian term for 'coronation' is not known with certainty. But the fact that both the Hermopolis Stela, as well as the Naukratis/Heraklion stelae, possibly allude to coronation ceremonies of Nekhtnebef in different places, may hint at a royal tour of inspection at the moment of accession to power.<sup>50</sup> A similar procedure is attested for the Napatan kings. Their coronation stelae show that a visit to the most important sanctuaries immediately followed the accession to the throne, so that their gods could confirm the king by handing over the royal insignia. As we know with certainty, Napata, Kawa, Pnubs, and a Bastet temple near Napata were important cult places to visit during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.<sup>51</sup>

It is indisputable that Bubastis was one of the major cult centres in Egypt during the Thirtieth Dynasty. Nekhtorheb renewed the sanctuary of the Third Intermediate Period at the beginning of his reign. These building activities seem to have been completed within his reign as, in contrast to other great buildings projects in the Eastern Delta such as the temple of Behbeit el-Haggar,<sup>52</sup> his temple at Bubastis was not finished by the Ptolemies.

The naos, one of the key components of any temple, for 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' set up by Nekhtorheb at Tell Basta, depicts a *sm3-t3.wy* scene. As explained above, this may be considered as evidence for *one* of a series of coronation ceremonies or celebrations at the accession of Nekhtorheb. Similar depictions or inscriptions

<sup>41</sup> Cairo Museum JE 72103.

<sup>42</sup> Cairo Museum JE 34002.

<sup>43</sup> The so-called Thônis stela, now in the National Museum of Alexandria.

<sup>44</sup> Today in the Museum of Ismailia, inv. 2248. Here the coronation of the god Geb is described, probably alluding to Nekhtorheb's or Nekhtnebef's coronation. See e.g. T. Schneider, 'Mythos und Zeitgeschichte in der 30. Dynastie: Eine politische Lektüre des „Mythos von den Götterkönigen“', in A. Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel: Ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis* (Berlin, 1998), 207–42.

<sup>45</sup> Here related to the coronation of the god Horus, see P. Koemoth, 'Le couronnement du faucon-roi à Pi-Sopdou d'après le naos de Saft el-Henna (CG 70021)', *DE* 52 (2002), 13–55.

<sup>46</sup> Cairo Museum JE 48863; N. Grimal, *Quatre stèles napatéennes au Musée du Caire JE 48863–48866: Textes et Indices* (MIFAO 106; Cairo, 1981), 3–20, pls i–iv.

<sup>47</sup> Cairo Museum JE 48866: *ibid.*, 21–36, pls v–vii.

<sup>48</sup> Stela IX from Kawa: M. F. L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa, I: The Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1949), I, pls 17–26; II, 56 and 57.

<sup>49</sup> Barta suggested a form of coronation ritual: W. Barta, 'Rituale für Geburt und Krönung', *ZÄS* 112 (1985), 1–13 and lists all known sources relating to Egyptian coronation.

<sup>50</sup> Already suggested by H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (3rd edn; Berlin, 2000), 398–400, s.v. 'Krönung'.

<sup>51</sup> See E. Kornysheva, 'Das Inthronisationsritual des Königs von Meroe', in R. Gundlach and M. Rochholz (eds), *Ägyptische Tempel—Struktur, Funktion und Programm* (HÄB 37; Hildesheim, 1994), 187–210; L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (HdO I/31; Leiden, 1997), 220–30.

<sup>52</sup> C. Favard-Meeks, *Le temple de Behbeit el-Hagara: Essai de reconstitution et d'interprétation* (BSAK 6; Hamburg, 1996).



cannot be found on any other temple or naos walls erected under Nekhthorheb's reign. As this scene is unparalleled, it may indicate the ceremony at Bubastis was particularly important, perhaps that at the start or end of a royal tour of inspection.

A coronation of the pharaoh at Bubastis would reflect the importance of the city during the Late Period. This would partly be a consequence of its undoubted strategic and military importance in terms of the Eastern Delta, but also of its being one of the major cult centres of Egypt since the Old Kingdom. Such a tradition is not, in contrast, attested for other sanctuaries like Sebennytos,<sup>53</sup> Saft el-Hennah,<sup>54</sup> or Behbeit el-Hagggar. The attention afforded Bubastis under the Thirtieth Dynasty is continued in the Ptolemaic Era. The recently discovered copy of the Canopus Decree<sup>55</sup> at Tell Basta bears ample witness to the importance of this temple throughout the entire Ptolemaic period, until probably an earthquake destroyed the temple.<sup>56</sup>

### The function of the naos

Determining the exact function of the shrine is problematic. It is dedicated to *Bst.t nb(.t) hn*, 'Bastet, lady of the shrine', suggesting that the monument housed a cult statue of Bastet and represents the main naos of the sanctuary. However, the newly discovered fragments belonging to this naos were not found in the centre of the sanctuary, but rather to the north-west of it. Instead it is certain that the shrine, whose most important pieces are in the British Museum today,<sup>57</sup> was located in the main sanctuary<sup>58</sup> and housed the actual cult statue of Bastet. It is noteworthy that there are specific iconographical elements on the shrine of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' that suggest it was part of a sacred barque emplacement.<sup>59</sup> These decorative motifs include the Meret goddesses or the emblematic plants—all features that are normally absent from naoi but can often be found in the direct vicinity of sacred barques.<sup>60</sup> Additionally the reference to the word *wts-nfr.w* on the Saft el-Hennah block, which probably belonged to this naos, fits with the suggestion that *wts-nfr.w* can be translated as 'processional barque'. Thus Arnold<sup>61</sup> and Spencer<sup>62</sup> suggested

<sup>53</sup> See É. Naville, *The Mound of the Jew and the City of Onias: Belbeis, Samanood, Abusir, Takh el Karmus*, 1887 (MEEF 7/[1]; London, 1890), 23–7, pl. vi; N. A. Spencer, 'The Epigraphical Survey of Samanud', *JEA* 85 (1999), 55–83, pls vii–xiv; id. 'Samanud: The Urban Context', *JEA* 87 (2001), 23–31, pls i–iv.

<sup>54</sup> See Naville, *The Shrine of Saft el Hennah*; H. Virenque, 'Les quatre naos de Saft el-Henneh: Un rempart théologique construit par Nectanebo I<sup>er</sup> dans le Delta oriental', *EAO* 42 (June 2006), 19–28.

<sup>55</sup> J. Hallof, E. Lange, and C. Tietze, 'Ein neues Exemplar des Kanopus-Dekretes aus Bubastis', *AfP* 51 (2005), 1–29.

<sup>56</sup> Although often suggested, the Temple of Bastet cannot have been completely destroyed by the Persians during the hostilities that preceded the Second Persian Dominion. The discovery of the Canopus Decree proves that the temple was still among Egypt's most important sanctuaries during the Ptolemaic Period and it is highly improbable that the Ptolemies erected this edict in a completely or partly destroyed building. Thus it is more likely that the temple either collapsed under its own weight or due to an earthquake in later times.

<sup>57</sup> British Museum EA 1005, EA 1078, and EA 1079; see Spencer, *Naos*.

<sup>58</sup> This assumption is also supported by the fact that the fragments from Tell Basta, that belong to this shrine, were all discovered in the central square grid; see Rosenow, *Das Tempelhaus des Großen Bastet-Tempels in Bubastis*.

<sup>59</sup> See Spencer, *Naos*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> Compare the the central barque chapel in the Amun-Re temple at Karnak: P. Barguet, *Le Temple d'Amon-Ré à Karnak. Essai d'exégèse* (RAPH 21; Cairo, 1962), 130, pl. 20, and the Late Ptolemaic chapel at Koptos: C. Trau-necker, *Koptos: Hommes et dieux sur le parvis de Geb* (OLA 43; Leuven, 1992), 293–303, pl. 7.a.

<sup>61</sup> D. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (New York, 1999), 129.

<sup>62</sup> Spencer, *Naos*, 55–6.

that this naos fulfilled the role of a permanent architectural setting for a processional image. No sacred barque is depicted on the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'. As this motif is obviously missing, Spencer thus proposes that the naos housed an actual barque:<sup>63</sup> it was not a substitution chapel, but a barque chapel proper. In particular, the shrine may have housed a processional image of the goddess Bastet. The depiction of iconographical elements linked with barque emplacements and the textual reference to the processional barque itself (*wts-nfr.w*) are consistent with such an interpretation.

Furthermore, a block discovered at Tell Basta depicts the cult statues of the minor deities Shesemtet and Wadjet,<sup>64</sup> the accompanying inscription stating their material and size: *km3 n nbw k(3w) mh 1* 'made of gold, height: one cubit' (fig. 16). The statues are labelled as *W3d.t jmy.t wj3=s* 'Wadjet in her barque' and *Šsmt.t jmy.t wj3=s* 'Shesemtet in her barque'. This hints that cult statues specifically intended for sacred barques were a feature of the Bastet temple. It is thus likely that the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' housed a cult barque statue, while the central naos provided the space for the main cult statue of the goddess Bastet, which was probably larger than one cubit high and also made of gold.

Further studies at Tell Basta should throw more light on this shrine, and on the sacred buildings of the Late Period, particularly those in the Nile Delta.

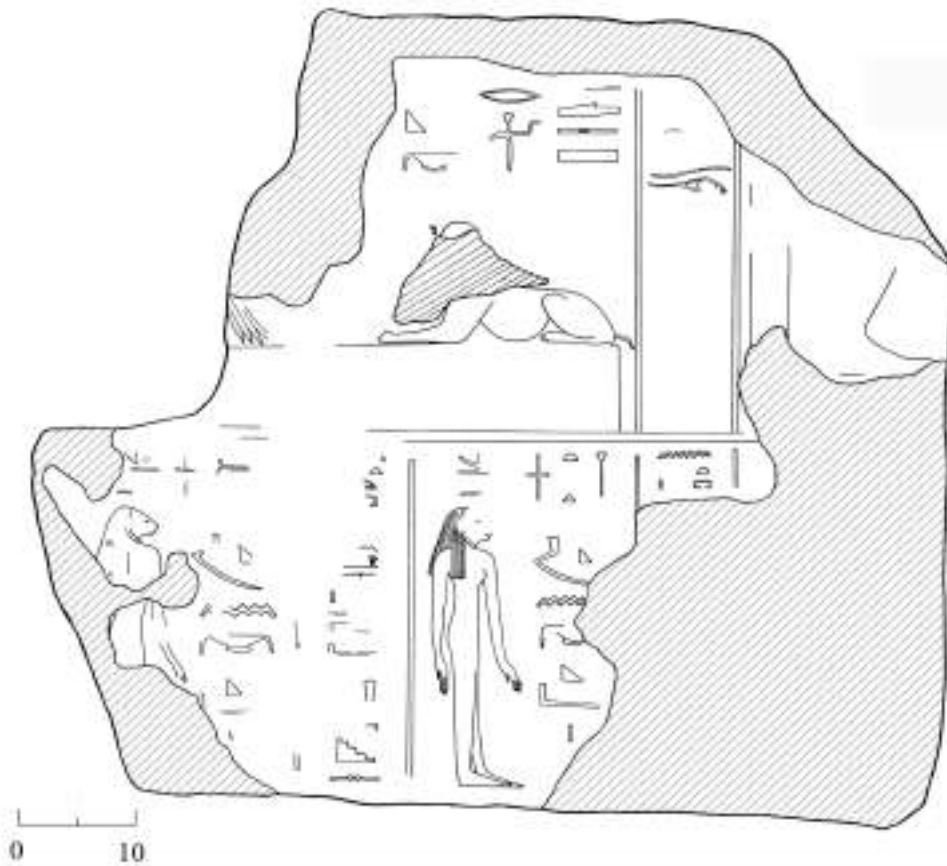


FIG. 16. Fragment D/5.4 from Tell Basta: Cult statues of Wadjet and Shesemtet (drawing by author).

<sup>63</sup> Spencer, *Naos*, 55.

<sup>64</sup> Block D/5.4; see Rosenow, *Das Tempelhaus des Großen Bastet-Tempels in Bubastis*.

**Appendix: Blocks that do not belong to the Naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'**

In contrast to the reconstruction proposed by Charles van Siclen,<sup>65</sup> the following fragments do not belong to the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine':

*Cairo Museum CG 70016*<sup>66</sup>

This fragment cannot have formed part of this naos, as is clear from its architecture and decoration. The block is 1.01 m wide which—on the basis of a symmetrical offering scene in the centre—leads to a reconstruction of a naos originally approximately 1.55 m wide. In contrast to that, the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' had a width of approximately 1.75–1.80 m. Furthermore its inscription refers to the king as 'beloved of Wadjet, lady of Nebu/Nebit(?),<sup>67</sup> residing (*hrj-jb*) at Bubastis'. Thus the block is more likely to belong to a naos for Wadjet, who was worshipped at Bubastis as a minor deity. A similar epithet can also be found on the naos for Bastet and Heryshef found at Bubastis.<sup>68</sup> Here, Heryshef is characterized as 'Heryshef, king of the Two Lands, residing (*hrj-jb*) in Bubastis'. Other naos for minor deities can be ascribed to Montu, Sakhmet, Shesemet, and Horhekenu.<sup>69</sup> However, Spencer proposed that fragment CG 70016 was part of the temple's central naos.<sup>70</sup>

*British Museum EA 1080* (fig. 17)<sup>71</sup>

Again, the architecture and decoration of this fragment implies it did not belong to the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine'. Its reconstructed width can be determined as 1.46 m,<sup>72</sup> in contrast to the 1.75 m wide naos discussed here. In addition its cornice bears no traces of decoration, whereas the cornice on both the left and the right outer walls of the naos of 'Bastet, lady of the shrine' was definitely decorated.<sup>73</sup> Thus this block is also more likely to be part of a naos for a minor deity worshipped at Bubastis.

*British Museum EA 1005, 1078, 1079;*<sup>74</sup> *Cairo Museum, number unknown;*<sup>75</sup> *Switzerland Private Collection 240;*<sup>76</sup> *missing block*<sup>77</sup>

These blocks are also included in Van Siclen's reconstruction of the inner decoration of the naos' outer niche,<sup>78</sup> but do not belong to this shrine. They all can definitely be assigned to the central naos of the Bubastis sanctuary.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See van Siclen, in Bryan and Lorton (eds), *Essays Goedicke*, 321–32.

<sup>66</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii.H.

<sup>67</sup> See L. Habachi, 'Edjo, Mistress of Nebt', *ZÄS* 90 (1963), 41–9. Habachi identifies this toponym with an ancient site close to the modern village Bilfiya in Upper Egypt and gives further references.

<sup>68</sup> Cairo Museum CG 70013.

<sup>69</sup> See Rosenow, *Das Tempelhaus des Großen Bastet-Tempels in Bubastis*.

<sup>70</sup> Spencer, *Naos*, 1–6, fig. 5, and pl. 2, although there is still a difference of 10–15 cm between the total width of BM EA 1079, which definitely belonged to this shrine, and the reconstructed total width of CG 70016.

<sup>71</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii.D and E.

<sup>72</sup> See Spencer, *Naos*, 2.

<sup>73</sup> See B/4.1 (a) and B/4.3 (a), figs 3 and 11.

<sup>74</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii.A and pl. xlviii.A–D.

<sup>75</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii. C. See also Spencer, *Naos*, 11–12, pl. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii.F. See also Spencer, *Naos*, 12, pl. 20.

<sup>77</sup> Naville, *Bubastis*, pl. xlvii.B. See also Spencer, *Naos*, 13, pl. 5. Current location unknown.

<sup>78</sup> See van Siclen in Bryan and Lorton (eds), *Essays Goedicke*, 330–1 (figs 6 and 7).

<sup>79</sup> Spencer, *Naos*, 5–13.



FIG. 17. British Museum EA 1080: Gabled roof with vertical front adorned with frieze of uraei (courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).