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Gerhard Haeny

# A Short Architectural History of Philae [avec 3 planches].

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# A SHORT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF PHILAE

Gerhard HAENY

The festive inauguration of the Temples of Philae on March 10, 1980, marked the successful completion of the last major salvage operation of the « Nubian Campaign ». The elaboration of the project to transfer the temples to the higher island of Agilkiya, the quest for funding and the initial stages of the work were undertaken many years before, when Dr. Gamal Mokhtar was still chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization. He had also suggested that the two architects of the Swiss Institute in Cairo, Dr. Horst Jaritz and the author of this paper, should cooperate with the engineers and archaeologists delegated to Philae by the Department of Egyptian Antiquities [1] and should contribute their special knowledge of Ancient Egyptian methods of construction towards a closer understanding of the history of the site. It may therefore be quite appropriate to honour Dr. Mokhtar's 65th birthday by a short account of the conclusions we arrived at through our observations.

The major archaeological finds made in the course of the recent work on Philae have been announced by our Egyptian colleagues in a number of scholarly papers which they

[1] We take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the support and encouragement we have received from Dr. Mokhtar and from his successors at the head of the Organization of Antiquities. Special thanks are also due to the staff of the Nubia Office and the Centre of Documentation as well as to the representatives of the Consulting Engineers and the members of the Philae Archaeological Committee of UNESCO. We are particularly indebted to all those with whom we were in daily contact during our work at Philae, to the resident archaeologists, the late Loutfi Tambouli and his successor, Sami Farag, with Gamal Wahba and Adel Farid, his assistants; to the engineers of Condotte Mazzi Estero, M. Grapelli, G. Joppolo, A. Giammarusti, and to A. Roccati of the Soprintendenza alle antichità egizie. Most stimulating and rewarding were the discussions with E. Winter, entrusted by the Austrian Academy of Science with the integral publication of the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the Philae temples initiated by H. Junker. Other egyptologists engaged in minor projects at the time of the transfer operations were the late S. Sauneron (*BIFAO* 75, 448-9, §. 464) and L. Žabkar (*JEA* 69, 115). The German Archaeological Institute in Cairo kindly offered board and lodging at the expedition house at Elephantine.



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published with exemplary speed [1]. Moreover, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the contracting firm Condotte-Mazzi Estero, which had been entrusted with the actual transfer and reconstruction of the temples, invited A. Roccati and G. Giammarusti, an egyptologist and an engineer who had actively participated in the work at Philae, to prepare the text of a splendidly illustrated publication [2]. The two authors were certainly in an excellent position to present the site of Philae to an interested wider public, expose the necessity of the transfer, explain the technical problems raised by the task and the means adopted for their solution, also to describe the divinities adored in Philae, the temples successively erected there and the beliefs and ritual feasts attached to these sanctuaries — in short, to paint a vivid picture of the history of the island. In some stimulating passages, Roccati alludes to the main points in which the new findings will necessitate alterations in the current scholarly opinions on Late Egyptian religion.

[1] These articles are henceforth quoted by the following abreviations :

*OA* 16 = Sami Farag - Gamal Wahba - Adel Farid, « Reused Blocks from a Temple of Amasis at Philae », *Oriens Antiquus* 16 (1977), 315-24.

*OA* 17 = Sami Farag - Gamal Wahba - Adel Farid, « Reused Blocks of Nectanebo I Found at Philae Island », *Oriens Antiquus* 17 (1978), 147-52.

*OA* 18 = Sami Farag - Gamal Wahba - Adel Farid, « Blocks of the Ramesside Period and of King Taharqa Found at Philae », *Oriens Antiquus* 18 (1979), p. 281-289.

Farid, *MDIAK* 34 = Adel Farid, « The Stela of Adikhalamani Found at Philae », *MDIAK* 34 (1978), 53-6.

Wahba, *MDIAK* 34 = Gamal Wahba, « Two Ramesside Blocks Discovered on Philae Island », *MDIAK* 34 (1978), 181-3.

Farid, *MDIAK* 36 = Adel Farid, « Re-used Blocks from a Temple of Amasis — The Final Results », *MDIAK* 36 (1980), 81-103.

Kadry, *MDIAK* 36 = Ahmed Kadry, « Remains of a Kiosk of Psammetikhos II on Philae Island », *MDIAK* 36 (1980), 293-7.

[2] Henceforth quoted :

*FILE* = Antonio Giammarusti - Alessandro Roccati, *FILE, Storia e vita di un santuario egizio*, (1980).

Two further articles by one of the authors :

Roccati, *Epigrafi* = Alessandro Roccati, « Nuove epigrafi greche e latine da File », in : *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren III* (1978) = *EPRO* 68 / 3, 988-96.

Roccati, *Iscrizioni* = Alessandro Roccati, « Iscrizioni greche da File », in : *Scritti in onore di Orsolina Montevecchi* (1981), p. 323-33.

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The present paper is intended as a kind of supplement sustaining the evidence published by our colleagues with further details and opening the discussion on some items where our conclusions do not agree with their statements. The reader may be surprised to learn that differences of opinion exist, though we have all been working side by side and have frequently exchanged our ideas. There is, of course, little room for disagreement on material facts, yet these facts can be interpreted and combined with each other in different ways. Because of the specific conditions prevailing during the transfer of the temples, some parts, in particular the lower levels of the embankment walls, remained inaccessible to investigation. We have therefore used reports already published by earlier researchers, especially those of Lyons [1], and observations which can still be verified on photographs taken in the last century.

## The Early History of the Site

In order to understand the physical conditions which had a determining influence on the architectural development of the temples of Philae, the island's topographical situation must first be considered. We have to try to imagine what the island might have looked like before any intervention by human hand. The raising of the water level by the construction of the Aswan dam at the turn of the century has completely changed the aspect of the surrounding landscape. A reconstruction of the natural setting has to depend on inaccurate old maps, ancient drawings and photographs, and, for information on the subsoil, on the soundings reported by Lyons. The air photograph reproduced on Pl. XXXV, taken after the second heightening of the Aswan Dam, but at a time of low reservoir level, may convey at least an idea of the situation at Philae in former days at the peak of the inundation. In early summer, when the river was at its lowest, the island had quite a different shore line surrounded by outer walls, which show in some old photographs but have never been surveyed.

In this paper, only the main topographical characteristics can be mentioned : About two miles south of the First Cataract, the big granite island of el-Heisa rose from the bed of the Nile, joined at a short distance by a second island to the east, then by a third further

[1] Henceforth quoted :
Lyons, *Album* = H. G. Lyons, *A Report on the Island Temples of Philae* (1896).
Lyons, *Report* = H. G. Lyons, *A Report on the Temples of Philae* (1908).
For a summary including recent discoveries and additional bibliographical notes see : E. Winter, *Philae*, in : *LdÄ* IV, 1022-27.

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downstream. The three islands parted the river into several channels and forced the main stream to pass around them in a wide eastward bend before it reached the rapids [1]. Philae, the third and easternmost of these islands, was much smaller than the others, and its rocks did not rise to the same height. Its firm base of granite was covered by an old layer of alluvial soil, which had created an almost level surface, broken only by a low ridge at the south-east corner and by a towering pile of rocks about midway down the west bank.

A narrow channel, partly obstructed by smaller rocks, separated Philae from Bigâ, the neighbouring island to the west. The steep cliffs forming the east side of Bigâ receded from the edge of the water to enclose a small bay situated just opposite the centre of Philae. On the gently rising ground of this bay, the remains of a gateway and four columns of a pronaos still mark the site of a late Ptolemaic temple [2]. A wide embankment with stairs leading down to the river extended in front of this sanctuary. Travellers in the last century reported having seen fragments of royal statues of the Middle and the New Kingdom among the ruins. The rocks at the back of the bay and the cliffs to the north abound with inscriptions, in which high officials of the New Kingdom recorded their visit [3]. These indications leave hardly any doubt that the small bay at Bigâ was the site of Senmet, mentioned in a text of the Middle Kingdom as the northernmost town of Nubia. The exceptionally well preserved temples of Philae, however, always proved more attractive to scholars, and the poorer remains on the site of Bigâ have therefore never been properly investigated.

Philae cannot claim a similar importance at such an early date. Yet the island was not entirely uninhabited. Pottery sherds characteristic of the Middle Kingdom have been collected in a trench dug along the eastern side of the pile of rocks. There were, however, no traces of a contemporary construction, and the small number of sherds can at best be taken as evidence for a rather sporadic occupation.

Moreover, the presence of a few fragmentary sandstone blocks with Ramesside relief and inscriptions [4] cannot be considered as proof that New Kingdom temples had been erected on Philae. The blocks were found in a variety of locations, either deeply buried in foundations or used to patch up holes in the pavement or just lying loose on the surface.

[1] For a plan of the Cataract region before the construction of the Aswan dam see : J. de Morgan et al., *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Egypte antique* I, (1984) maps facing p. x and on p. 65.

[2] PM V, p. 255-8.

[3] Though clothed in the form of invocations of the local divinities, the rock inscriptions were basically intended to perpetuate a person's name. This is more openly evident in inscriptions of strangers : « Hoc venit primus »; Roccati, *Epigrafi*, p. 994.

[4] Wahba, *MDIAK* 34 — *OA* 18.

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Each fragment also belonged to a monument of a different reign, and the two place-names occurring in these inscriptions are so far not attested in other texts; they cannot be definitely linked with Philae. It seems rather more likely that these blocks were brought here from some unidentified place in the vicinity, just as later on stones were taken from Philae to other sites, for instance to Meshed to build the substructure of the mosques. Considering the many traces of New Kingdom activity on Bigâ, it is very surprising that on Philae not a single sherd of pottery of this period could be identified among the mass of sherds collected at all levels.

The chances of stratigraphic observations were, however, much impaired by the disturbed condition of the subsoil at Philae. The mud deposits had been cut through a first time for the foundations of temples and enclosure walls, then again when parts of these were taken down either to be replaced by other structures or just to provide material for Roman and Coptic dwellings. The foundations and cellars of these late constructions penetrated deeply beneath the earlier floor levels. The main disturbance, however, was due to the trenches dug at the beginning of this century, when the foundations of all the buildings were checked and then strengthened by underpinning. On all sides of the western knoll of rocks, wherever there was a small undisturbed area, we met with parts of solid brick walls of well-built houses which had once stood in this part of the island. Unfortunately, the preserved parts of these walls were so few that not a single plan of a house, much less a definite settlement pattern could be traced. Their orientation, however, clearly showed that the houses preceded the construction of the Ptolemaic temple of Isis. The pottery sherds from the corresponding level do not permit a closer dating, as, to our knowledge, they are not paralleled by any finds made in Egypt, but seem to have a vague affinity with pottery of the Kushite Sudan.

It seems probable that at the time of the Ethiopian occupation of Egypt the necessity was felt to establish a permanent settlement at the head of the cataract. If further studies of the collection of sherds should confirm such a dating, it might be possible to link the settlement with certain blocks of Taharqa found on Philae. These in turn raise problems which are not yet solved. Since the early years of this century, descriptions of the site also mention a granite altar with the cartouches of Taharqa, standing in the south-east corner of the forecourt, but there are no records available on when and where that altar was found. It was dedicated to Amun of Takompso, a town which is usually believed — based on rather weak arguments — to have been situated at the southern limit of the Dodecaschoinos[1]; it is therefore doubtful whether the altar really belongs to Philae or

[1] Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft,* Bd. IV A, 1987-9.

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was brought there from afar. Other blocks recovered in the course of the recent work had been reused in the outer revetment of an oven discovered under the level of the forecourt behind the gate of the Great Pylon. All had originally formed part of a gateway or of the façade of a small temple which might have stood on Philae, but could just as well have been situated on another island or on the shore of the Nile : they all show evident traces of having been reused not only once but several times.

A small kiosk built in the name of Psammetik II is the earliest structure which definitely belongs to Philae. Though an article concerned with it was recently published [1], it may be permitted to add a few comments on its construction. The kiosk had been erected on the mud banks at the foot of the western knoll of rocks, where it was discovered underneath and in between the foundations of another structure raised there at a later date. At that time, the kiosk had lost its architraves, the upper part of its eight columns and the screen-walls inserted between some of these and was already covered up by a huge deposit of earth and rubble. Into this layer, the foundation trenches of the later building were cut, and in the process two of the columns of the kiosk were removed as they happened to stand in the line of the planned walls.

The Kiosk of Psammetik II was poorly constructed; neither the pavement nor the column bases had proper foundations, and the shafts of the irregularly rounded columns were assembled from pieces of varying length. It seems improbable that the structure was intended to last for years and serve in a ritual that was repeated over a long time. One is rather inclined to think of a temporary place of shade erected for a particular procession or perhaps on the occasion of the king's stay in the cataract region at the time of his Nubian campaign. The mention of Isis in one of the inscriptions on the columns might therefore be interpreted as a special compliment to the Saite king in whose homelands Isis was particularly worshipped. In any case, this is the earliest reference to Isis in connection with Philae, and we may fairly assume that her cult was introduced there, when Saite troops re-established the southern frontier of Egypt in the cataract region.

The importance of this event for the future development of Philae was possibly under-estimated by earlier scholars. The engineers of the Napoleonic expedition had already pointed out that blocks of earlier monuments had been used in building the columns of the Ptolemaic pronaos. Later travellers frequently made the same observation, but the date of these blocks remained uncertain. In 1881, however, Wilbour [2] succeeded in reading the name of Amasis in a cartouche visible in a gaping joint, an achievement which went

[1] Kadry, *MDIAK* 34. — [2] Charles E. Wilbour, *Travels in Egypt* (1936), p. 69 — G. Maspero, in : *ZÄS* 23, 13, § LXXVI.

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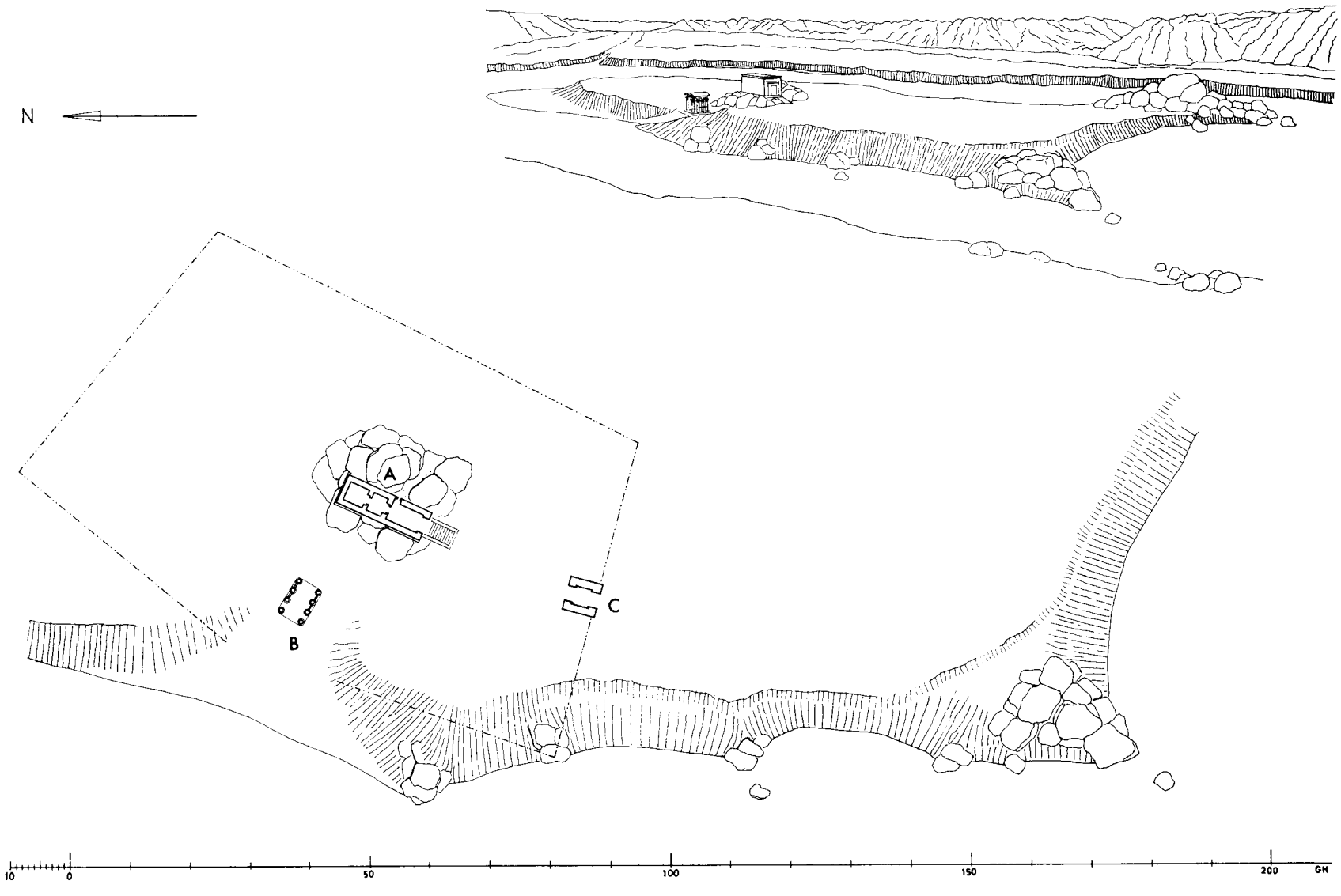



Fig. 1 : The site of Philae in its earliest phases.

A. The Temple of Amasis — B. The Kiosk of Psammetik II — C. The Gate of Nectanebo I with the approximate outlines of the precinct — Indetermined the original position of the Kiosk of Nectanebo I.

largely unnoticed. On dismantling the temple for its transfer, many further blocks were discovered in the lower courses of the columns and of the Second Pylon. Most had belonged to a small temple of Amasis and only about two dozen to a yet unidentified structure of Nectanebo I.

It was to be expected that more reused blocks would appear, yet the discovery of practically the full groundplan of the Temple of Amasis, after the pavements slabs of the Pronaos had been lifted, produced a great surprise; some doubts persist only concerning its front gate, which had occupied the same position as the gate of the Second Pylon whose construction obliterated the traces of the earlier one. The Amasis Temple [1] consisted of three small chambers arranged in a line and built on a narrow ledge of the knoll of granite on the west side of Philae.

Until these recent discoveries were made, the earliest known buildings of Philae were the gateway between the two towers of the Great Pylon and the small kiosk at the south end of the island. The reliefs and inscriptions of both these structures are carved in the name of Nectanebo I. The eighteen blocks found reused in the Second Pylon add more information on the king's activities, but confront us also with the puzzling question as to what kind of building they had belonged and where an additional structure might have stood. No doubt, any further building of Nectanebo I would have been included in the king's general project. It is therefore advisable to describe first the two structures whose main parts have been preserved, before dealing with the more or less isolated new blocks.

The Gateway of Nectanebo I was certainly planned to provide the precinct of Isis with an impressive main entrance. The precise extent of the sacred enclosure in those times remains unfortunately unknown, as later changes have obliterated all traces of the outer walls. It is quite possible, however, that the precinct in the time of Nectanebo I covered already the same area as in later times and that the Ptolemaic enclosure walls follow approximately the line of the earlier ones. In any case, the entrance was originally enclosed in brick walls. The two towers of the Great Pylon which now rise on both sides of the gate are an addition of the first half of the second century B.C.

The Kiosk of Nectanebo I is situated at the south end of the island, near the south-western corner of the embankment. Scholars of the last century became aware of its resemblance to the porches frequently found in front of small Late-Egyptian temples. They also noticed that the structure, besides having lost the architraves and the top of the columns on the front and on the east side, was incomplete in itself. The inscriptions on the preserved architrave of the west side lack the usual ending of such texts; they break

[1] *OA* 16, 315-24, tav. XIII-XXX.

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off above the southernmost column close to the sandstone obelisk set on the low parapet of the south embankment.

These observations led to the hypothesis that the kiosk was the remnant of a slightly longer porch erected in front of a small temple, which had supposedly stood further south and had been washed away by the onrushing floods. This version was apparently first introduced into egyptological literature by Baedecker's guide-book [1] and has since been faithfully repeated by most authors. Even Lyons refers to it in his first report [2], though visibly with some hesitation. As an engineer, he may have seen the many technical arguments standing in the way of such a hypothesis.

Lyons' final report [3], written when he had gained further knowledge of the buildings of Philae, contains information which should have shattered the theory long ago. But he restricted himself to the reporting of the purely technical facts and did not attempt to draw conclusions concerning the sequence of the constructions. He states that the kiosk « was partly founded on ancient walls of the same character as the counterforts » which he had observed below the West Colonnade. There, the outer wall of the embankment was strengthened by inner walls perpendicular to it, « about 2 m in thickness, spaced on the average 3 m apart, and forming a series of cell-like spaces » filled with earth and « bridged over by sandstone beams » resting on the counterfort walls. Lyons, however, was apparently not quite aware that the construction of the southern part of the embankment was the same as on the west side, and that the « ancient walls » quoted above were nothing but the counterforts of the south side. For this reason, his description of the substructure underneath the Kiosk is somewhat vague and has to be restated in different terms. Like the outer embankment wall, these counterforts, here oriented north-south, descended to the rock, and the cell-like spaces in between them had been filled in with earth which had slightly subsided, so that the covering stone beams were no longer « supported from below »; they « were mostly found broken and sunk ». Lyons refers the reader to the plans, which show that the columns were not aligned on the walls of the substructure but « were placed askew to them in such a manner that parts of the west side and the north end were unsupported except by the stone beams spanning the spaces » between the counterforts. The kiosk could evidently not have been built before its substructure had been completed; therefore Lyons understandably declares that these « ancient walls » on which the kiosk had been erected « belonged to an earlier date than the temple itself ».

[1] Baedecker, *Egypte, Manuel du voyageur* (Ed. 1898), p. 343.

[2] Lyons, *Album*, p. 22.

[3] Lyons, *Report*, p. 9-11, pls. V-VI.



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These « ancient walls », the counterforts of the south embankment, would consequently be older than the kiosk. But as the supposedly older embankment forms the extreme southern limit of the island, there was no place further south for a small temple connected with the kiosk. Further evidence, however, which will be presented in more detail later on and which was already partly known to Lyons, conclusively proves that the embankment cannot have been built earlier than the 2nd century B.C.

We are thus confronted with the odd situation that a building of the early 30th dynasty stands on an embankment of distinctly Ptolemaic work. The perplexing contradiction can only be resolved if one accepts the idea that the kiosk of Nectanebo I was no longer in its original position; it had been re-erected on an artificial extension of the wide area south of the Great Pylon. An unpublished manuscript of Borchardt's records a clever observation which supports our new version : On many blocks of the kiosk he had noticed small demotic numbers in red paint which had guided the Ptolemaic masons in their reconstruction.

Additional proof for the theory will be given below, when we discuss the different stages in the development of the Dromos. One further point must be mentioned here : Our colleagues succeeded in restoring a loose block to its former position in the kiosk [1]. The inscription on it refers to a restoration of the monument in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Such a date, however, would still be too early for the re-erection of the kiosk on the south embankment. These repairs must therefore have been made when the structure was standing in its unknown original position.

We must now return to the blocks of Nectanebo found reused in the Second Pylon [2]. By relying on the fragmentary reliefs and inscriptions, our colleagues were able to partly reassemble these blocks. A closer study of the technical characteristics of the stones should, however, yield further results. One of these blocks is the end piece of an architrave, its dimensions matching exactly those of the preserved architrave of the kiosk whose end is missing. Other blocks with relief on both faces might belong to screen walls, but the evidence published so far does not reveal whether they had formed part of the missing end of the kiosk.

## The Temple of Ptolemy II Philadelphus

From the 26th to the 30th dynasty, even to the end of the Persian occupation, the cult of Isis at Philae had, in all probability, few adherents apart from the soldiers garrisoned at

[1] *OA* 17, 151-2, tav. VIII. — [2] *OA* 17, p. 147-52, tav. VI-XIII.

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the southern frontier of Egypt and the people living in the neighbourhood. There is no evidence that it had any influence outside the cataract region [1]. Its propagation and increasing renown which finally carried its popularity far beyond the Egyptian territory, were initiated by the erection of a new temple for the goddess in early Ptolemaic times.

The promotion of the cult of Isis, not only in her earlier abode at Behbeit in the centre of the Delta, but also at the southern border of the country, was undoubtedly a clever political move of the foreign rulers, as later developments proved. The plan for the temple was possibly conceived and worked out in the time of Ptolemy I Soter [2] since the construction, including the decoration of the interior, was completed before the end of the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The new temple was built on bedrock immediately behind the shrine of Amasis. The choice of this site suggests that the older sanctuary was still in use until the new house of Isis was completed and ready to receive the sacred image.

There is no need to describe here the layout of the temple in detail. Attention must be drawn, however, to the fact that the disposition of the rooms does not conform to the characteristic groundplan encountered at Edfu, Kom Ombo and Dendera. There are two explanations for this :

*a*) The temple of Isis could not compare in size with the other, much larger, edifices and therefore its layout had to be modified. On the other hand, the elaborate schematic plan, nowadays considered to be typical for Ptolemaic temples, may first have been developed for the temple of Horus at Edfu early in the reign of Ptolemy III; the sanctuaries built by Ptolemy I Soter and Philadelphus were thus still largely dependent on examples of an earlier date.

*b*) Some slight irregularities in the foundations of the temple at Philae seem to indicate a certain indecision in determining the final design. For instance, in the first room behind the main gate the bedrock had been prepared to receive the bases of two columns which eventually were not put there. It is yet too early to draw final conclusions, but the

[1] The question raised by Jomard, *Description de l'Egypte, Antiquités* I (2e éd. 1821), p. 210 : « Comment se fait-il qu'Hérodote, le plus ancien auteur qui ait parlé d'Eléphantine, n'ait pas même nommé l'île de Philae? » is now easily answered : In Herodot's time the sanctuary of Isis at Philae was too insignificant to deserve a mention.

[2] The fragment No. 2147 is part of a small stela recording the dedication of fields to Isis in the name of Alexander, son of Alexander the Great and Roxane.

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problem concerning the origin of the typical plan of the big Ptolemaic temples certainly deserves further consideration by egyptologists.

## The Pronaos and the Second Pylon

As the new house for Isis was built to the north of her earlier sanctuary, the next structural additions — the Second Pylon and the hall of columns connecting it with the façade of the temple — came to be placed on the knoll of granite on the west side of the island. This entailed the dismantling of the temple built by Amasis and the levelling of the rocks which rose higher to the east. The granite blocks were used to fill in and expand the space on the west side where the natural rock dropped sharply towards the river, while, as mentioned earlier, the blocks of Amasis were reused together with others of Nectanebo I in the shafts of the columns and in the lower courses of the pylon. Work on the constructions could have started as soon as the obstacles were removed, but progress seems to have been very slow. A stela of the Nubian king Adikhalamani [1], a contemporary of Ptolemy V, was found inserted under the pavement slabs. The dedication text of year 24 of Ptolemy VI Philometor (157 B.C.), inscribed on a granite boulder at the foot of the pylon, may mark the completion of the masons' work, whereas the earliest decoration in the hall dates to the later years of Ptolemy VIII (145-116 B.C.).

The architectural disposition of this part of the temple differs from that of other Ptolemaic sanctuaries and has therefore often been misunderstood. The hall behind the Second Pylon is usually referred to as the Hypostyle [2], a term improperly used in this context. In Egyptian architecture, the term should be reserved for halls with columns, closed by walls on all sides and completely roofed over, whereas at Philae a small part at the back of the pylon is left open to the sky. On each side of this small courtyard a single column supports a lateral part of the roof which connects the main roof at the back of the hall with the towers of the pylon. The back part of the hall, comprising the second and the third row of columns set parallel to the façade of the temple, has to be considered as a separate unit. Traces on the columns of the second row show them to have once been interconnected by screen walls. The back part of the hall has thus to be interpreted as corresponding to the normal pronaos of other temples, while the lateral roof extensions with their single columns represent a much reduced peristyle flanking a tiny inner courtyard. Because of the limited space available on the rocks, the ancient builders resorted to this

[1] Farid, *MDIAK* 34, 53-6, taf. 9. — [2] So for instance : PM VI, p. 233, and plan, p. 230.

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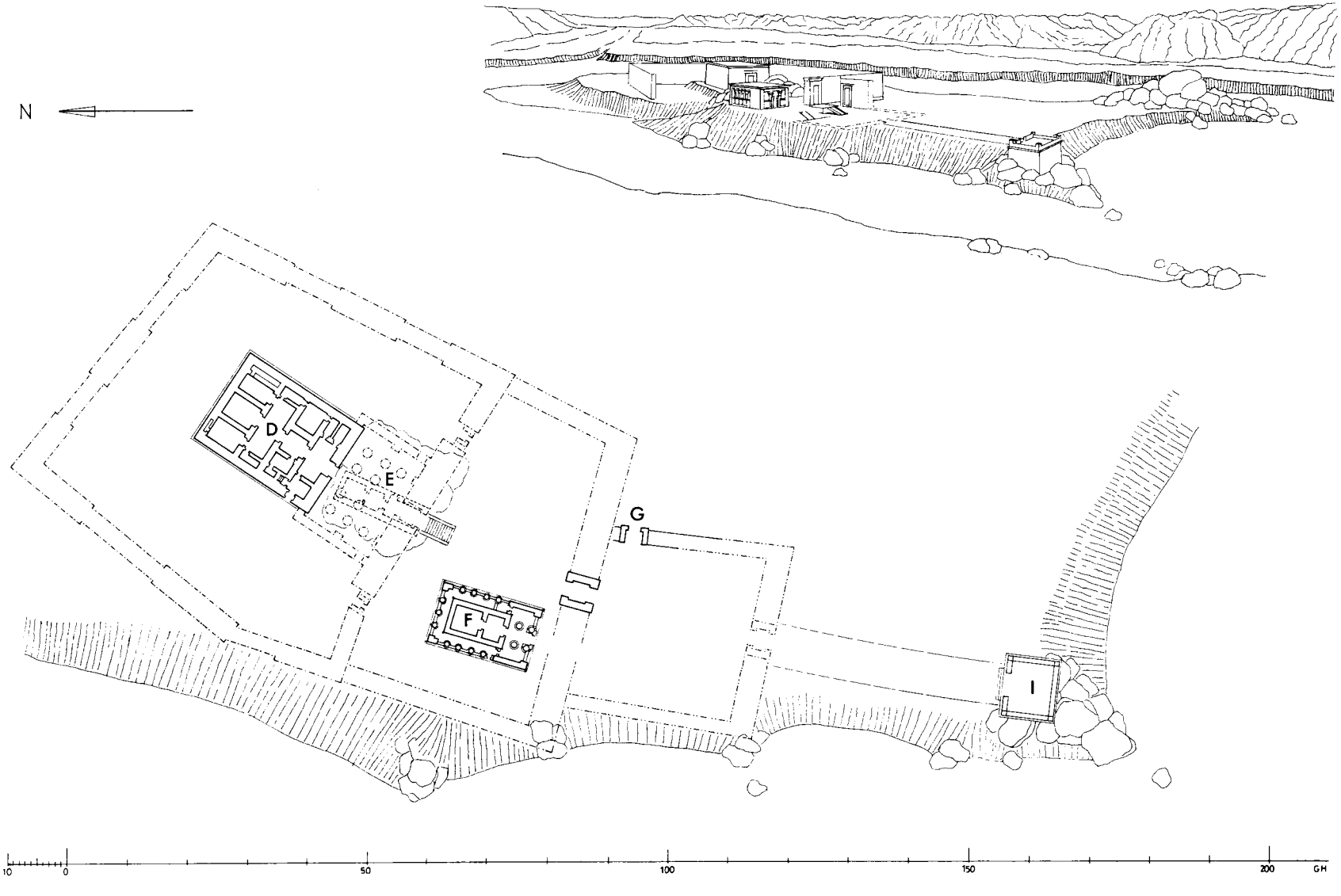



Fig. 2 : The Temples of Philae, circa 225 B.C.

D. The Temple of Isis of Ptolemy II Philadelphus — E. The projected Pronaos — F. The Mammisi — G. The Gate of Philadelphus — I. The early South Platform.

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exceptional arrangement which is, in fact, just a very clever reduction of the plan of other Ptolemaic temples.

## The Inner Enclosure Wall

Stone walls enclosing a narrow corridor which runs along the sides and the back of the building are a characteristic feature of Late Egyptian temples. Yet none of the plans of Philae [1] established in the last century shows such a wall. It would, however, be surprising if it had never existed. And in fact, looking for traces on the back of the Second Pylon, we found that part of the surface was without decoration; closer inspection showed a faint incision outlining the area where the missing wall had once abutted. The short, low remnant of a wall west of the Pronaos and the straight edge of the pavement further north seemed to mark the direction of the one-time enclosure. In addition, Lyons in his drawings had recorded a short stretch of wall situated parallel to the back side of the temple [2], but nothing of the kind was visible on the ground. Further research had to be postponed until the temple was entirely dismantled. Subsequent excavations revealed the presence of empty foundation trenches which could be traced all along the east side of the temple. On the west side, where the natural surface of the island was at a lower level and the foundations of the wall had to go deeper, at least parts of the stone courses had remained in place, forming an almost continuous line along the sanctuary. On the north side, the wall indicated by Lyons was found at the level of the temple foundations, with a considerable number of blocks of the upper courses lying beside it. These blocks had one side decorated in sunk relief belonging to the representations that had covered the inner surface of the enclosure wall. As far as possible they were reassembled and then transferred to Agilkyia where they now stand as visible proof of the inner enclosure wall which had gone unnoticed for such a long time.

## The Mammisi

The Mammisi is undoubtedly the oldest structure still standing on the lower ground extending between the foot of the Second Pylon and the gateway of Nectanebo I, but its architectural history has for a long time mislead its investigators, Borchardt and Daumas

[1] Lyons, *Album*, plan I; Lyons, *Report*, pl. IV-V.

[2] Lyons, *Album*, plan I, in later plans omitted. — The Inner Enclosure Wall is first indicated, still with some errors, in *FILE*, p. 73.

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among the more recent ones [1]. The small temple consists of an inner core of three rooms in a row, preceded by a wider vestibule of four columns, of which two stand in front, and enclosed at the sides and at the back by a peripteral colonnade. It was soon discovered that the third and innermost room of the core, the present sanctuary, was a later addition to the original two rooms. As the vestibule and the colonnade surround all three rooms apparently without interruption, it seemed obvious that they had been built after the extension of the core in a third phase of construction. A slight irregularity in the dressing of the exterior of the core suggested to Borchardt that the original two rooms had already been connected with a vestibule that was later replaced by the present one.

Borchardt refrained from proposing definite dates for the building phases he distinguished while Daumas, in principle agreeing with Borchardt, considered a date in early Ptolemaic times or even in the 30th dynasty as most probable for the initial building; he attributed the erection of the vestibule and colonnade to the reigns of Ptolemy V and Ptolemy VI.

An inconspicuous detail, a difference of dressing observed at the joints of the columns and screen walls and checked wherever possible, led us to assume a different course of construction that comprised only two major building phases. When the Mammisi was dismantled, many more details turned up which confirmed our hypothesis.

The present vestibule and a shorter colonnade already enclosed the original two rooms. They were built in the same technique and practically at the same time. Then, when a third room was added to the second chamber, the back of the colonnade with the masonry pillars at the corners had to be removed, but they were soon rebuilt behind the extended core. Thus, only three new columns had to be supplied on each side to fill the gaps in the colonnade created by the extension.

An inscription of the temple of Ptolemy II Philadelphus already contains a reference to the Mammisi [2]. Its construction may have been planned in his time, but it is more likely that the work was done in the reign of his successor whose name figures in the earliest inscription of the original sanctuary. The masonry work was certainly completed when Ptolemy V ordered the recording of his suppression of the Upper Egyptian revolt on the east wall of the vestibule.

The walls of the additional third room, the sanctuary of the Mammisi of later times, are inscribed in the name of Ptolemy VIII Evergetes II, and it is almost certain that the extension of the Mammisi has to be attributed to the later part of his reign,

[1] Borchardt, « Tempel mit Umgang », *BÄBA* 2, 3-5, Blatt 1. — Daumas, « Les mammisis des temples égyptiens », *Annales Université de Lyon*, Lettres 3e Sér., Fasc. 32 (1958), p. 87-90.

[2] Information courtesy E. Winter.

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when — as we will see — two other smaller temples on Philae were enlarged in exactly the same way.

## The Great Pylon

The two towers of the Great Pylon that enclose the older gate of Nectanebo I are definitely a construction later than the Mammisi. This is sufficiently proved by the existence of the passage in the west tower and the remains of two walls on its back side which linked the Pylon with the finished corners of the Mammisi's vestibule. We could not find the slightest indication that the construction of the towers was begun before the later years of Ptolemy V (186-180 B.C.), but the masonry was certainly completed during the reign of Ptolemy VI, in whose name the passage of the west tower and the gateways of the early parts of the Mammisi are inscribed [1].

## The East Colonnade of the Forecourt and the Rooms Behind it

The extension of the Mammisi by Ptolemy VIII closed the west side of the forecourt between the First and Second Pylons. It is reasonable to attribute to his reign also the construction of the colonnade that closes the east side of the court, the more so as an inscription on its architrave names the king as the sponsor of the work. Most of the other decoration is considerably later. Aligned along the back wall of the colonnade is a series of rooms, interrupted in the middle by a longer passage which leads to a gate in the outer enclosure wall. The passage and the gateway are usually attributed to Tiberius on account of their inscriptions, while the passage, in fact, is contemporary with the east colonnade, whereas the gateway belongs to an earlier phase.

## The Outer Enclosure Wall East and North of the Precinct

Before the two towers of the Great Pylon were built, the gateway of Nectanebo I must have been connected to brick walls that formed the boundary of the sacred precinct. Of these walls, however, no trace is left. One can only assume that the Ptolemaic enclosure roughly followed the line of the earlier wall.

[1] Junker, *Der Grosse Pylon des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, Abb. 126-161. — H. Junker - E. Winter, *Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä*, p. 138-49, 154-61, 406-15.

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Lyons' description of the enclosure wall suggests that all its parts, as far as preserved, date from the same period, occasional repairs made here and there excepted. Upon closer examination, the wall was found to consist of several sections built in different techniques that have to be distinguished from each other in an attempt to establish their chronological sequence.

The part of the enclosure wall to the east of the Temple of Isis was the one best preserved [1], extending for more than 50 metres from a point east of the Second Pylon to the north-east corner of the precinct. Today, only its stone-built foundations remain, the surmounting mud bricks still observed by Lyons having been washed away by the annual flooding of the site. A particularity of its construction — a division of its outer face into sections alternately protruding and recessed — gave the wall the appearance of being composed of projecting towers interconnected by walls. The upper surface of the foundations is not level, but undulating up and down, the culmination between two depressions corresponding to a recess in the outer face. This wavy movement was repeated by the courses of the brick work which originally rose to a height of at least 8 metres.

The southern end of this part of the enclosure must originally have had a connection with the east side of the Second Pylon. This section was removed in the course of later alterations. The north-east corner of the wall was situated so close to the coffer-dam that its remains could not be recovered to be reconstructed at the new site of Philae, where the northern side of the enclosure is now just marked by a scarp on the ground. Even the plans of Lyons show only faint traces of the enclosure wall on the north side; the foundations there had been destroyed by the construction of Coptic houses and only a few remnants were left. Yet old photographs prove that the north enclosure wall had been built in the same technique of undulating courses as on the east side.

When the towers of the Great Pylon were built, the part of the east enclosure wall just described was extended southward to link up with the side of the east tower of the new pylon. This wall was originally also constructed in wavy courses, as proved by a few traces left at the base of the pylon. Later it had to be rebuilt, most probably when the east peristyle was erected in the forecourt between the First and Second Pylons late in the reign of Ptolemy VIII. Even before that, part of the wall near its north end was removed to make room for a gateway. This East Gate, built in the middle of the 2nd century B.C., is usually referred to as the Gate of Tiberius because of its inscriptions which were carved nearly two centuries later. The gate made it possible to pass from the forecourt of the temple to the paved lane which ran outside the enclosure wall along its whole length.

[1] Lyons, *Album*, pl. No. 26-27, Text p. 40.

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## The Outer Enclosure Wall on the West Side of the Precinct

Lyons had assumed that an enclosure wall with wavy courses had also existed on the west side of the precinct, but no indications could be found in support of this view. There is, in fact, a stretch of wall with concave courses visible below the Gate of Hadrian, which, however, proved to belong to quite a different structure and will be described later in our text. Yet the west side of the precinct was not left unprotected. Along the upper edge of the sloping mud banks a first line of walls was built, parts of which were replaced by later constructions. Then a second line of walls, in some places even a third, was added further down the banks so that the natural slope was divided into steps. Thus the surviving walls represent an assemblage of parts built in different techniques at different times. Their respective chronological order can be determined by noting in which manner they were connected with each other, but as most parts have never been decorated with reliefs and inscriptions, we have no clues permitting a closer dating of the different phases.

Solid stone foundations which had once supported a stout brick wall extend from the west side of the Second Pylon straight to the edge of the west bank where, at a distance of 15 metres from the pylon, they turn north at a right angle, continuing in that direction for 8 metres and then ending abruptly as they meet the south-west corner of another structure built nearly in the same alignment. Close to the pylon, the brick wall was interrupted by a door through which one could pass from the lower forecourt to the higher ground west of the Temple of Isis. This is proved by a flight of stairs, the substructure of the threshold and by the sill preserved above the foundations.

The next structure to the north had never before been properly studied and identified as an independent building. Earlier references to it are interspersed with misunderstandings, which have to be corrected by a detailed description. The place had been covered by a heap of broken mud bricks which were cleared away in 1885 when a subterranean passage leading down to the edge of the river was discovered [1]. This passage was not, as Lyons had apparently assumed, part of the original structure, but had been dug through it [2].

Only the solid stone foundations of the building were still in place, rising above ground on the west side and deeply embedded in earth elsewhere. When this earth was removed for the transfer of the blocks, the Kiosk of Psammetik appeared beneath the foundations. The latter delimited an area in the form of a slightly distorted square subdivided by east-west oriented cross walls into three unequal parts, the one in the middle being the widest. The foundations had certainly once been surmounted by mud brick walls.

[1] In : *PSBA* 9, 311-13 : Communication by Major Plunkett. — [2] Lyons, *Album*, p. 39-40.

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A remarkable technique had been adopted to prepare the six stone courses of these foundations : The blocks of the lowest course were laid on the level ground of the foundation trenches. The upper surface of this first course was then cut in such a way that it ascended in a continous curve from the lowest point in the middle of each side to the four corners of the building. This concave curving was repeated in the bedding of all the courses above and by the upper surface of the stone foundations; it was certainly also continued in the mud-brick layers of the walls which had been erected on the substructure. Mud-brick buildings with concave courses are common from the Saite Period till Late Roman times, but carefully prepared stone foundations are an exception. The only close parallels known to me are the so-called Roman houses at Taffeh [1], which unfortunately do not help in dating the building at Philae.

Representations of buildings with concave courses in painting and three dimensional models show massive constructions comprising several stories. At Philae, we gain just an idea of the disposition of the ground-floor. The building was entered from the east, the main door leading into a wide central hall, where other doors opened into lateral chambers. We could, however, find no indications concerning the original position of the stairs.

In any case, the towering structure was still standing upright at the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., when a gate inscribed in the name of Hadrian was erected at the south-west corner of the building, soon afterwards to be followed by a walled passage along its southern side. The outer frame of the gate is connected with a wide, high wall facing the river and built astride the west walls of the earlier foundations.

A visitor approaching the place from the side of the Temple of Isis will be surprised to find a sheer drop of several metres right outside the gate; he may wonder how the gate could ever be entered. The answer was provided by a number of decorated stone blocks discovered by our Egyptian colleagues on the low ground outside and assembled into a complete wall [2]. Its undecorated outer face shows screen walls with the lower parts of the columns between them, which had evidently formed the side of a porch. When measuring the angles of the blocks which had been in contact with a neighbouring structure, we found that this porch could only have stood outside Hadrian's Gate. In fact, a minute inspection of the gate's front wall revealed the faint lines by which the masons had marked

[1] Neither Shafik Farid, « Brief Report on the Excavations of the Antiquities Department at Tafa », *ASAE* 61, 27-30, nor earlier Weigall, *A Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, p. 64-66, refer to this particularity of construction which is, however, illustrated by Weigall's pl. XXIII, 1.

[2] These reliefs presenting scenes of the Osiris ritual, similar to those of the passage near the Gate of Hadrian, are still unpublished.

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the places where the screen walls abutted. Even the height of the porch could be determined by the cuttings at both upper corners of the front wall where the architraves had been inserted. Another question, however, remains unsolved : Where were the stairs, on which people could ascend from the low ground on the west side to the much higher floor level of the porch? Essential architectural parts must be missing here, their loss being due either to exceptional floods or to the destructive action of man at the end of the Roman occupation.

A gap of about 6 metres, now closed by a modern ramp, separated the foundations with concave courses from the substructure of the Temple of Harendotes. This gap had once been filled by another, now disintegrated building. There was also a narrow passage with a flight of stairs descending from the paved courtyard of the temple to the lower ground outside the precinct. A similar, but sloping, passage had also once existed to the north of the substructure.

Of the Temple of Harendotes itself, only the lowest course of the walls and parts of the pavements had remained in place. Blocks of the upper courses were identified by Lyons among the stones reused in building the West Church [1]. This church, as well as the larger basilica to the east, could not be included in the transfer program, as they lay in the path of the coffer-dam. However, when the sheet piles were driven in, some blocks were retrieved by the divers and deposited near the office of the Department at Shellal, where we identified them as components of the Temple of Harendotes. They comprised among others two architraves whose length suited no other known building at Philae. The cartouches carved on their soffit confirmed Lyons' otherwise undocumented statement that the temple had been built and decorated in the reign of the Emperor Claudius. Its dedication to Harendotes, however, cannot be considered as definitely proved.

Heavy destructions due to Coptic buildings and the proximity of the coffer-dam prevented the search for a northern continuation of the enclosure wall. A southern extension, linking the corner west of the Second Pylon with the west side of the Great Pylon, was built soon after the latter had been completed. This wall runs parallel to the colonnade of the Mammisi, but at a distance of 10 metres from its south end it suddenly shifts inwards, so that it abutts directly against the side of the Great Pylon. The lower courses consist of stones embedded in the slope of the natural banks of the island; the sill of a gate situated about halfway between the two pylons lays therefore on a considerably lower level than the floor of the Mammisi. A sloping pathway winding round the back of the latter building must have ascended from this gate to the forecourt of the Temple of Isis.

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 30-31.

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The stone courses of the wall were certainly surmounted at first by brick masonry which rose almost to the height of the roof of the Mammisi. The brick courses, however, no longer existed in the reign of Neos Dionysos when the reliefs of the Great Pylon were carved; had they been there, the small west side of that pylon could not have been decorated from its base to the top.

This change in the original plan must be seen in connection with other work undertaken along the banks. The inner wall was not supported by bedrock, and there was always a risk that it would slowly subside. An outer wall was therefore built on the rocks of the riverside and connected with a series of perpendicular walls which acted as struts for the inner wall. The upper part of this auxiliary structure included a corridor along the outer wall and a series of chambers set in the spaces between the counterfort walls. The top of the construction then formed a kind of roof-terrace for visitors, offering a view of the sanctuary and the Abaton on Bigâ [1] where only the priests were admitted.

Lastly another, possibly the oldest, structure in this section of the precinct has to be mentioned, the more so as it has been omitted in the plans published by Roccati and Giammarusti. This is the subterranean stairway, referred to by Lyons as the northern Nilometer because of the three different systems of cubit scales carved in its walls. It starts near the vestibule of the Mammisi, its door apparently integrated into the later masonry of the inner enclosure wall. The stairs descend straight down to the river and end below water level. The last steps could therefore never be cleared and examined, but old photographs suggest that the end of the passage was completely closed except for some slots where the water seeped in. The change to three different systems of scales, and more so the much worn steps of the stairs, are a sign that this passage was used for a very long time; perhaps the inhabitants of the island drew their water here before the first temple was built.

## The Area to the South of the Precinct

Having described the buildings situated within and along the enclosure walls, we shall now turn to those outside the precinct. The northern half of the island and, apart from

[1] The location of the Abaton, the Tomb of Osiris venerated on Bigâ, has been an intriguing question to archæologists (*LdÄ* I, 1-2). In the reliefs of the passage near the Gate of Hadrian, the tomb is represented behind the sanctuary. This does not exclude that it was, in fact, situated to the south of the temple, where the air photograph reproduced on Pl. XXXV shows a low oval mound. That this site was used in later times as the burial ground of a Christian community (Reisner, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia* I, p. 102-11 and plan 7) may just indicate that the sanctity of the place was still remembered.

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a few exceptions to be dealt with later, also the entire east side were gradually occupied by the dwellings of the people employed in the service of the temples. On the other hand, the west side south of the Great Pylon seems to have been reserved from an early date to accommodate the crowds which gathered on festive days. When, however, the cult of Isis had ceased in the 6th century A.D., the dwellings began to encroach upon this area as well. The pavement slabs were often torn out and cut into smaller blocks; some subsidiary temples were wholly dismantled, their stones serving in the new buildings; cellars were dug into the ground. Thus, much evidence concerning the early phases of this part of Philae was destroyed. This is particularly regrettable for the area immediately in front of the Great Pylon, where several alterations intervened. Long before the pylon was built, some kind of platforms must have existed, with stairs leading up to the Gate of Nectanebo and to the Mammisi. These different phases could, however, no longer be accurately determined. On Agilkyia, the access to the Gate of Nectanebo is partly a modern reconstruction based on a few elements of uncertain date. The large stairway leading to the front of the west tower and to the door giving access to the Mammisi is but an « invention » of the last century, built in connection with other repairs. Better known are the date and the position of the pedestals of two granite obelisks [1] erected by the priests of Philae in acknowledgement of benefactions bestowed on them by Ptolemy VIII.

From the raised platform in front of the Great Pylon the visitor overlooks a splendid courtyard, bordered on both sides by shady colonnades and closed off in the south by the re-erected Kiosk of Nectanebo I. The architectural harmony of this court is so overwhelming that few visitors will be aware of the intrinsic irregularity of its layout without consulting a plan. They would hardly guess without their guide-book that monuments of very different age are here assembled. Our admiration for the ancient architect's achievement increases when we realize to which extent his plans had been predetermined and his options limited by structures built on this ground in the course of three centuries.

A person standing on the opposite side facing the pylon will not be troubled by the fact that the East Colonnade has but half the length of the western one. The courtyard appears to be centered on the massive west tower, with the passage to the Mammisi in the middle. This impression, not intended at first, was stressed by inserting a torus and a

[1] At present, only one base remains in place. The other one, together with the shaft of the obelisk which had survived, was removed by Belzoni and transported to England; Iversen, *Obelisks in Exile* I, p. 62-85. — For a discussion of the Greek inscriptions on the base see; : A. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* I, p. 160-96. — If the date of the Macedonian calender is accepted as reliable, the date of the king's reply to the priests could be fixed on the 9th of June 122 B.C.

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cornice above the flat framing of this door. The straight line of columns on the west side had to hide the irregular outlines of an earlier terrace, and the East Colonnade was built to cover the different shapes and orientations of a series of minor sanctuaries that had been founded there. They thus appeared united in a single block of building.

The key to the building phases of the courtyard is found by investigating its subsoil. Unfortunately, we were unable to search very deeply, as the waterlevel within the coffer-dam was maintained by the pumps at about one metre below the pavement. But much of the information we missed was supplied by the records of soundings made by Lyons and his staff at the beginning of this century.

Our starting point is the observation, published by Lyons [1] and still evident on old photographs, that the west embankment was built in different stages. A section, located roughly under the third to the sixth window counting from the south in the back wall of the colonnade, is set off from the walls north and south by continuous, tapering joints. Lyons noticed also that the protruding top cornice of this part describes a slightly concave curve similar to those observed on the platforms which protrude into the river east of the Kiosk of Trajanus and at the back of the temple of Hathor. He assumed that the structure on the west side which includes a stairway leading down to the river had also been at first a platform of this type. Our investigation confirmed his findings. The masonry of this structure was separated by neat joints from the embankment walls north and south. The wall on the northern side extended to the old and solid banks of the island, in which it was firmly embedded. The southern side wall abutted instead against another, still earlier, structure that had so far remained hidden under the pavement.

After clearing this earlier construction, we found it to cover an area of about 8 by 10 metres enclosed by solid stone walls, with the top course protruding on all sides, forming a continuous cornice. The interior was paved with two layers of sandstone slabs laid on a filling of mud. Dovetail holes and marks of crowbars showed that the cornice blocks had once been surmounted by a low parapet wall, except in the middle of the north side where two steps led down to a paved pathway. The stones of the parapet had of course been removed when the place was covered by a later pavement.

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 39 and 41, pl. No. 28; Lyons, *Report*, p. 10, plans V and VII. To avoid the misleading term « quai », we designate the long walls at the river side as « embankments », the similar, but shorter structures protruding from the bank as « platforms ». The word « quai » has suggested that such constructions had served as landing stages. This interpretation, however, is excluded by their height above river level. For a detailed discussion of the subject see : Jaritz, « Die Terrassen vor den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet », *AVDAIK* 32, 59-65.



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As shown by the soundings of Lyons, the structure had been raised on a spot where the underlying rocks reached almost to the surface [1], certainly the best place to build a platform near the banks of the river. Such platforms, of a yet ill-defined function, placed at some distance in front of temples and linked by a pathway with their main entrance, are a common feature from the New Kingdom until Roman times. It is therefore not surprising that the Temple of Isis was also provided with a platform, although it is difficult to say when this was done. It may have been built as soon as a first temple was founded, but the quality of the sandstone blocks, their size and the particularities of their dressing rather point to the time of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. A block found reused in the temple of Arensnuphis, with bewelled upper edges, a hieroglyphic inscription with the cartouche of Philadelphus and an early Greek graffito [2] might easily have belonged to the parapet surrounding the platform.

*The Minor Sanctuaries*

The orientation of the platform and of the cleared part of its dromos shows that they were linked to the Temple of Isis. To understand the next changes introduced in this area, we have to turn our attention to the minor sanctuaries which were erected along the eastern side of the dromos.

The earliest of these sanctuaries was undoubtedly a small temple dedicated to Arensnuphis erected in the vicinity of the platform and gradually enlarged in various stages. The decoration in the parts still preserved was begun in the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator. During the Upper Egyptian revolt, it was continued under Ergamenes, then taken up again in the time of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. In those years the temple consisted of three rooms in a row, entered from the west.

After the transfer of this temple, when the foundations were accessible for study, it became evident that the building started by Ptolemy IV had been preceded by a smaller one of uncertain date, whose ground plan could no longer be determined. The structure, as it had existed in the time of Ptolemy V, was later expanded twice. Of a porch erected in front of the façade nothing remained but the traces of columns and screen walls on the stylobate [3]. A fragment with a Greek inscription recording building operations in the name of Ptolemy VI might be connected with the work on the porch [4]. Ptolemy VI

[1] See the longitudinal section in Lyons, *Report*, pl. IV, bottom.

[2] Roccati, *Iscrizioni*, p. 324, fig. 1.

[3] Lyons, *Album*, p. 22-25, plan II.

[4] A. Bernard, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* I, p. 116-21.

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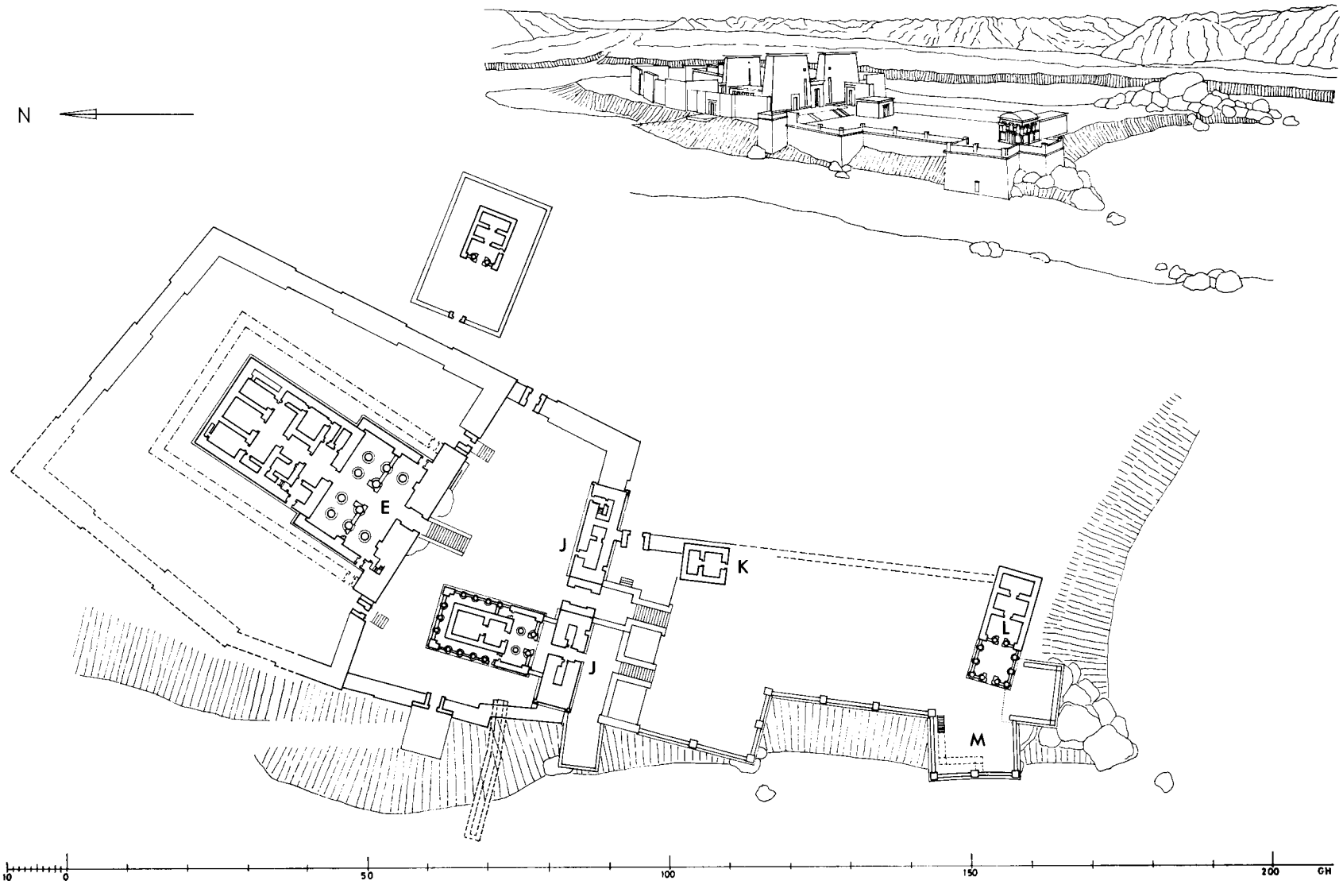



Fig. 3 : The Temples of Philae, circa 150 B.C.

Additions : E. The Pronaos, Peristyle and Second Pylon — J. The towers of the Great Pylon — K. The Temple of Imhotep — L. The Temple of Arensnuphis — M. The West Platform of Arensnuphis.

also dedicated a granite naos to the sanctuary. Later still, a door was cut through the back wall and a further room added into which the naos was moved. A stone wall enclosing a narrow corridor along the sides and round the back of the temple represents the last addition in Ptolemaic times; the reliefs on the well-preserved north and east walls were carved in the time of Tiberius.

Another sanctuary was founded by Ptolemy V and the first Cleopatra shortly after the birth of their son (186 B.C.) and dedicated to Asklepios / Imhotep, possibly out of gratitude for the happy event. The small temple [1] built near the Great Pylon comprises only two rooms, to which later a forecourt was added. The cult cannot have lasted long, as none of the successors seemed inclined to continue the decoration of the interior; in the lifetime of the founder, only the reliefs of the façade were finished.

Roughly midway between the temples of Imhotep and Arensnuphis, the remains of another small temple were apparent. Similar in its layout to the temple of Imhotep, it had consisted of two rooms accessible from a small forecourt to the south; its walls were destroyed down to floor level. The loss of all inscribed blocks deprives us of information concerning its founder and the divinity to whom it had been dedicated.

In some publications this small unnamed temple is erroneously presented as the sanctuary of Mandulis [2], an obscure divinity of Nubian origin. A fragmentary Greek inscription found at Aswan [3] is frequently quoted to prove that the cult of Mandulis was established at Philae in the 2nd century B.C.; yet the incomplete text still leaves many questions unanswered and does not allow definite conclusions.

A rather modest sanctuary dedicated to Mandulis existed, however, at Philae in later days. It was situated just north of the aforementioned temple, with side walls and the back wall being built in mud-bricks. Its front was formed by the stone wall backing the East Colonnade, from where the single room of the sanctuary was entered through a wide door. The blocks of this wall had been prepared beforehand in such a way that they would guarantee a solid connection with the parts built of mud-bricks. This fact admits two conclusions : either that a brick building had stood there or that it was at least planned when the East Colonnade was erected. Unfortunately the broken stela of Mandulis [4] inserted into the brick wall opposite the wide door does not provide enough elements to permit a closer dating.

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 26, pl. Nos. 10-11.

[2] For instance in : *FILE*, p. 73.

[3] A. Bernard, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* I, p. 126-37.

[4] Lyons, *Album*, p. 26, pl. No. 53. — Ahmed B. Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, CGC 22192, p. 189-90, pl. LXV.

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The respective position of the minor sanctuaries leaves no doubt that the western platform, built earlier than the long embankment, was connected with the Temple of Arensnuphis, though the two structures are not exactly oriented the same way. This, however, does not answer the question, in which of the building phases of the temple the platform was constructed. Probably the space available outside the temple had to be extended, when part of the ground was needed for the erection of the porch. A date in the first half of the 2nd century B.C., attributing the platform to the reigns of Ptolemy V or Ptolemy VI, seems the closest possible guess.

The establishment of minor sanctuaries must also have required an enlargement of the dromos. We attribute a wall situated in the centre of the later courtyard to such a widening of the pathway. This wall was oriented north-south, parallel to the later East Colonnade, its top course appearing just below pavement level and clearly visible near the Arensnuphis platform, but much destroyed further north. As circumstances did not allow us to make deep trenches, we have to assume that its foundations were embedded in the sloping mud-banks of the island and that the empty space on the inner side was filled up with rubble and earth.

## The Later Developments in the South-Western Area

The additional surface thus gained along the dromos was soon found insufficient to accommodate all the people attending the feasts of Isis. A much more ambitious plan was then adopted, possibly still in the lifetime of Ptolemy VI; its execution was certainly completed late in the reign of Ptolemy VIII. High embankment walls were erected on the rocks which appeared at the base of the island when the Nile was at its lowest level. The wall along the river was strengthened on its inner side by counterfort walls set up at more or less regular intervals. Together, these walls formed a series of chambers which were filled to the top with earth and rubble and covered by huge sandstone slabs placed across from wall to wall [1]. Embankments of this kind were built to the west of the dromos and, separated by the Arensnuphis platform, around the south-western tip of the island. On the south side, the embankment extended eastward for 25 metres to a flight of stairs descending to the edge of the water. Old photographs show several ruined walls protruding from the sloping banks east of the stairs; we therefore believe that the embankment had once continued further east, but had collapsed due to unstable ground.

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 41.

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The construction of these embankments created a wide, plane terrace comprising the entire south-western part of the island. Situated high above the Nile, the large platform had to be provided with parapets at the edges overlooking the river. Along the whole length of the south side, two courses of the parapets are still preserved above the ledge of the embankment. Stray blocks found in the vicinity show that another course with bevelled edges had run along the top. In three places, the slightly concave line [1] of the parapet was interrupted by a square-shaped pier about 1 metre wide, projecting in front and at the back and displaying a pronounced base connected in one instance with a classical profile. More will have to be said on the subject later on.

When the wide terrace was created, the re-erection of the Kiosk of Nectanebo I and the construction of the Colonnades were still something of the distant future. At least a generation separated these additions from the earlier work. Thus, the new buildings were put in place without regard to the internal structure of the embankment. The masons laid the blocks of the stylobates directly on the slabs which covered the top of the embankment and placed the columns at regular intervals without considering whether they stood above a firm counterfort or above an intervening space. Some of the slabs broke under the weight of the columns which then began to lean sideways or even collapsed. Most of the damage the visitor sees today is due to the inattention of the ancient builders [2].

There now arises the question whether the Colonnades or the Kiosk of Nectanebo were erected first. The latter has already been described in an earlier passage where we dealt with the other buildings of Nectanebo I and where we pointed out that the lateral rows of columns, as far as they are preserved, were incomplete already in ancient times. To remedy this defect to some extent, two obelisks were erected close to the southernmost columns. Their roughly-worked bases were inserted into the parapet wall, a task which could not have been achieved after the Kiosk was built. One of these obelisks has long since disappeared, while the western one is still in place; it has a Greek inscription carved into the north face of its shaft [3]. Written in honour of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos, the text confirms that the obelisks and, inseparable from them, the Kiosk were set up during, or shortly before, the reign of that ruler. The Demotic graffiti inscribed above

[1] The concave curve of the south embankment wall is first indicated in the plan published *FILE*, p. 73. For a view see : Jaritz, « Die Terrassen vor den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet », *AVDAIK* 32, taf. 31 a.

[2] Much of the damage, particularly columns out of their upright position or fallen, was repaired in connection with the work at the turn of the century, and again at their re-erection on Agilkia.

[3] A. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* I, p. 316-18.

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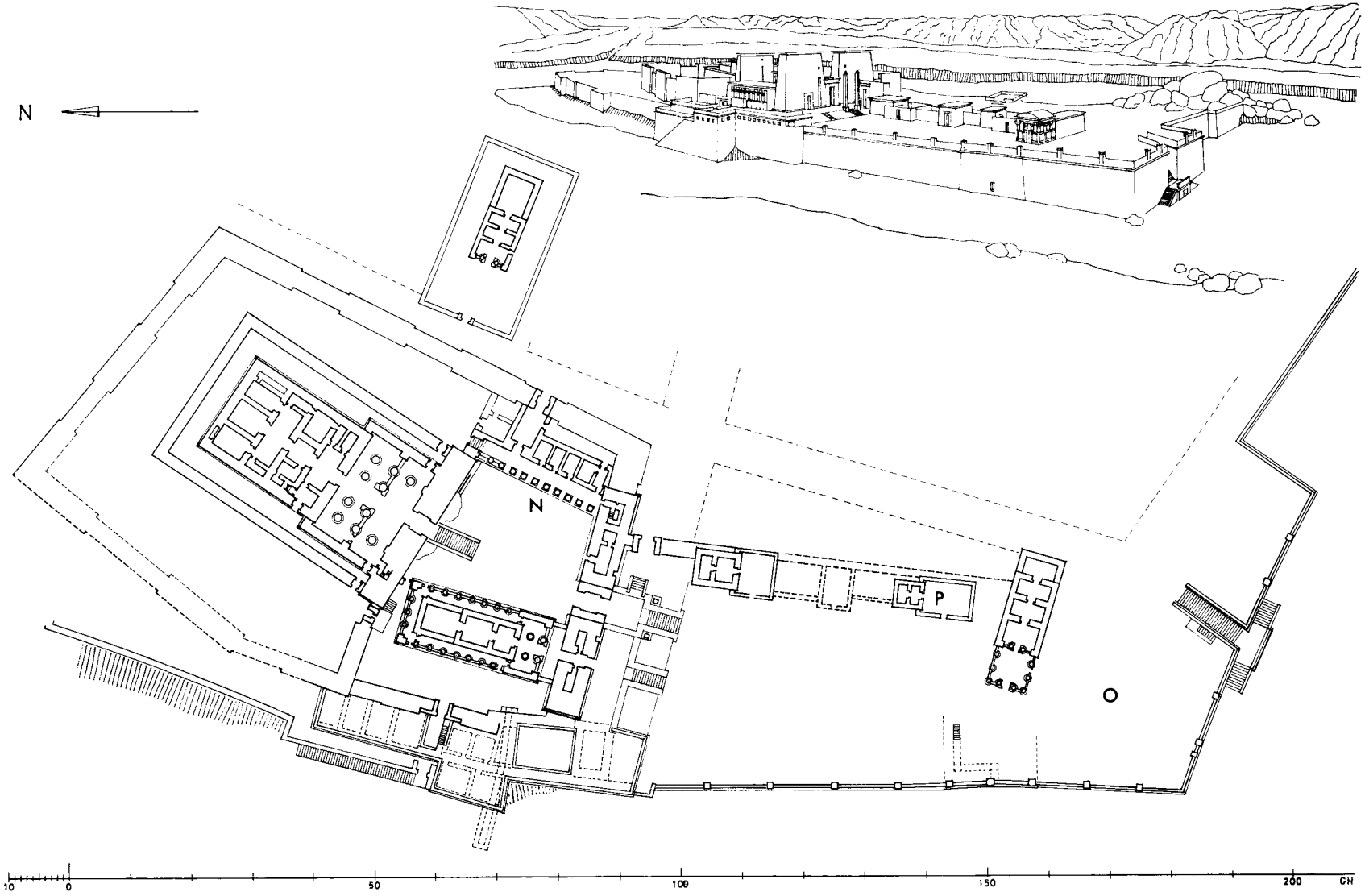



Fig. 4 : The Temples of Philae, circa 100 B.C.

Additions : New sanctuaries at the back of the Temples of Arensnuphis and Hathor and of the Mammisi — N. The East Colonnade of the Court — O. An extension of the Dromos to a wide Terrace — P. A small temple.

and below the Greek writing do not contracdict this dating. According to Griffith [1] who considers them to be among the earliest Demotic records at Philae, they were incised by a group of officials and workmen from Edfu employed on the island. Other members of this group left graffiti on the front of the Second Pylon and on the columns of the forecourt. Though none are dated, there is sufficient evidence that they had been inscribed in the reign of Neos Dionysos after the reliefs on the Pylon were completed and before the decoration of the columns was begun in the same reign.

In Roccati's opinion [2] the back wall of the West Colonnade was erected prior to the obelisks. He assumes that its southern prolongation from the south-west corner of the terrace to the obelisks had originally extended further east and had to be shortened to install the obelisks. Now, there are several arguments contradicting this hypothesis :

The presence of a high wall on the edge of the terrace would make no sense unless seen in the context of the Colonnade. Obviously the wall was prolonged beyond the end of the Colonnade to the corner of the terrace and to the obelisks with the intention of linking the Colonnade with the Kiosk. No one would have thought of building it, if the Kiosk had not been there before. — The regularly arranged joints of the upper courses in the southern part of the wall, moreover, clearly indicate that it was meant to end close to the obelisk. — Thirdly, the outer face of the two lowest courses of this wall is perfectly smooth, while the blocks above are still unfinished. These two courses with the finished dressing belong to the parapet of the terrace. The bevelled top had to be removed and a second row of blocks had to be added on the inner side of the parapet to obtain a base of the required thickness for the new high wall. The inner doubling of the parapet ends where the base of the western obelisk was inserted, an observation providing definite proof that Kiosk and obelisks stood there before the wall was built.

Such intricate technical details may escape the attention of whoever is not familiar with them. Yet there are other arguments already put forward by Lepsius and Griffith who both arrived at the same conclusion as the one presented here [3].

Inverting the correct order of the two building phases led Roccati to date the construction of the West Colonnade in the first half of the lst century B.C., between the second year of Ptolemy IX and the last year of Ptolemy XII, and to propose a date in Roman times

[1] Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus*, p. 42-4 (Ph. 2-10), p. 60), p. 60 (Ph. 80-82), p. 80-2, (Ph. 244-245), p. 107 (Ph. 385-388). According to a communication received from Kaplony-Heckel, Ph. 327 should be added to the group. A son of one of the officials named in these graffiti is known to have been an adult man around the years 50-30 B.C.

[2] *FILE*, p. 72-73; Roccati, *Iscrizioni*, p. 324.

[3] Griffith, *o.c.*, p. 42; L*D Text* IV, p. 132.

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for the obviously unfinished East Colonnade. The two colonnades, however, cannot be separated from each other; they were certainly part of the same architectural concept, although their construction did not necessarily proceed at the same pace, and both were left in an unfinished state.

Roccati's proposed dating is chiefly based on Greek inscriptions found on blocks reused in the lower courses of the back wall of the West Colonnade [1]. As far as these inscriptions had been visible on the outer faces of the blocks, they had been noticed by early visitors to the site; more such inscriptions were discovered when the wall was dismanteled. They range in time from Ptolemy III to the second year of Ptolemy IX, and the back wall of the West Colonnade was certainly built after the latter date. Its construction, however, did not — as Roccati believes — precede, but did follow the erection of the obelisks and the Kiosk of Nectanebo, as demonstrated in the passage above; this postpones the earliest possible date for the construction to the reign of Ptolemy XII. Other observations call for an even later date. In addition to their Greek inscriptions the reused blocks of the back wall bear faintly traced graffiti which the scholar who first published them dated in early Roman times [2]. In two cases these graffiti, as well as the inscriptions, are turned upside down; they can therefore not have been incised when the blocks were in their almost inaccessible secondary position.

Few epigraphists have wondered on which part of a structure the Greek inscriptions of high officials honoring their rulers might have been placed. Yet publications dealing with such texts omit just those elements which could contribute towards a solution to the problem. Among the respective examples found at Philae there are a few cases where not only the inscribed surface was preserved but also one or both of the adjoining sides. These are slightly sloping and neatly worked to a depth not surpassing 15 to 20 centimetres. Beyond this depth, the block either shows the rough dressing for a lateral joint or even a lateral extension by which it was bonded into a wall. At least in these cases, the inscribed structure had not stood free but must have resembled a pilaster protruding from a wall. This observation reminds us of the piers projecting from the parapet walls. A contemporary example from Elephantine [3] that has been assembled from fragments shows the cornice of the pier surmounted by wedge-like corners like the horns of an altar. Such piers in

[1] The inscriptions collected in : A. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* I (1969), Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16?, 20 have to be augmented by the recent finds published : Roccati, *Epigrafi;* Roccati, *Iscrizioni.*

[2] E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ* II, p. 375-76, Nos. 302-304.

[3] H. Maehler, « Griechische Inschriften aus Elephantine », *MDIAK* 26, 169-72, taf. LVIII-LIX.

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the parapets of the platforms and along the dromos, later in the parapet at the edge of the wide terrace, would be the proper place for these inscriptions, and it is therefore not surprising that later visitors felt induced to carve their names beside them. The parapet, however, had to be removed before building the West Colonnade, and the stones were immediately reused in its lowest courses.

It may help the reader if we recapitulate the various building phases :

*a*) A first platform built in connection with a dromos leading to the Gate of Nectanebo I and the temple of Isis, probably under Ptolemy II Philadelphus.
*b*) Enlargement of the dromos and, at right angles to it, construction of a second platform in connection with alterations and additions to the early temple of Arensnuphis, between Ptolemy IV and Ptolemy VI, most probably during the reign of the latter.
*c*) Further extension of the dromos by new and high embankment walls along the west and south sides of the island creating a wide, open terrace, a project possibly conceived in the time of Ptolemy VI and certainly completed at the end of the reign of Ptolemy VIII.
*d*) Erection of two obelisks on the south side of the terrace and reconstruction of the remains of the old Kiosk of Nectanebo I, some time after Ptolemy VIII, very likely in the reign of Neos Dionysos.
*e*) Transformation of the open terrace into a courtyard enclosed by lateral colonnades, late in the reign of Augustus. The decoration of the back wall was started at this time and continued under his successors till Nero, but was never really completed.

## The Kiosk of Trajanus

Having dealt with the precinct of Isis and the wide area to the south of it, we have yet to describe the monuments of three small areas on the eastern side of the island where they were enclosed by the ruins of later dwellings.

The most impressive building is doubtless the huge Kiosk usually attributed to Trajanus. It stands roughly to the east of the Gate of Philadelphus, at the back of a platform which projected out into the main branch of the Nile. The plans and sections published by Lyons [1] which show the Kiosk placed askew the substructure of the platform may serve

[1] Lyons, *Report*, pl. XIII-XIV.

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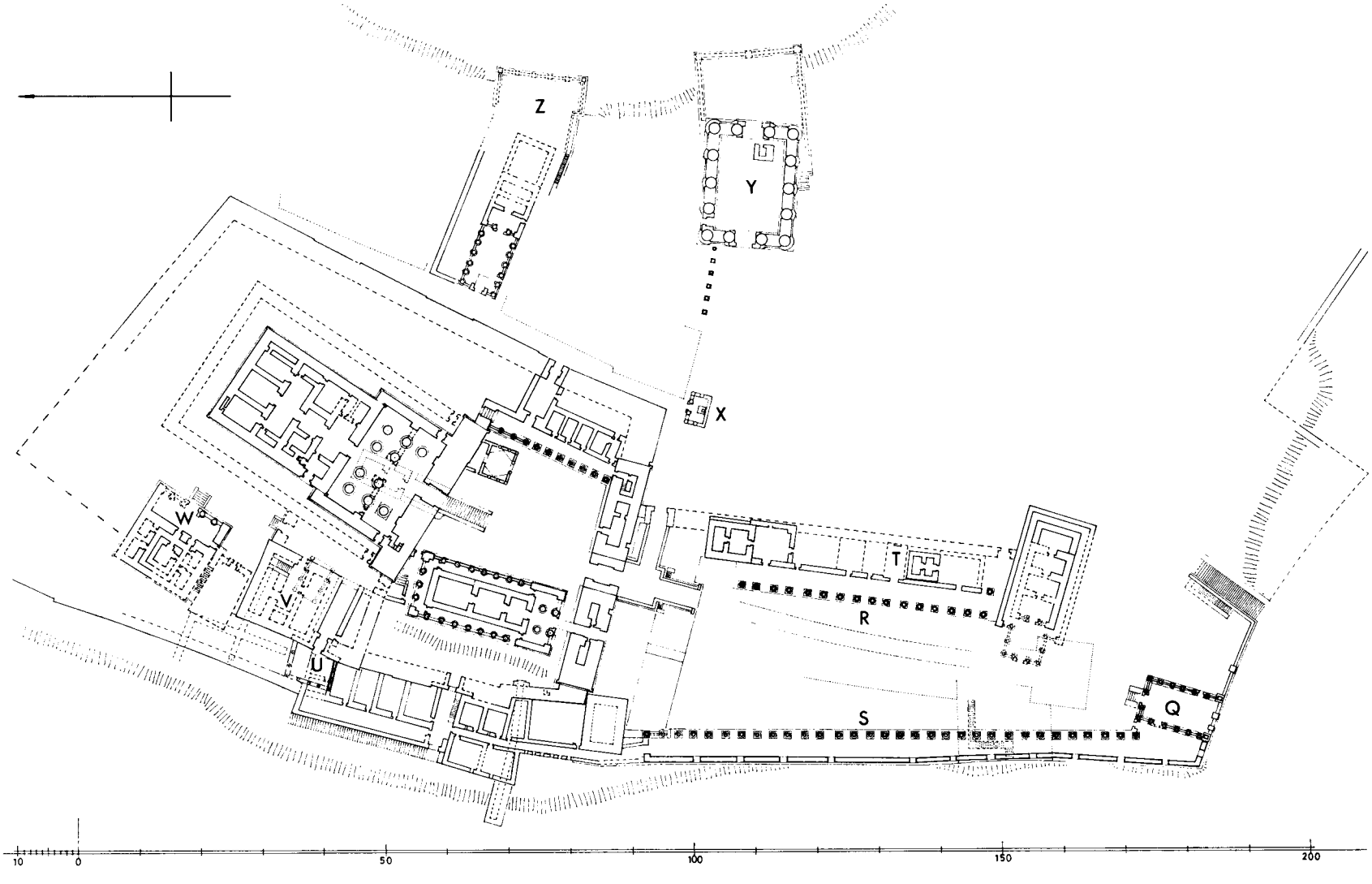



Fig. 5 : The Temples of Philae in Roman Times.

Additions : Q. The rebuilt remains of the Kiosk of Nectanebo I — R, S. The East and West Colonnades of the Dromos — T. The Temple of Mandulis — U. The Gate of Hadrianus — V. The brick building with concave courses — W. The Temple of Harendotes — X. The unfinished Chapel — Y. The Kiosk of Trajanus — Z. The Platform behind the Temple of Hathor.

as evidence that the platform was built at an earlier date. This was further confirmed when its top courses were removed for their transfer to Agilkyia : The back part of the platform had obviously been dismantled to a certain depth in ancient times to ensure a firm interlocking of its substructure with the foundations of the Kiosk.

The dating of the two structures remains, however, highly conjectural, as irrefutable evidence is lacking. A single course of the parapet of the platform facing the river is preserved; it shows that there was a pier in each corner and one in the middle, resembling those of the south embankment built in the time of Ptolemy VIII. A certain similarity between the platform and the south embankment is also noticeable in the masonry. As masonry of corresponding quality is found at Philae only in the time of Ptolemy VIII — with the exception, of course, of the work done in the reigns of Philadelphus and Augustus — we consider dating the platform in the reign of Evergetes II as the best possible guess.

The names of the Emperor Trajanus are inscribed on the reliefs of the inner sides of two screen walls, the only part of the Kiosk ever completed. Yet it seems unlikely that such an enormous structure should have been planned and nearly finished at the end of the 1st century A.D. Though the architectural form of the Kiosk is perfectly in keeping with Late Ptolemaic rules, the mere size of the edifice gives the impression of a demonstration of power, and also of goodwill, at the beginning of Roman rule in Egypt.

## The Temple of Hathor

Not far to the north of the Kiosk stands the small temple dedicated to Hathor [1]. Founded and partly decorated by Ptolemy VI Philometor, it originally consisted of only two rooms, a vestibule with two columns in front and a sanctuary behind it. The addition of a new sanctuary at the back of the first — following the pattern employed for the extension of the Mammisi and the Temple of Arensnuphis — must probably be ascribed to Ptolemy VIII Evergetes II. Some reliefs were added, and a Greek inscription in his name carved on the listel of the cornice above the entrance [2] is dated to the last decade of his reign. The temple was surrounded by a wall of mudbricks which enclosed also a small forecourt entered from the paved lane to the east of the precinct of Isis.

In early Roman times, this forecourt was roofed over by a porch inscribed in the name of Tiberius. Nearly contemporaty with it is a platform opening onto the main branch of the river and built at the back of the temple. Decorated sherds collected in the filling

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 27-8, pl. No. 12-15, *FILE*, p. 69.

[2] A. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philæ*, p. 153-7.

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material below the pavement suggest a date around the middle of the 1st century A.D.; the design of these sherds corresponds exactly to that on those recovered below the floor of the Temple of Harendotes. An exceptional feature of this platform is a passage built into the substructure, enabling communication along the banks between the different parts of the town without interfering with possible activities on the platform above.

The small temple has suffered severely at the hands of later inhabitants of the town who took stones from it to build their houses. Consequently, the walls of both inner rooms have disappeared down to floor level. Of the architraves of the porch, however, many were recovered nearby, most of them only slightly damaged, whereas the Hathor capitals of the columns had been cut up into small fragments. The reconstruction of the porch on Agilkyia could therefore not be carried beyond what had been visible before, the stumps of the columns and the screen walls in between them.

## The Unifinished Chapel

Just in passing we have to mention the ruins of a late and never completed chapel [1] built opposite the spot where the lane passing the Temple of Hathor meets the paved road which connects the Kiosk of Trajanus with the Gateway of Philadelphus. Its missing roof had been supported by columns on three sides, while the back wall was completely closed. It stood in front of the neighbouring houses which were already encroaching on the pavement when the small structure was raised.

## The Temple of Augustus and the Gate of Diocletianus

The remains of two monuments in the north-eastern part of the island, the temple dedicated by the Prefect Rubrius Barbarus to Rome and the Emperor Augustus [2] and a triumphal arch of Diocletianus, situated outside the cofferdam, had to be retrieved by a group of divers for the purpose of their reconstruction on Agilkyia. Reassembling the blocks found preserved in their original position and systematically numbered by the divers posed no problems. But the north wall of the Temple of Augustus which at the beginning of this century still rose to the level of the roof was already at that time in too poor a condition to be worth preservation and was therefore left to collapse during the

[1] Lyons, *Album*, p. 26, pl. No. 9; *FILE*, p. 78.

[2] Lyons, *Album*, p. 29-30, pl. No. 20-21; Borchardt, *JdI Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 18, 73-90.



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first flooding of Philae in the winter of 1902/03 [1]. Its blocks, lying pell-mell in the water, were recovered together with the better preserved parts of the monuments. A patient study of each of these blocks, many of which had to be drawn to scale with every detail recorded, enabled us to determine their original sequence, so that the wall could be rebuilt by the engineers and workmen of the Antiquities Organization.

Many a visitor will, however, be puzzled by the numerous grooves of dovetails on both sides of the wall. Dovetails are normally inserted in the upper bedding of blocks and remain hidden by the stones of the next course. Here, where they appear in the face of the wall, they are due to an ancient attempt at repairing a structural weakness. The north wall of the building was originally built on unstable ground which then partly subsided; the poor foundations gave way also and the upper courses began to sag as well.

It is usually taken for granted that the town of Philae was fortified by enclosure walls when Diocletianus ordered the Roman troops to withdraw from the Dodecaschoinos to the cataract region. The triple-arched structure [2] erected in front of the Temple of Augustus at the head of the stairs leading to the river is therefore frequently interpreted as a gate in the enclosure wall. As, however, the small sides at both ends of the structure are worked as smoothly as the façades, with, moreover, fully modelled pilasters, provided with socle and cornice, at their corners, there is no doubt that the Gate of Diocletianus was intended to be seen from all sides, that is, as an isolated monument. It must therefore originally have been a triumphal arch [3], although its sculptural details were never completed. The numerous Greek inscriptions referring to works of fortification belong to the 5th and 6th century A.D.

* * *

The gradual decline of the cult of Isis, its ultimate replacement by the Christian faith and the transformation of the Late Roman and Christian township into a Moslem fortress [4]

[1] Maspero, « La protection de Philæ », *ASAE* 4, 251, 255.

[2] Lyons, *Album*, p. 33, pl. Nos. 25 and 47 — Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia romana*, p. 5-10, fig. 4-8.

[3] We thus return to the idea of one of Napoleon's engineers, M. A. Lancret, *Description de l'Egypte, Antiquités* I (2e éd. 1821), p. 111-2, which has been rejected for a long time.

[4] Maqrizi, Edition Bouriant, *MMAF* 17 (1900), p. 549 (Reference cortesy Jaritz) — Maqrizi quotes Abdallah Ahmed Selim el Aswani whose information seems to be reliable, but we do not know for certain which period they concern; El Aswani must have lived several centuries before Maqrizi.

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belong to a different chapter. As Roccati intimates in some of the most stimulating passages of his book [1], the newly acquired insight into the history of the temples of Philae will not fail to have an impact on the existing notions on the cult of Isis in Late Egyptian times. Such conclusions, however, will have to be discussed in another context.

[1] *FILE*, specially the chapter entitled « Una nuova religione », p. 77-81.

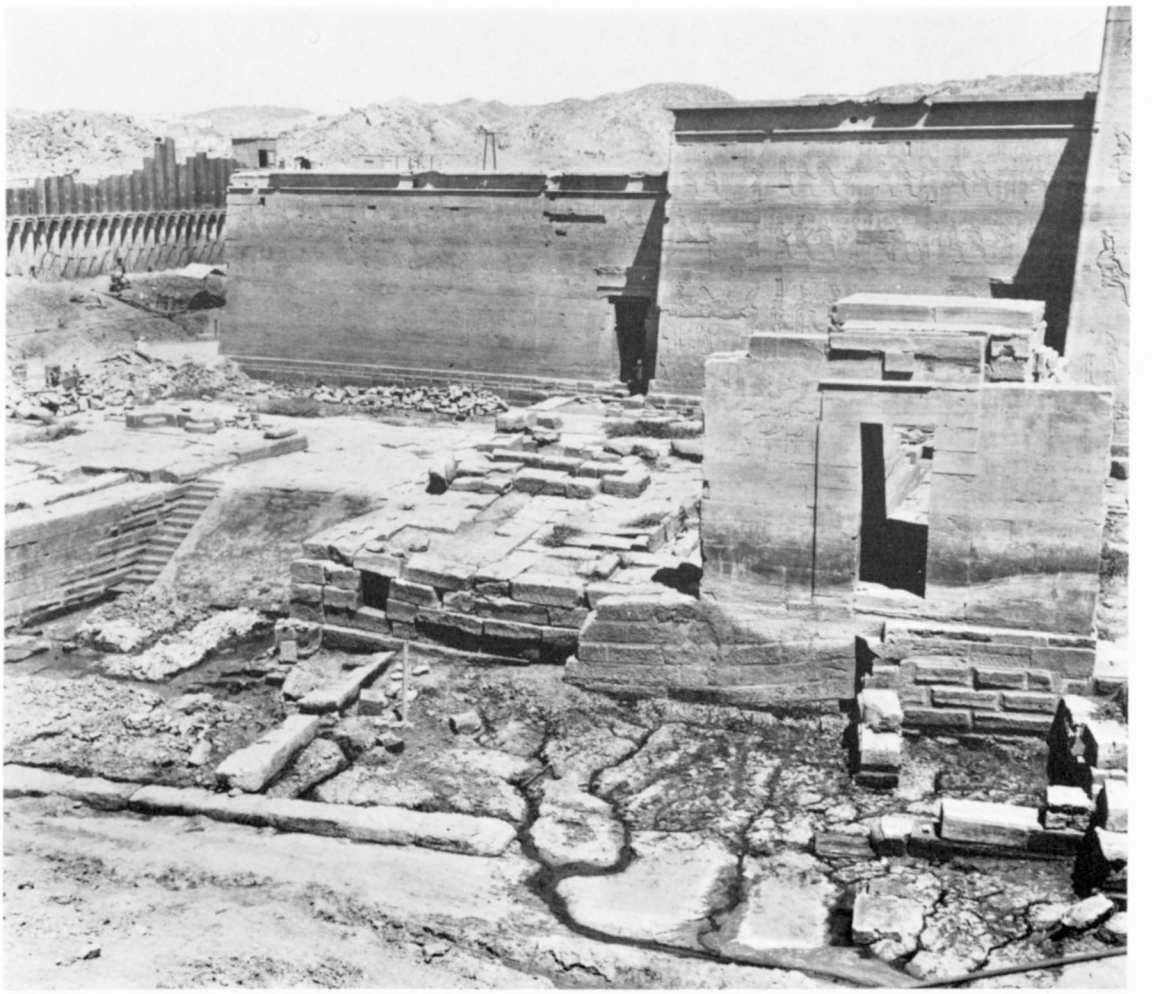


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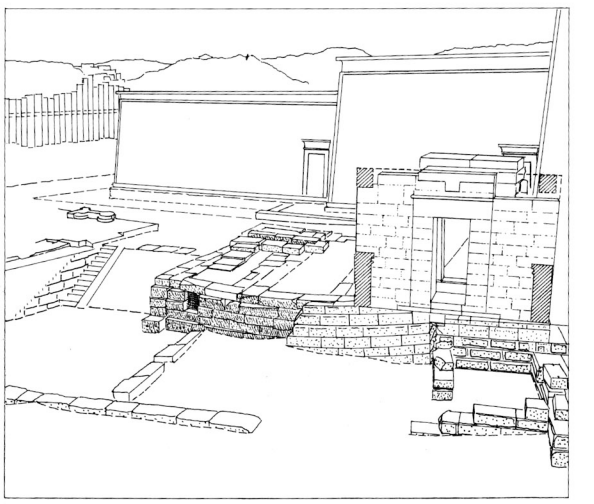


The Island of Philae from the air, with the site of Senmet opposite.

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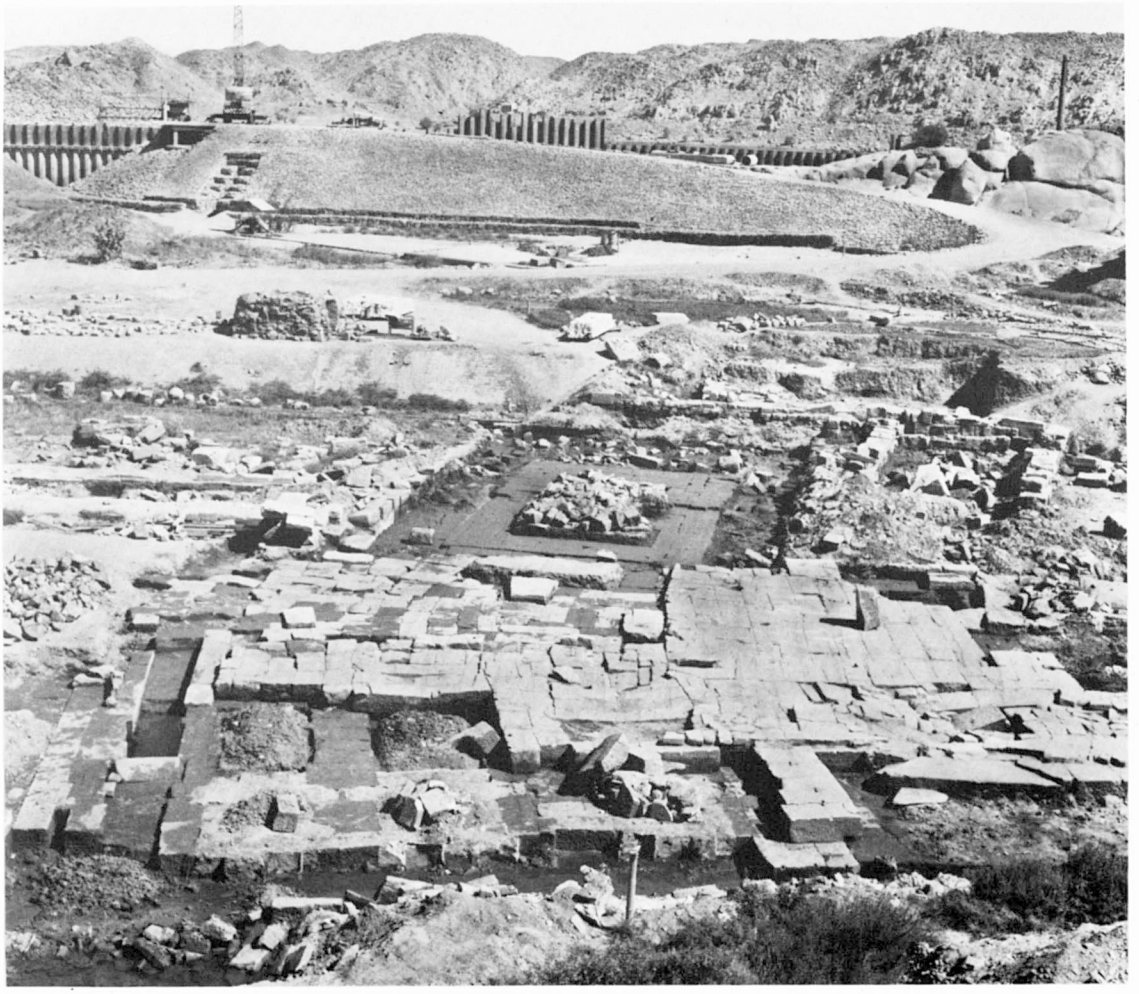


A part of the enclosure wall west of the Temple of Isis.

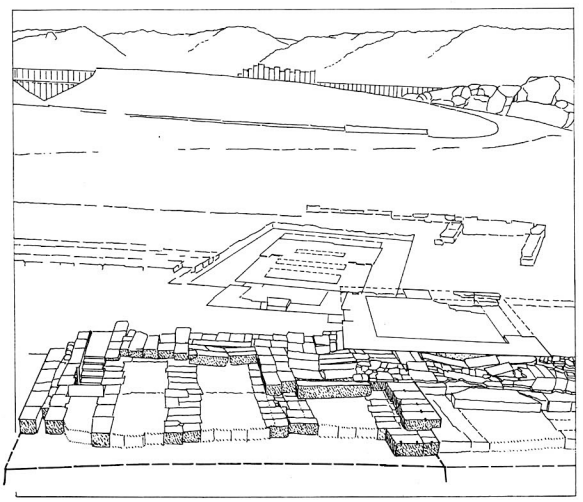


The façade of the Gate of Hadrianus surmounting on the right side the foundations of the enclosure wall and the substructure of a brick building on the left. The places where the missing porch abutted are marked by shading.

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The central part of the Dromos after removing the pavements.



In the background : The foundations of the Temple of Arensnuphis, their different stages disclosed.

In the centre : The platform at the southern end of the early Dromos.

In the foreground : The internal structure of the west platform of Arensnuphis revealed after the transfer of the front parts.

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