Irene Forstner-Müller, Pamela Rose

The Town of Kom Ombo I



With contributions by Ernst Czerny and Tomasz Herbich

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IRENE FORSTNER-MÜLLER, PAMELA ROSE

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Introduction

Irene Forstner-Müller & Pamela Rose

Kom Ombo is situated approximately 45 km north of Aswan on the east bank of the river Nile, where the river widens in comparison with its channel to the south and bends westwards (Fig. 1). The modern city is an industrial town, dominated by the sugar factories that gave rise to its existence in the early 20th century. The archaeological site of Kom Ombo lies on the river bank, some three km from the modern town. It is today a protected area, containing the famous Ptolemaic temple, a regular feature of tourist itineraries, and the remains of the ancient tell that lies around it on three sides.

The Cairo Branch of the Austrian Archaeological Institute has a long-term research interest in settlement archaeology, and began its new project at Kom Ombo (in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA)) in 2017, with the aim of

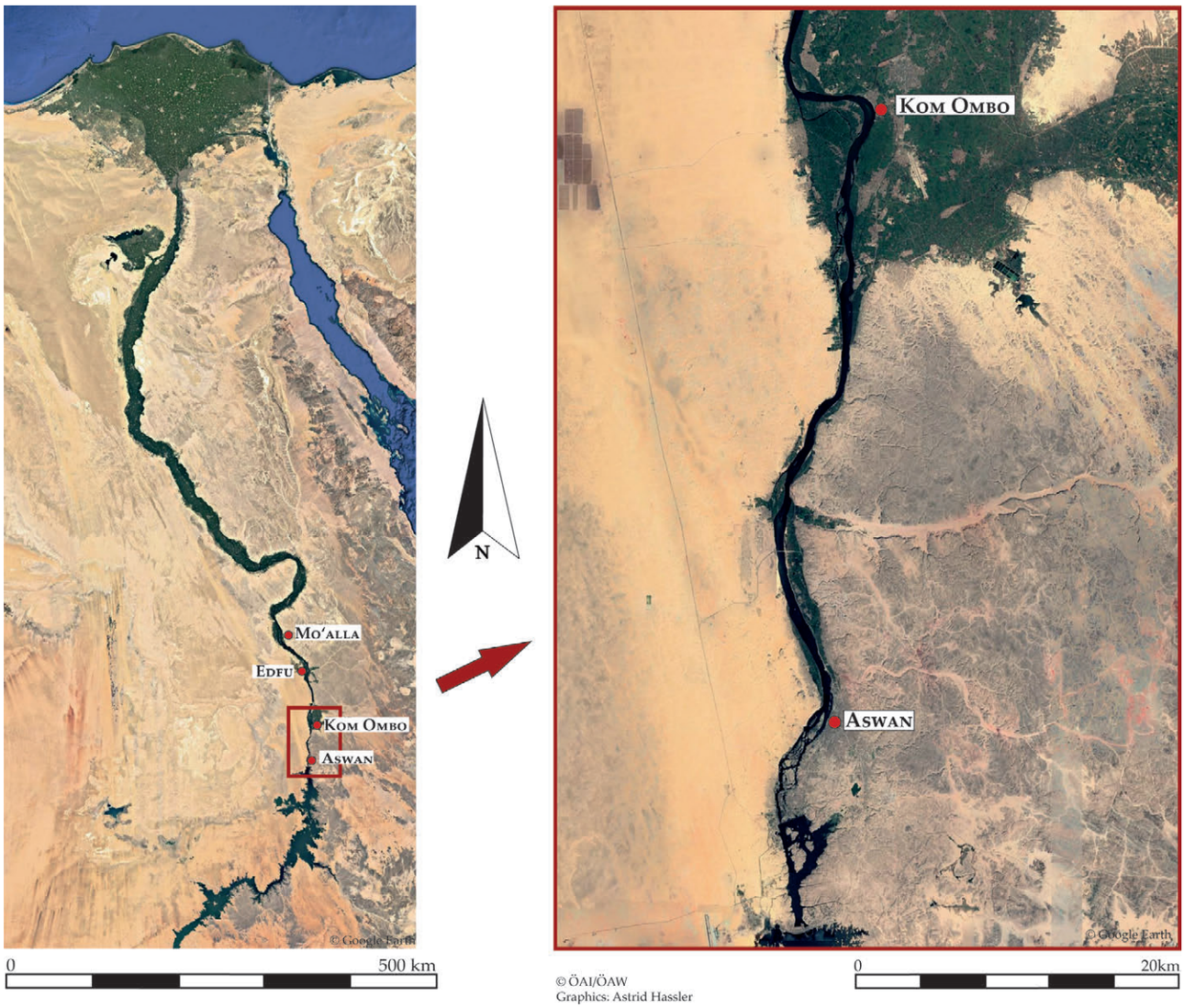


Fig. 1 Map of Egypt (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler, for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

investigating the ancient town and its hinterland. Surprisingly, this aspect of Kom Ombo has only recently become a target of interest for archaeological work, as will be made clear in the following chapters. The most important of this recent work, the outcome of which has contributed significantly to our own work, was a USAID-funded project to lower the groundwater around the temple and tell (the Ground Water Lowering Project, henceforth the GWLP). It was carried out by the American company CDM Smith in cooperation with the MoTA between 2015 and 2019. Trenches and installations for the pumps and pipework provided the opportunity for widely scattered rescue excavations across the site. The GWLP partly overlapped in time with our own excavations and we are grateful for the fruitful co-operation and exchange of knowledge between the two teams.[1] The project is partly funded by the Austrian Science Fund (Stand alone project P31791: The town Kom Ombo in the 3rd millennium B.C.)

This volume presents an overview of the Kom Ombo site and its history before the ÖAI-Egyptian mission began its excavations. The following chapters give an overview of the settlement history of the site, the research history, Kom Ombo as seen in the visual arts, the transformation of the landscape of Kom Ombo and, as the last chapter, the magnetic survey which was undertaken in 2018.

This volume is the first of a series dealing with the project's research. The next volume to appear will be the report on the 19th-century Anglo-Egyptian fort.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Professor Barry Kemp (1940-2024), whose work at Kom Ombo laid the foundation for the current project.

Acknowledgments

We thank the directors of the Austrian Archaeological Institute for their support for this project. We are indebted to the former executive director of the ÖAI PD Dr. Sabine Ladstätter for helping us initiating the work, and to deputy executive director of the ÖAI Prof. Dr. Barbara Horejs for her ongoing support and encouragement in our work. We are grateful to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) for supporting and funding the project (P 31791).

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We would also like to thank our cooperation partner Prof. Bernhard Palme for many fruitful discussions.

Finally, we would like to thank the Austrian Embassy, and especially His Excellency ambassador Dr. Georg Stillfried, for his interest and advice.

[1] We are especially indebted to the chief engineer Tom Nichols and the directors of the archaeological aspects of the work, Freya Sadarangani and Ana Tavares.

Chapter 1 Historical Overview

Irene Forstner-Müller & Pamela Rose

The modern Arabic name كوم أمبو "Kom Ombo", which can be translated as "hill of Ombo", is derived from the town's Ancient Egyptian name *Nbw.t > Nby.t* , "the Golden One".[2] The significance of the name is not certain, but the town may have been the starting point for gold-mining expeditions into the Eastern Desert and Nubia, and at least by the New Kingdom was an important hub for these activities.[3] The "gold of *Neby.t*, 1000 *dbn*"[4] is mentioned for the first time in the temple of Ramesses III in Medinet Habu,[5] but officials from Kom Ombo are depicted bringing gold rings in the well-known taxation scene in the 18th Dynasty tomb of Rekhmira.[6] Close connections with the south and east, although not in connection with gold, have continued into modern times, so that in the small town of Daraw, c. 5 km south of Kom Ombo, camels from Sudan are sold at a famous market.

In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, the name of the ancient city became Greek Ομβος, Ομβοι or Ομβ*(ε)*ιτων πόλις, Latin *Ombos* or *Ambos*, and in late antique Coptic, *Imbw*.[7]

Old Kingdom

Jaques de Morgan was the first to suggest that there was occupation at Kom Ombo in the Old Kingdom during the 5th and 6th Dynasties, although without citing his reasons. "Primitivement Noubit dut être une simple forteresse destinée à arrêter les incursions des peuplades nubiennes contre lesquelles tant d'expéditions furent dirigeés par les rois de la Ve et de la VIe dynasties; plus tard, la Nubie ayant été peu à peu pacifiée, le rôle de Noubit en tant que forteresse disparut …"[8] About the same time as de Morgan wrote this, a scarab bearing the name "Assa" was retrieved from the river bank at Kom Ombo. Ward, who acquired the scarab, associated the name with the 5th Dynasty king Djedkare Asesi.[9]

Kemp also concluded that Kom Ombo was a sizeable settlement in the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period based on archaeological evidence.[10] Recent archaeological work by the joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission and the henceforth GWLP has confirmed these observations.[11]

The recent excavations have brought to light three imprints of a cylinder seal from the reign of the 5th Dynasty king Neferirkare containing the name of Kom Ombo (*Nbw.t*)[12] and mentioning a *pr-šnʿ* of the royal repast(?) (at) *Nebut* (Fig. 2). This is currently the earliest evidence for the ancient name of Kom Ombo. The *pr-šnʿ* is linked to the processing and packing of raw materials and the royal administration, and emphasizes the importance of Kom Ombo at this time.

Non-royal cylinder seal impressions from the excavations date from the early Old Kingdom to the 5th Dynasty, and royal cylinder seal impressions give the names of the kings of the 5th Dynasty, Userkaf, Sahure and Neferirkare.[13] These provide secure dating evidence for the settlement in the Old Kingdom and confirm Kom Ombo's role as an administrative centre in close contact with the royal residence, especially during the 5th Dynasty and probably earlier.

Despite this, it is not clear how Kom Ombo fitted into the administrative organization of the First Upper

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2 Gutbub 1980, 680, footnote 1; Peust 2010, 101.

3 For these activities in the desert east of Kom Ombo see Rothe, Miller and Rapp 2008, 246–381, 391–395, 400–406. We are indebted to P. Seyr for this reference.

4 Wenig 1968, 71.

5 Breasted 1906, § 30; Kitchen 1983, 322. 4.

6 Davies 1943, pl. XXXI. We are indebted to P. Seyr for this reference.

7 Peust 2010, 101.

8 Morgan 1895, 1.

9 Ward 1900, 180. The current location of this scarab is not known, and it should be noted that scarabs are not found in the Old Kingdom.

10 Kemp 1985.

11 Sadarangani et al. 2019, summary 5-2 and 5-3 with further references; Forstner-Müller et al. 2019.

12 For this seal impression see Forstner-Müller et al. 2022.

13 Personal information L. Pantalacci and P. Seyr.



Fig. 2 Reconstruction of a cylinder seal from three different impressions. Photo of KO-KF 207 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by N. Gail; reconstruction by L. Pantalacci and P. Seyr)

Egyptian Nome during the Old Kingdom. It has been suggested that it was the nome capital,[14] although there is no clear evidence for this,[15] and it has even been doubted whether there was a formal administrative structure for the region.[16] Neither has Elephantine, the likely alternative candidate for nome capital, produced evidence for having this status: at the Qubbet el-Hawa, the burial place for the highest official residents of Elephantine, there is no evidence for the use of the title of nome governor from the late Old Kingdom tombs.[17] Kom Ombo is not named in an 8th Dynasty edict from Coptos listing Upper Egyptian nome capitals,[18] in which the title is given to Elephantine. The people buried in the tombs of the 6th–8th Dynasties at the Qubbet el-Hawa were primarily involved in organising and carrying out royal expeditions into Nubia. These officials were not nome governors, but were drawn from representatives of administrative sectors resident on Elephantine: expedition leaders who, by virtue of their activities, were directly connected to the king and therefore held the highest positions as administrative officials and officials in the religious sphere.[19]

There is no archaeological evidence at Kom Ombo for cultic installations predating the Middle Kingdom, but it is likely that there was a temple there in the Old Kingdom.[20] The inscriptions on the Chapelle Blanche at Karnak hint that this was the case. Although the Chapelle Blanche was erected by Senwosret I of the Middle Kingdom,[21] the inscription therein may copy texts dating back to the 6th Dynasty.[22] This identifies the main temple of the capital of the First Upper Egyptian Nome as a Horus temple. Whilst the capital cannot be certain-

14 For further information see Helck 1974, 69; Martin-Pardey 1976, 196–197; Franke 1994, 11, footnote 18.
15 Franke 1994, 11.
16 Franke 1994, 11.
17 Franke 1994, 11; Edel 2008.
18 Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 43053, Decree Coptos I of King Neferkauhor to the Vezir *šm³.j*, Goedicke 1967, 172.
19 Franke 1994, 11.
20 Old Kingdom temples were usually of mudbrick and were significantly smaller than later sanctuaries, so are less visible in the archaeological record. For a general overview of provincial temples see Bussmann 2010. Kemp classifies these as "preformal" temples (Kemp 2018, 110–137).
21 Lacau and Chevrier 1956, 220, pl. 3.
22 Convincingly argued by Franke 1994, 11, no. 18.

ly identified with Kom Ombo, if it does refer to this town, it would not only be the earliest evidence for a temple at Kom Ombo but would add to the evidence that Kom Ombo had a long-standing association with the Horus cult predating the worship of Sobek there.[23]

First Intermediate Period

The First Intermediate Period was a time of political instability following the collapse of the centralized Old Kingdom state. The country fragmented into more localized polities, and conflict between some of them is reflected in inscriptions in the tomb of Ankhtifi at Moalla, some 140 km north of Kom Ombo.[24] Ankhtifi was ruler of the Third Upper Egyptian Nome. During his career, he conquered part of the Theban Nome to the north and the Second and First Upper Egyptian Nomes to the south,[25] as well as making less belligerent interventions. Thus, he mentions Kom Ombo as one of the places he rescued from famine: "I brought life to Hierakonpolis and Edfu, Elephantine and Ombos".[26]

Again, little is known about the administration and Kom Ombo's place in it at this time. Whether, as assumed by Helck, the administrative division of the territory into nomes already existed, so that the places that Ankhtifi "brought life to" (*sʿnḫ*) were nome capitals,[27] or, as Franke argued, the list of toponyms was not a



Fig. 3 Aerial view of the tell with excavation areas 2017–2019 with underlying Google Earth image (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

23 Martin-Pardey 1976, 196–197.
24 Wenig 1968, no. 1 with further literature.
25 Brovarski 2018, 34–35.
26 Wenig 1968, no. 1 with further literature; Vandier 1950, 239–240.
27 Helck 1974, 69.



Fig. 4 Burnt remains of First Intermediate Period structures (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by U. Matić)

list of nome capitals but of towns[28] cannot be resolved. However, the fact that Kom Ombo is mentioned alongside other significant towns in this region shows its ongoing importance.

The archaeological evidence from Kom Ombo upholds this view. Kemp identified structures and pottery from the First Intermediate Period,[29] and recent survey has shown that the settlement of this date extended at least under the northern half of the modern tell (Fig. 3).[30] The excavations of the joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission have uncovered part of a contemporary cemetery and a large administrative building containing silos north of the modern temple enclosure wall,[31] and the work of the GWLP has shown that the standing temple and the Crocodile Museum are built on top of the First Intermediate Period town.

A striking feature of the First Intermediate Period remains is that they are heavily burnt (Fig. 4).[32] At some time, possibly at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, the town was – perhaps systematically – destroyed. It is tempting to link this to political events within Egypt at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, at which time the administrative centre in the south shifted to Elephantine. Perhaps Kom Ombo was on the wrong side in a conflict and had to bear the consequences.

Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period

The inscription on the Chapelle Blanche at Karnak cannot be taken as evidence that Kom Ombo was the nome capital in the early Middle Kingdom,[33] and by the earlier 12th Dynasty, Elephantine clearly fulfilled that role.[34] Sarenput I was the first official to bear the title of nome governor in his tomb at the Qubbet el-Hawa.[35]

The evidence for Middle Kingdom activity at Kom Ombo itself is sparse. An early Middle Kingdom tomb, belonging to the official *Sbk-ḥtp* and his wife *Nfr-wr.t*, lies to the east of the temple.[36] Its precise dating is

28 Franke 1994, 11.
29 Kemp 1985.
30 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 67.
31 See below.
32 First observed by Kemp, see Kemp 1985, 47, fig. 1.
33 As suggested by Helck 1974, 69.
34 Gomaà 1986, 10–11; Pilgrim 1996, 13.
35 Franke 1994, 10.
36 Zucker 1909, 200–201; Wenig 1968. See also Helmbold-Doyé in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 84–85.

debated: it may be very late 11th Dynasty[37] or early 12th Dynasty.[38] A stela of the official *Mmj*, which dates to the very early 12th Dynasty, was discovered during excavations in el-Shutb, a modern village to the south of the tell, and is now in the museum on Elephantine Island.[39] Another stela, now in the Field Museum in Chicago, is of a woman named *Sn-ḥtp* and probably dates to the 12th Dynasty.[40] It is attributed to a Kom Ombo provenance on the basis of the text, which mentions Sobek, Lord of Kom Ombo, and might be the first evidence for the veneration of Sobek there. In the temple area, two blocks bearing the cartouches of a king named Senwosret were reused in the Mammisi and provide further evidence for a temple in the Middle Kingdom.[41] Kom Ombo appears as the place of origin of 100 soldiers (*ʿḥ³.tjw*) in the stela Wadi el-Hudi 6, dated to Year 17 of Senwosret I,[42] and the place is mentioned in connection to personalia and products of the dockyard workshop in the contemporaneous P. Reisner II, frg. IV, vs. 18.[43] An offering table (SNM 5211), now on display in the Gebel Barkal Museum in Sudan, has the name of Senwosret I and a dedication to the god Horus of Nebyt (Kom Ombo) in its main inscription.[44] Finally, the same king is depicted by a seated royal statue from the Fayum which designates him as "beloved of Horus, lord of *Nby.t*".[45]

Other evidence for Kom Ombo in the Middle Kingdom includes a Ptolemaic text (the "Chronokratenliste") in the temple of Edfu. This probably copies an inscription of the second half of the 12th Dynasty and includes a reference to Kom Ombo.[46]

From the late Middle Kingdom comes a red granite casket, now in the Walters Collection in Baltimore, belonging to the treasurer and steward *Nṯr-jsy* and his wife *Nbw-m-sshy*. On it an inscription mentions Sobek-Ra of Kom Ombo.[47] According to Kopetzky, both the inscription and the material, which comes from the Aswan region, suggest an origin in the First Upper Egyptian Nome.[48] Marée dates the casket to the late 13th Dynasty on the basis of palaeography and other epigraphic features, and points out that the owners are known from other contemporary sources.[49] Since the casket was probably part of the official's funerary equipment, it suggests a cemetery of this date in the area of Kom Ombo. In the same period, the onomasticon of P. Ramesseum D (No. 189), dating into the 13th Dynasty, lists Kom Ombo as an important administrative regional centre between Elephantine and Edfu.[50]

Small portable objects provide further evidence. A cylinder seal bearing the name of Amenemhet II and the epithet "beloved of Sobek, Lord of Kom Ombo" in the Metropolitan Museum[51] can only be considered as a *terminus post quem*, as kings' names continue to be used after their deaths on seals and scarabs.[52] Two 13th Dynasty cylinder sealings, one in the British Museum, the other in the Art Institute in Chicago, mention the cult of Sobek, Lord of Kom Ombo.[53] A scarab in the Metropolitan Museum bearing the name Apophis,[54] a "royal acquaintance" and thus a member of the royal court,[55] was found on the tell and sold to Ward.[56] According to Ryholt it can be dated to the mid-13th Dynasty, around the time of the kings Sobekhotep III/Neferhotep I/Sobekhotep IV. It is identical in its cutting to some of the royal seals of these kings and was presumably produced in the same workshop.[57]

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37 Wenig 1968.

38 Personal communication M. Marée.

39 Personal communication M. Marée: Inv. no. 2869. Dating according to Marée: Senwosret I to Amenemhet II, inscribed for an *jmj-r ḫntj* ("interior-overseer") called *Mmj*, born of *Mwṯw.* Excavated by Galal Sharawy (6 Dec. 1966, exc. no. 977).

40 Inv. no. 31685 (Allen 1936, 19. 20 and pl. VI) cautiously dated by Allen to the 12th Dynasty. This dating was recently confirmed by Leitz 2002, 140 with remark 24 and 143 with remark 56. P. Seyr prefers a dating in the early 18th Dynasty (personal communication).

41 Gutbub 1974, 241. Unfortunately, the author does not give any further information.

42 Sadek 1980, 16–19.

43 Simpson 1965, 35, pl. 24. We are indebted to P. Seyr for this information.

44 Davies 2014, figs. 13-14, pl. 11.

45 Metropolitan Museum of Art Acc. no. 25.6 (Arnold 2009). We are indebted to P. Seyr for this information.

46 Kockelmann 2018, 454, 1633; Leitz 2002.

47 Kopetzky 2019–2020, 47, fig. 5.

48 Kopetzky 2019–2020, 47–48.

49 Personal communication M. Marée.

50 Gardiner 1947, pl. II. We are indebted to P. Seyr for this reference.

51 We are indebted to P. Seyr for this reference. See Brügger 2021, Hayes 1990, 201; Hutterer 2013, vol. 2, Catalogue [...]033. According to Yoyotte (1957, 94–95), this king is the earliest who uses the epithet "beloved of Sobek". See also Zecchi 2010, 29–30. The association of Amenemhet II with Sobek is well attested from other cult places, and it may be that this king played an important role in initiating or spreading the worship of Sobek, see Hutterer 2013, vol. 1, 216, 232–234.

52 For this phenomenon see Ben Tor 2004, 19.

53 Yoyotte 1957, 88.

54 MMA 05.3.346. Martin 1971, 15, no. 123, pl. 2(7).

55 For this information we are indebted to Kim Ryholt.

56 Ward 1900, 180; Ward 1902, 38, pl. 1:16. Ryholt points out that Ward merely says he "got" it there, and thus it might come from somewhere else. However, the authors' experience is that objects offered in relatively remote areas do not normally travel far.

57 For this information we are indebted to Kim Ryholt.



Fig. 5 Giuseppe Angelelli, Un'antica porta del re Thutmes-Moeris conservata tra le construzioni tolemaiche di Ombós (Rosellini 1844, pl. 28)

It is striking that the epigraphic material mentioned above comes either from cemeteries on the outskirts of the town or from museum collections. There is no archaeological evidence for Middle Kingdom or Second Intermediate Period activity from the tell of Kom Ombo as preserved today.[58] It is possible that occupation layers of this date remain buried within the tell, but, given the amount of disturbance, especially by *sebakhin*, it is more likely that the main settlement of this date was located outside the area of the tell as currently preserved.

New Kingdom

Unlike the earlier periods, there is a wealth of epigraphic evidence for activity for the New Kingdom indicating the presence of a temple at that time. Much is from the earlier part of the 18th Dynasty. The GWLP found a remarkable fragment of a stela dating to the 11th year of Amenhotep I, showing two high officials offering to the statues of two queens of the late 17th and early 18th Dynasty, Teti-Sheri, Amenhotep I's grandmother, and Ahmes-Nefertari, his mother.[59] There is no doubt that it was originally set up in a temple at Kom Ombo, as the first line of the offering formula invokes Horus Khenty-en-Irty, Lord of Ombos.[60] Thus, there was an active royal ancestor cult at Kom Ombo at the very beginning of the 18th Dynasty. Other early 18th Dynasty pieces include a fragment of a private stela showing two individuals, *Nbt³.wy* and *Hd.t*, who dedicated the stela, standing in front of the seated figure of a man named *Mnḫ*.[61] The GWLP also found fragments of early 18th Dynasty larger-than-life-sized royal statues.[62] A sandstone relief block dating to the early to middle 18th Dynasty depicts the standing figure of an anonymous king in front of Sobek.[63]

Architectural elements from the reign of Tuthmosis III were reused in Roman-period foundations[64] and included blocks from Osirid pillars, one of which bears the name of Tuthmosis III and, once again, the god Khenty-en-Irty, Lord of Khem, the capital of the Second Lower Egyptian Nome.[65] The central part of another Osirid pillar, also probably of Tuthmosis III, was usurped by Ramesses II.[66] It depicts an 18th Dynasty king embraced by Horus and Sobek. It is clear, therefore, that at the latest by the reign of Tuthmosis III, both gods were venerated at Kom Ombo and the cult seen in the later Ptolemaic setting was already established.

Remains of the 18th Dynasty are also known from earlier work on the site. The most intriguing is a doorway in the southern enclosure wall, the jambs of which are from the reign of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III and which has a Ptolemaic lintel. It was recorded in situ by Champollion,[67] Rosselini[68] and Lepsius.[69] Maspero later moved it to the Bulaq Museum,[70] leaving a large gap in the wall. How this doorway came to stand in the later enclosure wall, and its function – the question of to which monument it gave access – requires further analysis. Rosselini's drawing shows a flanking wall on the west side of the gateway, but the passage appears to be blocked off at the north end (Fig. 5).

Maspero also mentioned an architrave block of Amenhotep I and a block of Tuthmosis III,[71] both of which later disappeared.[72] Barsanti discovered fragments of a rose granite seated statue of one of the wives of Tuthmosis III.[73] Further blocks of Tuthmosis III were reused in the Mammisi.[74]

There is significantly less evidence from the later 18th Dynasty, for which only two kings are attested, Amenhotep II, whose name occurs on a stela fragment,[75] and Amenhotep III, who is listed in the hieroglyphic inscriptions recorded in the *Description de l'Égypte*.[76]

A head of a statue of an unknown king as a falcon, now in the Cairo Museum, was dated by Borchardt to the 18th Dynasty.[77]

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58 It is not certain that the single sherd interpreted by the GWLP as dating to the Middle Kingdom (Sadarangani et al. 2019, A3-7, pl. 12A) really dates to this period.

59 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-96 to 4-97.

60 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-243, fig. 433.

61 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-228–229, fig. 420. For the information on the dating we are indebted to P. Seyr.

62 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-208–216, figs. 385–398.

63 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-136–137, fig. 255.

64 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-109, fig. 225, A2-110, fig. 226, A2-24–26, figs. 63–64, A2-26–29, figs. 65–70, and possibly A2-23–24, figs. 61–62.

65 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-26–29, figs. 65–70.

66 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-65, 5-2, A2-13–20, figs. 46–53.

67 Champollion 1844, 231–232.

68 Rosellini 1844, pl. XXVIII.

69 Lepsius 1849, iII, 28, 1a and 1b.

70 Morgan 1895, 1. The Bulaq Museum was the earliest archaeological museum in Cairo. It was later moved to Giza and was then replaced by the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square.

71 Maspero 1883, 78.

72 Morgan et al. 1909, figs. 978–979.

73 Barsanti 1915, 168–176 and fig. V.

74 Porter and Moss 1991, 199.

75 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 118.

76 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 43 cartouches nos. 12 and 13, also noted by Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-5.

77 Borchardt 1930, 72.

Neither are many objects known from the Ramesside period (19th–20th Dynasties). A monumental stela of Seti I from the beginning of the 19th Dynasty was found by the GWLP.[78] It is damaged but shows an offering scene of the king before Horus and Sobek, followed by a historic text mentioning regnal year 13 of Horemheb and another king whose identity is uncertain.[79] The stela was accessible in the Graeco-Roman period as a Demotic *proskynema* on it addresses Sobek.[80] An Osirid pillar of the 18th Dynasty, mentioned above, was usurped by Ramesses II.[81] Blocks of Ramesses III were reused in the Mammisi,[82] and others were listed by Maspero[83] and mentioned later by de Morgan,[84] by whose time they had disappeared. A decorated block with relief and inscriptions, originally part of a free-standing polygonal column, shows a king offering to Sobek and the remains of two cartouches, one with the name of Ramesses II or Ramesses IV.[85] According to the excavators, the block was recarved by the latter ruler.[86] It is clear, then, that cult activity continued at this time, as also suggested by the mention of taxes from the House of Haroeris, Lord of Kom Ombo, (*pr Ḥr-wr nb nby.t*) in P. BM EA 10401, I,17.[87] A stela now in Accra, Ghana mentions a short hymn to Haroeris of Kom Ombo.[88]

The early Middle Kingdom tomb of *Sbk-ḥtp* and *Nfr-wr.t* mentioned above was reused in the Ramesside period.[89]

Of particular interest is a stela of the late New Kingdom found in Elephantine that mentions the "*dmy.t Nby.t*", which might show that there was a harbour or landing place at Kom Ombo.[90]

Archaeological evidence for occupation outside the temple in the New Kingdom is sparse. The GWLP also recovered a small number of early 18th Dynasty sherds.[91] Occasional sherds, mainly of Ramesside date, have been recovered in the area of extensive *sebakh* digging at the north end of the east side of the tell, and in the debris overlying the current excavations. In general, however, New Kingdom ceramics are too rare to suggest any major occupation here. As with the Middle Kingdom, it is possible that occupation layers of this date are buried within the tell and that few sherds have become exposed on the surface, but, given the amount of disturbance, especially by *sebakhin*, it is more likely that the main settlement of this date, and perhaps also of the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period, was located outside the area of the tell as currently preserved.

In addition to these local sources, other documents also mention Kom Ombo as a regional centre throughout the New Kingdom. For example, O. Eg.Exp. 23001.97 from Deir el-Bahari, dating to the 18th Dynasty, cites the place as the origin of crews of workmen[92] and the Ramesside papyrus Valencay I, rt. 10–11 mentions fields on the island of Kom Ombo (*jw n nby.t*).[93]

Third Intermediate Period and Late Period

Almost nothing is known of the Third Intermediate Period at Kom Ombo, and there is no evidence for activity in the temple nor on the tell. The little information known comes from the cemetery excavated by Zucker,[94] in which the earlier tomb of *Sbk-ḥtp* and *Nfr-wr.t* was reused in the Third Intermediate Period. According to Jansen-Winkeln, the secondary burial dates to the middle of the 21st Dynasty: "… daß die Sekundärbestattung im Jahr 49 des Hohenpriesters Mencheperre (nach der alternativen Datierung Psusennes' I.) stattfand …".[95] The burial is of the official *Wn-tꜣ-wꜣt* and his wife *ʿn-m-ms*.[96] In the cemetery of el-Shutb (Fig. 126), New Kingdom tombs were reused in the Late Period, suggesting ongoing occupation in the Kom Ombo area.[97] A fragment of a statue of a reclining sphinx that, according to Legrain, was

78 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-5, A2-233–238, figs. 425–430.
79 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-235.
80 Translation and dating (based on photographs) by P. Seyr, personal communication.
81 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-65, 5-2, A2-13–20, figs. 46–53.
82 Porter and Moss 1991, 199.
83 Maspero 1883, 78.
84 Morgan et al. 1909, fig. 980.
85 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-34–35, fig. 80.
86 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A2-35.
87 Janssen 1991, 80, pl. IV. For this information we are indebted to P. Seyr.
88 Kitchen 1989, 34. For this information we are indebted to P. Seyr.
89 We are indebted to J. Helmbold-Doyé for this information.
90 Stele JE 29536, Delange 2012, vol. 2, 214 fig. 608. For this reference we are indebted to P. Seyr.
91 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A3-8–9, A3-13, A3-38, A3-241, figs. 701–702.
92 Vs. 7, 9 and 1 (Römer 2017, 120, 134). For this information we are indebted to P. Seyr.
93 Gardiner 1951, pl. 17. For this information we are indebted to P. Seyr.
94 For this cemetery see also chapter 2 and Helmbold-Doyé in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 84–85.
95 Jansen-Winkeln 2004, 76.
96 Jansen-Winkeln 2004, 75.
97 Sharawi 1979, 169–176 and pls. I–VII; Leclant 1982, 87, 57; Sadarangani et al. 2105, section 6.4.

found in Kom Ombo, is now in the Cairo Museum.[98] The importance of the town throughout this period is highlighted by the fact that the Onomasticon of Amenemope mentions it in all preserved copies.[99]

As with the New Kingdom ceramics, the survey of the tell identified very few fragments of Late Period date, and the quantity is so small as to make little sense as evidence of settlement within the surviving tell area. It is worth noting, however, that the few Late Period sherds came from debris within a single *sebakhin* cut southeast of the exposure of Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period remains at the northern edge of the eastern side of the tell.[100] Very little pottery of this period was found in the work of the GWLP.[101]

Ptolemaic/Roman Period

Kom Ombo re-emerged as an important urban centre in the Ptolemaic period. The site became a key administrative centre for the First Upper Egyptian Nome with important trade connections to the Red Sea ports.[102] It replaced Elephantine as nome capital,[103] at the latest by 135 BC. In the Roman Imperial period and by the end of the 2nd century at the latest, the Philae and Elephantine nome and the Ombite nome were united with Kom Ombo as the metropolis.[104] Ptolemy lists Ombi as a metropolis of the nome of Thebes.[105]

The new significance of the town is reflected in the resumption of temple building in the reign of Philipp Arrhidaios. This building activity, already noted by Gutbub,[106] is attested by a block found during recent excavations and by Demotic quarry marks on blocks from the foundations of a building below the Mammisi, which date to the very early Ptolemaic period.[107] Building continued in the Ptolemaic period, as shown by monumental stelae with copies of synodal decrees erected under Ptolemy IV Philopator and Arsinoe III[108] and Ptolemy V Epiphanes[109] that were found in the fill of the foundation trench of the northeast temenos wall of the temple.

The existing temple was begun under Ptolemy VI Philometor, and a monumental stela of this king was discovered with the others cited above.[110] He created a double temple, the northwestern part of which was dedicated to the triad of Haroeris (Horus the Elder), with Tasenetnofret (Beautiful Sister) and Panebtawy (Lord of the Two Lands), and the southeastern part to the triad of Sobek, Hathor and Khonsu. Most of the decoration was completed by the reign of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos, by which time Kom Ombo was the most important Sobek sanctuary in Upper Egypt.[111] Haroeris, on the other hand, has only a single mention on a Greek inscription dating to the Ptolemaic period.[112]

The temple was modified up to the reign of the emperor Macrinus in the early 3rd century AD.[113] The forecourt, a gate, the Nilometer and a chapel were added, the latter built in the reign of Caracalla.[114] A stela of Hadrian was found during the repair of part of the eastern mudbrick enclosure wall, which collapsed in 1902.[115] A statue of Trajan was found at the same time.[116] Relief fragments inscribed with the cartouche of Caracalla[117] and the life-size head of a statue of Marcus Aurelius[118] were discovered by the GWLP.

The cults of both gods represented in the temple were associated with burials of mummified sacred animals. Necropoleis for sacred crocodiles were located in the south-eastern part of modern Kom Ombo, in

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98 Borchardt 1930, 41.

99 P. Moscow I.1.b 128, IV,13; T. BM EA, vs. 3; Ramesseum fragment F, x+ (Gardiner 1947, pls. X, XX, XXII). We are indebted to P. Seyr for pointing this out to us.

100 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al 2019, 66–67.

101 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A3-9, A3-36, A3-38–44, A3-49, A3-130, A3-132–133, A3-252, A3-269.

102 Morkot 2001, 248.

103 Originally the capital of the First Upper Egyptian Nome was Elephantine, It is not clear when this shift in importance from Elephantine to Kom Ombo took place, Müller 2010a, 429–430; Müller 2010b, 232–234; Müller 2014, 67. Hölbl 1994, 233, puts this event into the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor.

104 Locher 1999, 137.

105 <https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Periods/Roman/_Texts/Ptolemy/4/5*.html> (last access 2 May 2021). Ombi was located on Ziegler's map of 1532 from Ptolemy's data (Ziegler 1532).

106 Gutbub 1980, 682, n. 24.

107 Personal communication F. Hoffmann, however dated in Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-132 to the reign of Ptolemy VIII.

108 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-7, A2-230–233, figs. 421–424.

109 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-7, A2-239, fig. 431.

110 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-7. The GWLP was not allowed to document the stela. The object was taken to Cairo without documentation on behalf of the MoTA.

111 Kockelmann 2018, 83.

112 Kockelmann 2018, 83 footnote 189.

113 Gutbub 1980, 676–679.

114 Gutbub 1980, 676.

115 Carter 1903, 174; JE 36324.

116 Kamal 1905, 205–206; CG 22213.

117 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-106, A2-134–136, fig. 252.

118 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-106, A2-221–223, figs. 406–411. The identification of the head was made by Wolfgang Müller.

el-Shutb and underneath the modern MoTA inspectorate (Fig. 126);[119] at an earlier date, crocodile mummies were recovered from presumed cemeteries in the sandy plain to the east of the tell.[120] Remains of falcon mummies were found in el-Shutb,[121] and mummies of other species of birds of prey were recorded as coming from Kom Ombo, as well as mummies of ibis, rollers, gazelle and snakes.[122] The breeding of ibis and other species as offerings for pilgrims are known from Demotic ostraca from Kom Ombo.[123] The animal cemeteries were not merely burial grounds but also served as sites for funerary cults.[124]

Excavations in and around the tell have provided much evidence for Ptolemaic and later activity. The GWLP excavated a small Ptolemaic cemetery east of the tell on the line of the boundary pipeline, containing disarticulated burnt skeletons with few grave goods.[125] Other Ptolemaic burials took place in the cemeteries on the eastern edge of Kom Ombo.[126]

On the southeastern part of the tell are the remains of a settlement, the architecture of which is today clearly visible (Fig. 3). It was partly excavated by an Egyptian mission which recovered a large number of ostraca from the late Ptolemaic and early Roman periods,[127] although the building remains themselves appear to be of later date. There are in fact a huge number of ostraca[128] from the site, most of which probably come from *sebakh* digging, which give evidence for otherwise unknown aspects

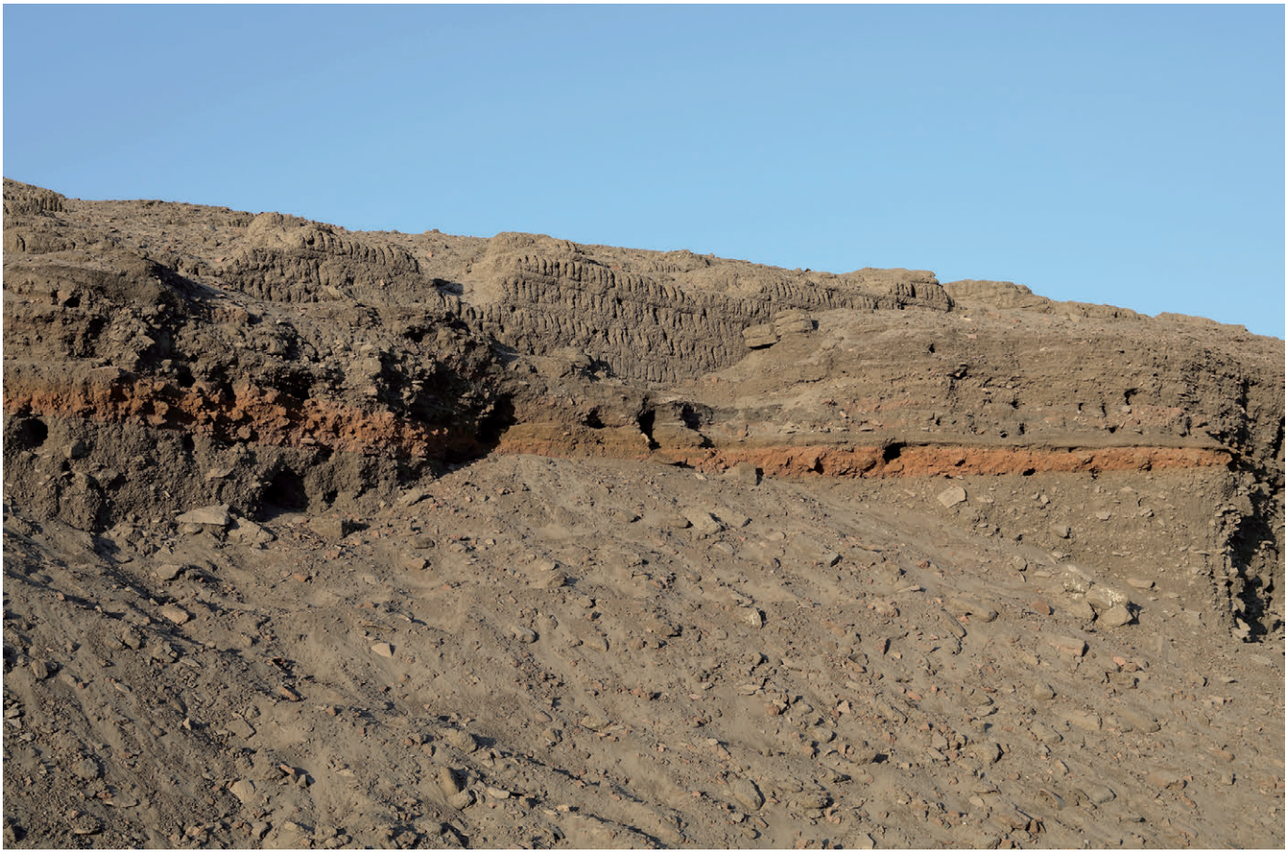


Fig. 6 Section with a deposit of small stone chippings, eastern side of the tell (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by N. Gail)

119 Some of the crocodile mummies are displayed in the Crocodile Museum at Kom Ombo.

120 Gaillard and Daressy 1905, 66.

121 Information panel in the Crocodile Museum at Kom Ombo.

122 Gaillard and Daressy 1905, passim.

123 Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1914; Smelik 1979, 240–241.

124 Kockelmann 2018, 621.

125 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A4-1–4.

126 For the SCA excavation see Leclant 1982, 87, 56; and Wolfgang Mayer, personal communication, who informed the author that the DAI was asked by the Egyptian authorities to support them with taking photos. For the German Expedition headed by Zucker, see Helmboldt-Doyé in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 84–85.

127 Wareth and Wagner 1993; Wagner 1995.

128 Preisigke and Spiegelberg 1914; Colin 2014, 109–126; Palme in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 86–88; Hoffmann in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 88–90; Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-7, A2-81–97.

of the town such as the presence of a gymnasium.[129]

On the eastern side of the tell, there is evidence for the landscaping of the terrain in the late Ptolemaic or early Roman periods. The exposed section here shows a deep deposit of small stone chippings up to 1.35 m in thickness (Fig. 6). It appears to have been put here deliberately to extend the available building area eastwards.[130] The dating is derived from the few sherds seen within the deposit.

The recent survey showed that pottery of Ptolemaic date was widespread on the tell, although the GWLP found little in the areas in which they worked.[131] Concentrations of imperial Roman-period pottery were noted in the recent survey, particularly at the southern end of the tell, east of Kemp's wall M[132] and at a high level above the modern ground surface;[133] this appears to mark the remains of an early imperial Roman part of the city directly on the slope of the tell.[134] Notable pottery from this area includes large quantities of imported bifid amphorae from a range of sources, given the variety of fabrics used, and fragments of eastern sigillata A vessels.[135] The pottery spills in large quantities down the tell side here and can be seen embedded in what appear to be rubbish levels high on the tell side.

Late Antiquity/early medieval period

The importance of Kom Ombo continued into Late Antiquity. It had an episcopal see from the early 5th century and in the later 6th century it was probably the capital of a nome separate from the First Upper Egyptian Nome to the south.[136] No remains of a church have been seen on the surviving tell, but columns interpreted as perhaps coming from a church were found in the temple courtyard and further fragments of column capitals have been found in recent years.[137] Kom Ombo occurs on the Tabula Peutingeriana, a medieval copy of road maps covering the ancient world, compiled in the Roman period from a range of sources, the latest of which appears to be 5th century, but which also includes information from the first century (Fig. 7).[138]

The Kom Ombo area was vulnerable to attacks by marauders originally from the Eastern Desert, including the Blemmyes,[139] In 232 AH (857 AD), Ibn Hawkal recorded that the Buja, Eastern Desert dwellers, invaded Ombo, a town of Upper Egypt one day's journey from Aswan.[140] Thus the town still existed in the 9th century.

There are very large quantities of pottery of late Roman/late antique date across the site, much of which is from the Aswan area. This was also noted by the GWLP.[141] It is also likely that some of the standing remains date to this period. The ceramic evidence rapidly diminishes thereafter. Early medieval pottery is rare, but types seen include fragments of bag-shaped jars, Tell Nebi Samweel amphorae and Ballas jars.[142] The GWLP also identified pottery up to the 9th century in date, without further information.[143]

The post-medieval period

There is no certain archaeological evidence for activity on the tell in the later medieval period, and it seems that the settlement was abandoned, at least in the area of the temple and tell as it survives today. The remains were, however, visited. Whilst most of those who have left records were Western travellers in the 18th and 19th centuries (chapters 2 and 3) who did not speculate on the recent past of the site, one earlier traveller did provide information that is worth considering here in the context of otherwise unattested activity at Kom Ombo.

The traveller in question is Evliya Çelebi, who travelled throughout Egypt and beyond into Africa in the later 17th century, visiting Kom Ombo in the course of his journey. His description will be discussed further in chapter 2, but his comments on the site at the time of his visit are worth considering here. It should be noted, however, that the remarks on Kom Ombo are clearly entangled with comments relating to Aswan.

> "… we came to Qal'at Qulumbu …
> … At present it is under the authority of the *sanjak* of Ibrim and in the *nahiye* of the *kadi* district of Aswan.[144] The warden and garrison have

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129 Gutbub 1980, 676, 682, n. 18.
130 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 67.
131 Saradangani et al. 2019, A3-13.
132 Kemp 1985, 46.
133 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 67.
134 As noted by Wolfgang Müller.
135 To be published as part of a future volume.
136 Dijkstra and Worp 2006, 183–184.
137 Barsanti 1915, 174. The joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission found similar fragments in 2017; see also Sadarangani et al. 2015, 87.
138 Mathisen 2017, 78–79.
139 Dijkstra and Worp 2006, 187.
140 Vantini 1975, 156.
141 Sadarangani et al. 2019, A3-13.
142 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 66.
143 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 5-8, A3-13.
144 The Anonymous Venetian, travelling in 1589, noted that Kom Ombo – not identified by name – marked the northern border of the province of Ibrim ("la provincia di ebrin"), Burri and Sauneron 1971, 111.



Fig. 7 Tabula Peutingeriana (© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Sammlung von Handschriften und alten Drucken, Cod. 324, Segment 8)

> been removed, and inside the castle are 300 rush mat houses belonging to the tribe of the Beni Ja'far. They pass as Muslims but their sect is Ja'fari. They dwell outside the castle and in the desert, a tribe comprised of 3,000 people, very wealthy in goods and provisions."

There follows a discussion of the First Cataract. The text continues:

> "The road to the *vilayet* of Habesh [on the Eritrean Red Sea coast] splits off at this point from Qal'at Qulumbu… Some of the Habesh viziers come here to Qulumbu, whether overland or via the Nile from Egypt, muster some troops, and take hundreds of camel-loads of food and river water before heading back through the desert to the *vilayet* of Habesh. There is no other road; it is all rocks and mountains. The road to Ibrim is south of here along the Nile, while the road to Habesh is south-east … I again took a party from Qulumbu castle and headed up the Nile towards Ibrim [which, however, implies an active garrison, so raises issues of the location of the castle from which he travelled] …"[145]

A second source for Çelebi's African travels, a map in the Vatican library, is closely related to the text but gives a less complex version of the situation at Kom Ombo:

> "This place is a ruined fortress known as QLR-RBV (*Qulumbu), a *nahiye* of Aswan. Inside it there is no *agha* or garrison, but around it are approximately 300 houses of reed matting, dwellings of a tribe known as Beni Ja'far. They pass as Muslims but belong to the Ja'fari sect and are rebels, obedient to no one. They subsist on dates and produce dates. Dates are very plentiful in this place."[146]

In short, the text suggests that there had been a garrison at Kom Ombo, by implication in the Ottoman period. The map in the Vatican library only notes that there was no garrison at the time of writing.

The idea that a garrison could have been present at Kom Ombo might result from the distinctive fortified architecture of the temple enclosure, discussed below.[147] Further, given the confusion between Kom Ombo and Aswan in the Çelebi text, it is possible that the garrison was in fact at Aswan, although the immediate text in which the remark is embedded seems to refer only to Kom Ombo. The reference to the route to Habesh is of interest, and the close contact of Kom Ombo with the Eastern Desert has already been mentioned. However, the question of where the supplies referred to would have come from, given the fact that Kom Ombo was a sparsely inhabited area, remains an issue, and again raises the possibility that it is in fact Aswan that is meant here.

At the time of Çelebi's visit, both his text and the map in the Vatican library agree on the presence of a tribe settled around the temple in flimsy structures, but there was no 'urban' population. In 1737, the traveller Richard Pococke considered himself so threatened by a local population that he only looked at Kom Ombo from the river.[148] Norden, who also visited the site in 1737, referred to "miserable shacks" in the vicinity of the temple.[149] Some sixty years later, when the French savants visited the site, it was effectively deserted and the *Description de l'Égypte* map shows only ruins.[150] Denon mentioned poor huts around the monuments which detracted from the impressiveness of the site,[151] and his image of 1802 (Fig. 8) shows what seems to be a cluster of buildings, or possibly high-standing ruins, to the northeast, perhaps based around the northeastern bastion of the fortified enclosure. Later images show ruins in this position, which may be the remains of Denon's buildings or something older, but clearly were better preserved than the majority of the remains.[152] The absence of local population in the early nineteenth century is confirmed by William Hamilton, who visited Kom Ombo in 1801 and commented that there was no population within two miles of the temple.[153]

The final use of Kom Ombo independent of tourist activity was the construction of a short-lived Anglo-Egyptian fort on the tell of Kom Ombo in 1886, as part of the response to the Mahdiyya in the Sudan. This fort is currently under excavation and will be published separately.[154]

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145 Dankoff et al. 2018, 233.

146 Dankoff et al. 2018, 63.

147 It has not been possible to trace any reference to a Kom Ombo garrison in a brief examination of published literature on Ottoman Egypt: for example, there is no reference to payments made to a garrison here (Shaw 1962).

148 Pococke 1743, 115. See also chapter 2, 28.

149 Norden 1755, 187. See also chapter 2, 28.

150 Description de l'Égypte 1809a, 2–4; Description de l'Égypte 1818, Flle 2 (Koum Ommbous).

151 Denon 1802, 182 and pl. XLI. See also chapter 2, 30.

152 See the images of Horeau, Sattler and Libay, Czerny chapter 3.

153 Hamilton 1809, 74–80. See also chapter 2.

154 Rose forthcoming.

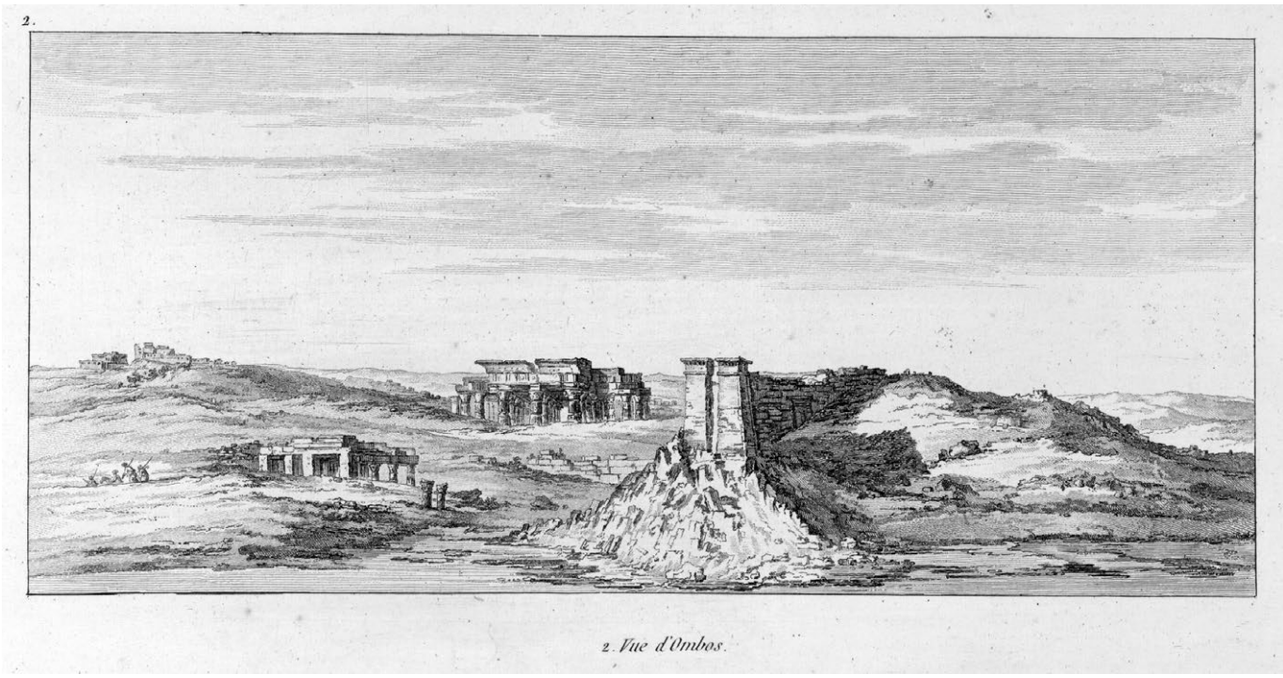


Fig. 8 Dominique Vivant Denon, Vue d'Ombos (Denon 1802, pl. 41.2)

Excursus: Çelebi, the temple enclosure wall and the *Description de l'Égypte* plan

It is possible that the temple enclosure wall seen by Çelebi gave rise to the assumption that there was once a garrison there. Its unusual form is best seen in the plan in the *Description de l'Égypte* (Fig. 9).[155] It showed the enclosure with bastions at the northern and eastern corners, and in the centre of the northeastern side. The northwestern wall of the enclosure changed angle midway along its length. The southwestern wall of the enclosure was perhaps hypothetical as the Mammisi lay in the wall line and the wall, if projected, would have impacted on the gateway; the actual wall must have been further southwest.

There are reasons to question the accuracy of the *Description de l'Égypte* drawing, at least with respect to the angled northwestern wall. The first proper plan of the enclosure is that made by the Royal Engineers in 1886 in connection with the construction of the fort on the top of the tell (Fig. 10). Whilst by this time much of the northern end of the site had disappeared due to river erosion, the plan shows the east end of a wall at right angles to the northeastern enclosure wall, thus part of a more conventional rectilinear enclosure. The same rectilinear enclosure can be seen in de Morgan's plan of 1894 (Fig. 11).[156] Since it seems absurd to suggest that between the *Description de l'Égypte* plan and the end of the 19th century the angled northwestern wall was removed and a straight wall built in its place, one must suppose, given the proper surveying methods used by the Royal Engineers and de Morgan, that the temple enclosure's northwestern wall was not at the angle as drawn in the *Description de l'Égypte*, but was more or less straight.[157]

Even if the angled northwestern wall is removed from consideration, the interpretation remains problematic. The character of the structure as a fortification is clear, but not of a form easily paralleled from other Egyptian sites. If not an early Ottoman fortification, perhaps it should be associated with late antique or early medieval activity. Since the town was vulnerable

[155] Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl.39. The text of the Description de l'Égypte also notes the unusual bastioned structure, and the fact that the wall was later than the temple, Description de l'Égypte 1809a, 3.

[156] Morgan 1895, frontispiece.

[157] It is not possible to interpret the mudbrick wall north of the temple and apparently abutting the Mammisi seen in the Belzoni image (fig. 43), and which is also present in a reconstruction drawing by Nestor L'Hôte (fig. 78); this is absent from other views. See also Sadarangani et al 2015, 78 for further comments on the enclosure wall.



Fig. 9 Tell and temple of Kom Ombo (Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 39)

to attack from the Eastern Desert, the temple enclosure could have been turned into a secure refuge for those living nearby. It is tempting to associate the brick blocking of the pylon gateway at the southwest corner noted in the *Description de l'Égypte* (which had been partly reopened)[158] with the fortifications around the temple, but no more can be said about it.

The *Description de l'Égypte* plan seems to have formed the accepted basis for plans of the enclosure, used for example by Dieulafoy in his *Acropolis de Suze*,[159] and by Maspero.[160] The plan by Dieulafoy, an archaeologist who visited Egypt between c. 1870 and 1880, showed minor differences from the *Description de l'Égypte* plan: one of the towers was a different shape, and Dieulafoy showed a break in the east wall which is not seen in *the Description de l'Égypte* plan (Fig. 12). Maspero used the same base plan to sketch in some of the structures visible within the enclosure, although these cannot be validated from other sources (Fig. 13). On it, the northern limits of the structures shown within the enclosure do not follow the line of the angled enclosure wall but are parallel to the temple axis, and would, if extended eastwards, have run outside the angled enclosure wall; perhaps these structures in fact aligned with the straight enclosure wall and the apparent distortion occurred because the structures were imposed onto an inaccurate plan.

158 Description de l'Égypte 1809a, 3.
159 Reproduced in Taramelli 1902, 153.
160 Maspero 1887, 28.

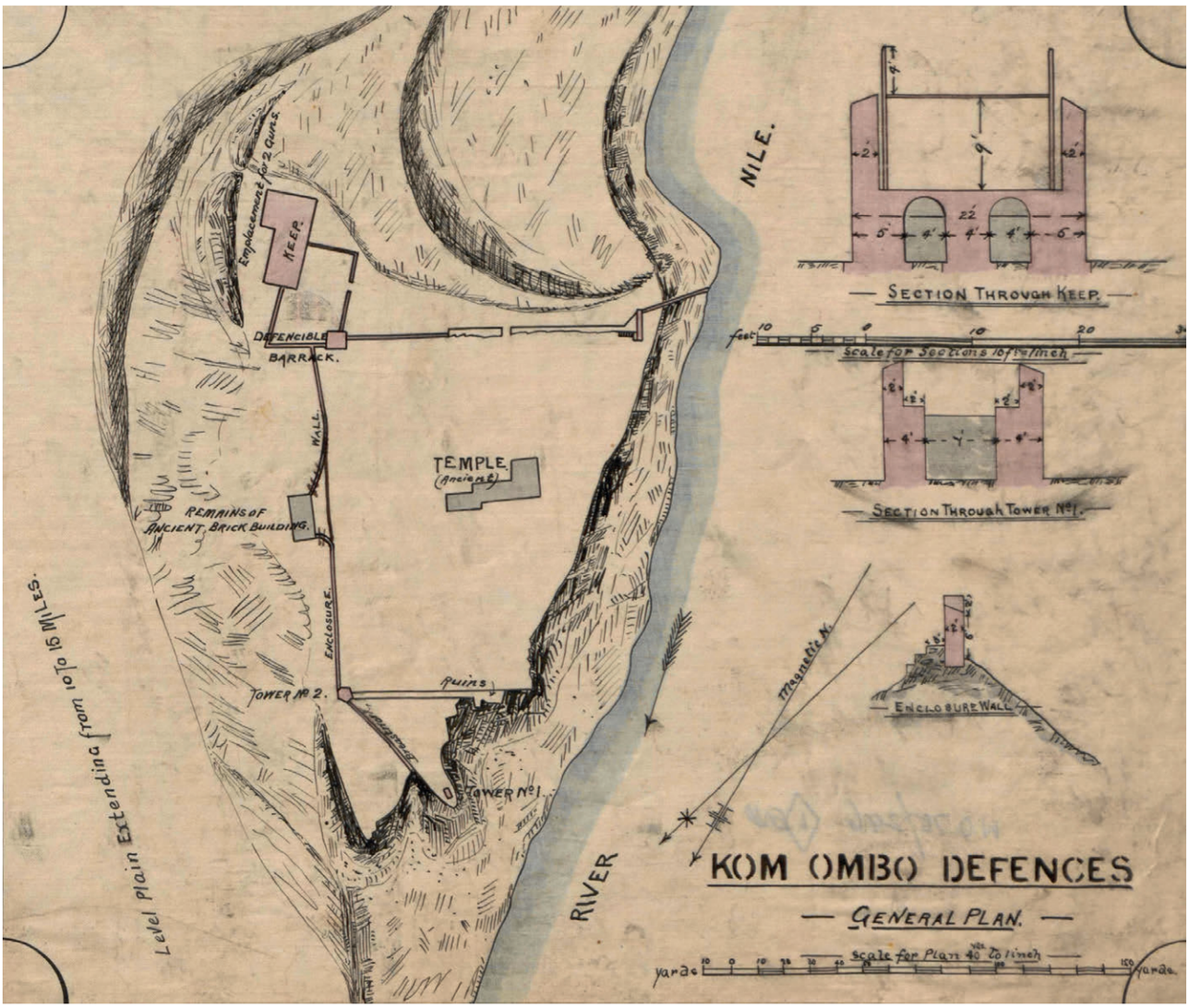


Fig. 10 Plan of Kom Ombo in 1886 (courtesy of National Archive of the UK, WO78/246)

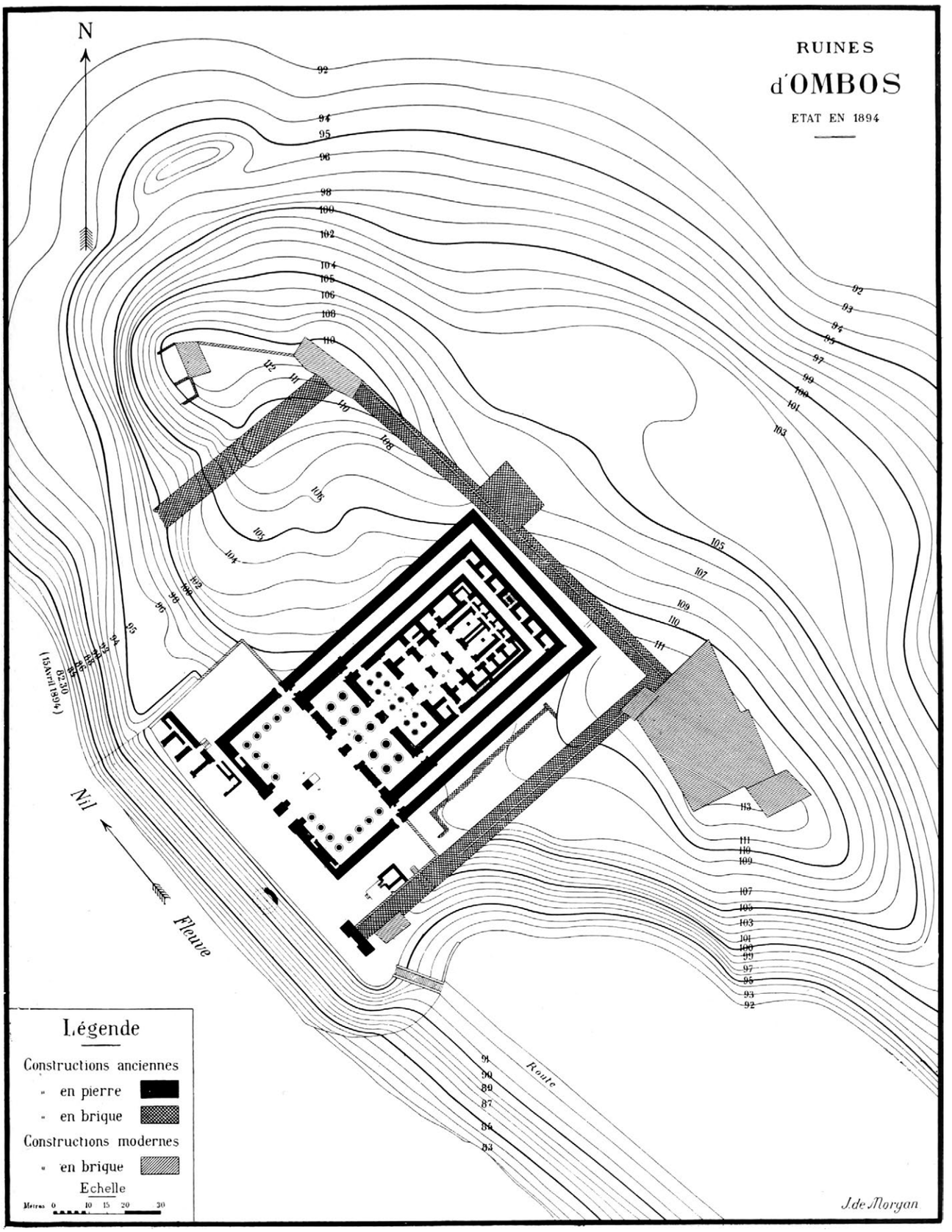


Fig. 11 Tell and temple of Kom Ombo (Morgan 1894, frontispiece)

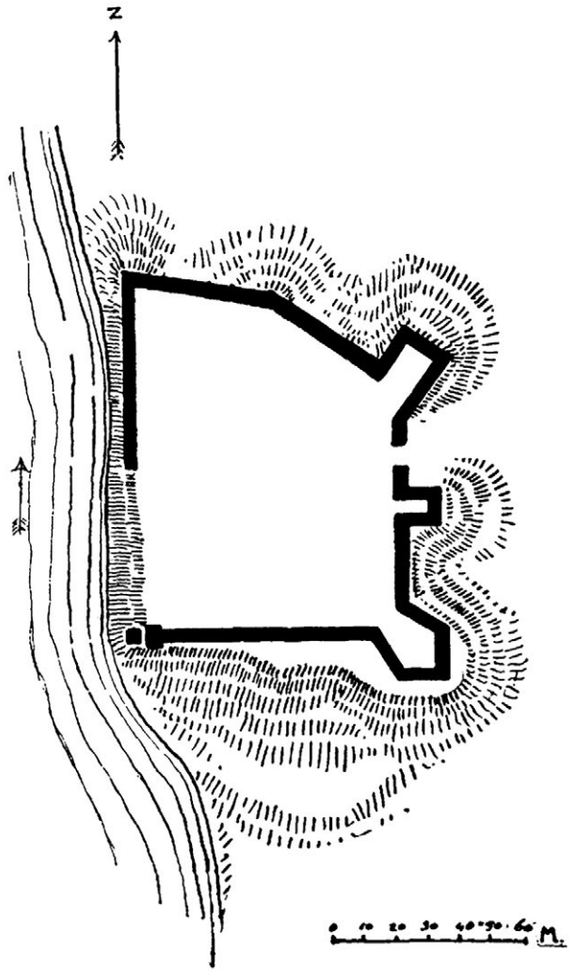


Fig. 12 Temple enclosure of Kom Ombo (Taramelli 1902, fig. 78)

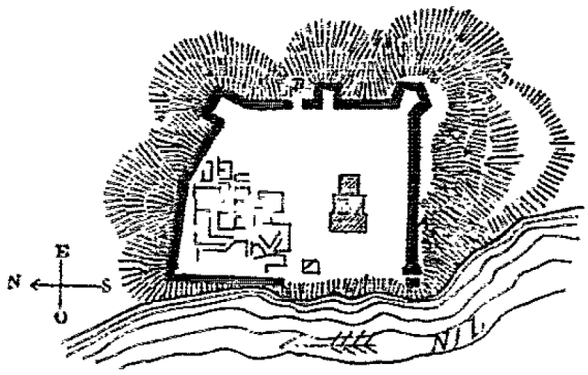


FIG. 30.

Fig. 13 Plan of Kom Ombo (Maspero 1878, fig. 30)

Chapter 2 Research History

Irene Forstner-Müller & Pamela Rose

Early visitors to Kom Ombo

Kom Ombo is one of the main tourist destinations in Egypt and has long attracted the attention of travellers.[161] Prominent visitors such as Amelia Edwards,[162] Gustave Flaubert[163] and Crown Prince Rudolph of Hapsburg[164] visited the site after 19th-century 'Egyptomania' created an interest in Egypt and its culture. Numerous paintings, sketches and travelogues resulted from these journeys.[165]

With the invention and spread of photography, pictures of Kom Ombo also became popular, either taken personally or purchased from professional studios. This brought about a quantitative increase in the number of images of the site, of greater authenticity than those presented in pictures and drawings, many of which were only completed months after the visit in the safety of the artist's studio. Both photographs and paintings tend to show closely similar views, usually face on to the temple, or, more distantly, from the river to the north.[166]

The earliest traveller leaving an account is the so-called Anonymous Venetian, who visited Egypt in 1589. His account did not identify Kom Ombo by name, but the site is easily identifiable. He provided a basic overview of what was then visible.[167]

> "…en face de celle-ci [the island of el-Mansureya] on voit un autre temple, lequel est en un lieu élevé, où apparaissent quelques grosses colonnes de vingt-huit palmes de circonférence; elles sont placées en trois rangs à raison de cinq (colonnes) par rangée … c'était là le portique. En face de ces colonnes, on voit un mur tout gravé de figures et de signes; il y a deux portes qui donnaient accès dans le temple. Du côté arrière du dit temple, il y en a un autre plus bas, et puis un autre, tous trois réunis ensemble, l'un derrière l'autre et l'un plus bas que l'autre. Dans celui du milieu j'ai vu quelques lettres grecques … Sur les flancs du dit temple, il y en a deux autres, soit un par côté, à la manière d'un théâtre, mais ils n'existent plus."

One of the two temples flanking the main temple was presumably the Mammisi; what the other was, is unclear.

The later 17th-century traveller, Evliya Çelebi, has already been mentioned in chapter 1.[168] He visited Kom Ombo ('Qal'at Qulumbu', thus the modern site name was already in use at that time) in the course of his journey up the Nile, and provided what purports to be a description and a quasi-mythological history of the site, the latter mainly omitted below.

> "[Qal'at Qulumbu] was conquered by 'Amr b. al-'As [conquered Egypt 640–642][169] in the year (-) of the Hijra, following the conquest of Egypt. He participated in this ghaza in person, because it is a great country and ancient urban area and key to all the fortresses along the shores of the Nile… Above this fortress [apparently referring to Kom Ombo] is a large walled exurban settlement… that even now reportedly stretches for three hours' distance along the Nile. The stones – each as large as an elephant – are dressed and polished and held together by iron brackets. They form a wall along the Nile that the Bedouins call Hayt al-'Ajuz (Wall of the Old Woman) [The Wall of the Old Woman is a well-known feature running around the first cataract, so some

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161 This chapter will not give an overview of all travel literature on Kom Ombo but selects authors who write on topics relevant to this volume. For wider travel literature with a special focus on Kom Ombo see Manley and Abdel-Hakim 2008, 158 and 164. See also Manley 2012, chapter 6, especially 149–152.

162 Edwards 1890, 393–395.

163 Flaubert 1910, 205–206.

164 Österreich 1884, 111–112. Another member of the family, Archduke Josef Ferdinand of Austria, visited Kom Ombo in February 1903, see Podhorný and Owerka 2018.

165 For a study of the many paintings, drawings and photographs of Kom Ombo see chapter 3.

166 See chapter 3, 47.

167 Burri and Sauneron 1971, 111; the text quoted here is the French translation of the original Italian.

168 Dankoff et al 2018, 63, 230–233.

169 Annotations within square brackets are added by the writers.

or all of this passage in fact refers to the Aswan region].

In the caves of the cliffs on the eastern side of this castle thousands of mummified crocodiles lie heaped up. The wrappings consist of the bark of the doum palm… The lofty mountain where these mummified crocodiles are heaped up is called Gebel Timsah (Mountain of Crocodiles). The Nile strikes it on the western side."[170]

The earliest 'modern' written travellers' records describing the monuments of Kom Ombo date back to the 18th century. Frederic Louis Norden, a Danish sea captain and explorer, was one of the earliest Western visitors.[171] He undertook a journey to Egypt and the Sudan in 1737–1738 at the request of the Danish king, Christian VI, and arrived at Kom Ombo on Wednesday 18th December 1737.

"MECREDl (sic), 18. Décembre.

L'Isle où nous mouillâmes, la nuit précédente, n'est pas éloignée du Village de BAMBAN

Situé au bord Occidental du Nil, vis-à-vis de celui de KOMOMBU "[172]

He gave a clear description of the ruins and the surroundings:

"Le principal Monument antique, qui soit ici, est situé derriére une montagne de sable, & caché, d'un autre côté, par quelques miserables cabanes; mais tout cela n'empêche pas un Voyageur curieux de pouvoir contempler avec beaucoup de satisfaction ces belles ruines.

Le bâtiment repose sur vingt-trois colonnes, bien travaillées & ornées de Hiéroglyphes. Les pierres qui servent à couvrir le toit sont d'une grandeur prodigieuse; & on voit clairement, que l'Architrave, qui présentement est fendu en deux, a été anciennement d'une seule pierre. …

C'est dommage, que cet Edifice ne puisse pas subsister long-tems [sic]. On le peut juger par l'état òu il se trouve. A peine le voit-on de deux côtés. Le dessus est déjà couvert de terre; & les colonnes, ainsi que le reste de l'Edifice, sont ensévelies jusqu'aux trois quarts.

Environ à cinquante pas de-là, on apperçoit sur la pente de la Montagne, un autre Monument antique, dont j'ai aussi donné le dessein, dans la même Planche. Il est de plus de dix-huit pieds de hauteur, avec une Niche réguliérement quarrée, dans le milieu, mais plus large en haut, qu'en bas. Ses côtés sont semés de Hiéroglyphes, qui sont fort gâtés vers la terre; & le derriére est presque tout caché sous le sable.

Tout cet Edifice est bâti de grands blocs quarrés, d'une pierre blanchâtre, qui approche fort du marbre. Du reste je ne sçaurois (sic) fixer l'usage de ce Monument: à moins que ce n'ait été autrefois un Autel, dont peut-être la table aura été enlevée, ou sera tombée parmi les ruïnes: peut-être aussi que dans la niche, dont j'ai parlé, il y avoit un Idole."[173]

The "autre Monument" is probably the southwestern tower of the pylon, which exists today, and shows that the other tower had already fallen by 1737.[174]

Norden's observations and engravings of his sketches were published posthumously.[175] A recent publication of his original sketches has shown that there are differences between the published drawings and the sketches made on site.[176] Norden also included a map of the area of Kom Ombo (Figs. 14–16).[177]

Later in 1737, Richard Pococke, an English clergyman, sailed by Kom Ombo, but did not visit the site due to threats from the local population.[178] He could only describe the ruins from a distance.

"We came to a large island, and opposite to it on the east side to Com-Ombo, or the hill of Ombo, which is the antient Ombos; there are great ruins about the hill, especially of an ancient temple; I took a view of it, which may be seen in the forty-eighth plate at A.[179] The capitals of the pillars are in the best Egyptian taste, adorned with leaves; and there seems to have been at each end of the small area, before the temple, such a grand gate as has been described at Thebes, of which the building to the south seemed to be the remains."[180]

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170 Dankoff et al. 2018, 232.

171 Norden 1755, 187–188, pl. CXXVII. See also chapters 3, 47–50; fig. 32 and 4, 98–99.

172 Norden 1755, 187.

173 Norden 1755, 187–188.

174 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-2.

175 Norden 1755. Norden's archaeological and topographical drawings of ancient Egyptian monuments were published in 1993 by Buhl, see Buhl 1993.

176 Buhl 1993, pl. 86v. See also chapter 3, 48–49.

177 Norden 1755, pl. CXXVI. See also chapter 4, 98–99.

178 Pococke 1743, 115 and pl. XLVIII, A. For his illustrations see chapter 3, 50; fig. 33.

179 See chapter 3, 47, 50.

180 Pococke 1743, 115.

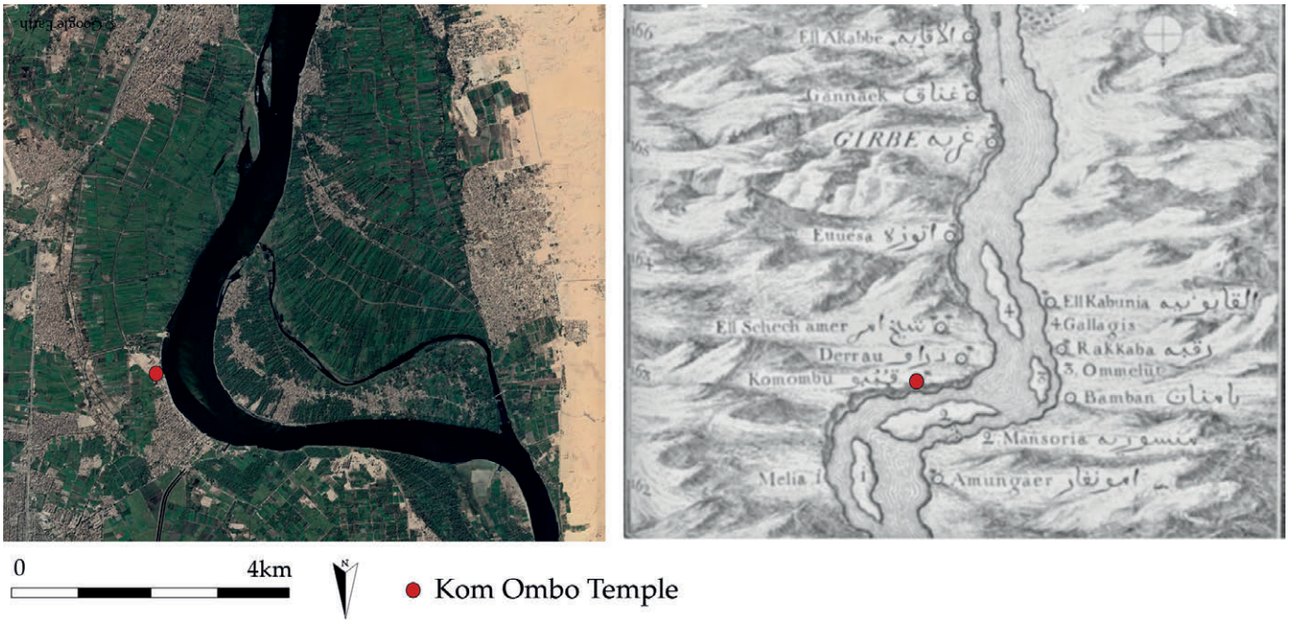


Fig. 14 Kom Ombo region. Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Map by F. Norden 1755 in its original orientation (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; Norden 1755, pl. CXXVI)

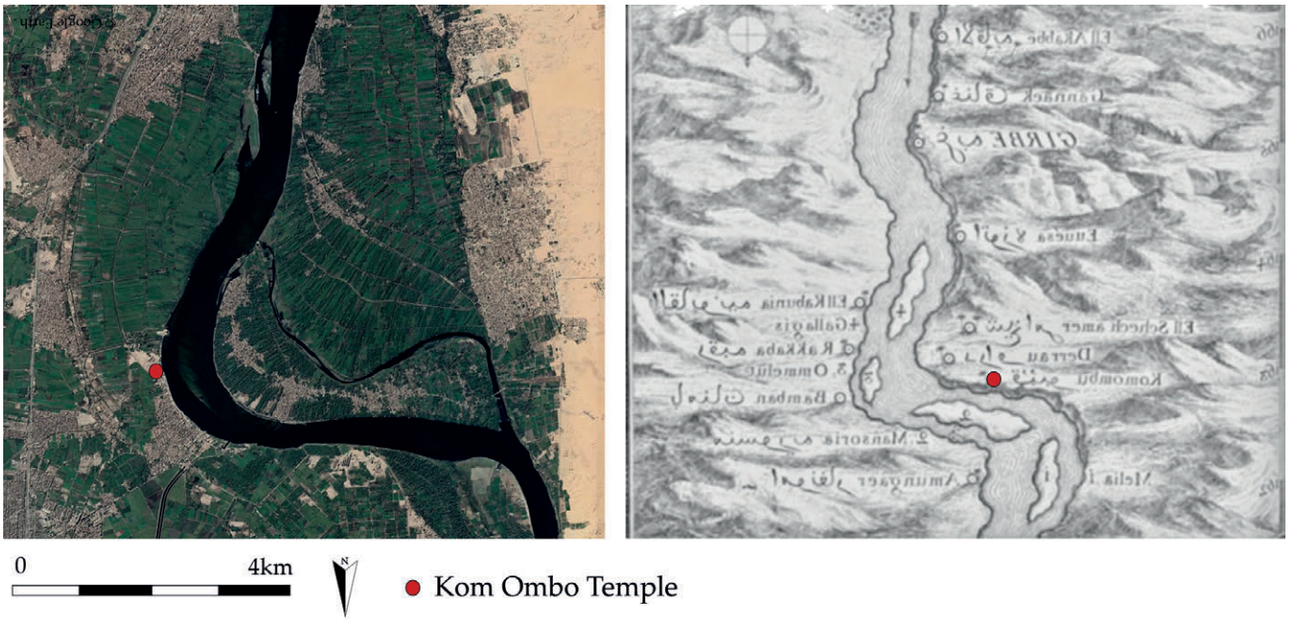


Fig. 15 Kom Ombo region. Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Map by F. Norden, mirrored (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; Norden 1755, pl. CXXVI)

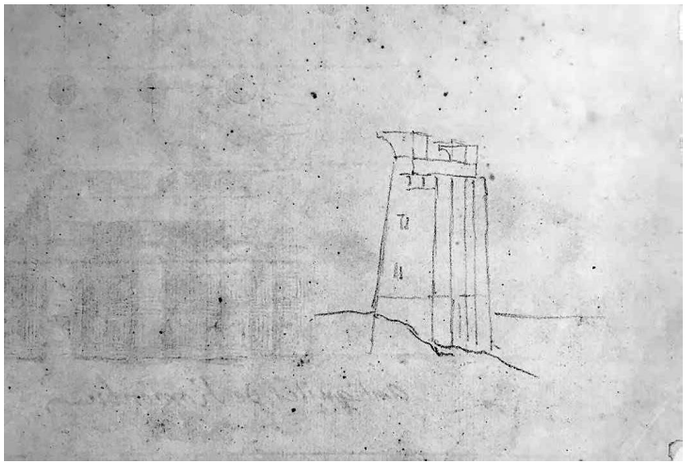


Fig. 16 Pylon of the temple of Kom Ombo; sketch by F. Norden (Buhl 1993, pl. 86v)

Denon, who accompanied the French expedition,[181] was at the site on 27th February 1798. He described the site as impressive although, as noted in chapter 1, surrounded by shabby huts[182]:

> "Embarqués le 25, nous n'arrivâmes que le 27 à Com Ombos … L'antique Ombos, où était révéré le crocodile, s'appelle encore Com Ombos (montagne d'Ombos); elle est effectivement posée sur une eminence qui domine le pays, et s'avance jusque sur le bord du fleuve. Si tous les fragments qu'on y voit encore appartenaient, comme il paraît, à un seul édifice, il était immense. Au centre, est un grand portique en colonnes à chapiteaux évasés, de la plus grande proportion: à la partie sud, une porte est conservée dans son entier; elle tenait à un mur de circonvallation qui est détruit: à l'ouest et sur le bord du Nil, s'élevait un môle énorme, ruiné à présent dans sa partie supérieure; les débordements du fleuve en ont déchaussé des fondations de quarante pieds de profondeur, elles étaient construites avec la même solidité et la même magnificence que ce qui servait de décoration. Au nord, dans la même direction, on voit les restes d'un temple ou galerie, de proportion plus petite, avec des colonnes à chapiteaux à tête. Dans l'espace entre ces deux derniers édifices était un parapet en pierres de taille, qui laissait voir le grand temple au milieu, et devait produire un effet aussi théâtral que magnifique. Quoi qu'il en soit, et quel que fût le reste de ce qui composait la ville antique d'Ombos, elle ne pouvait offrir qu'un aspect très majestueux, puisque dans l'état de dégradation où elle est, et malgré les méchantes huttes dont ces monuments sont encombrés, ses formes offrent encore le tableau de ruine le plus magique qu'il fût possible d'imaginer."[183]

The traveller and diplomat William Hamilton visited in 1801. He gave a detailed description of the site including the main temple, the Mammisi (identified as an Isis temple), the subterranean galleries which led to the Nilometer, the southwestern tower of the pylon and a crocodile cemetery about a mile from Kom Ombo.[184]

> "The morning after we left Es Souan, we landed from our boat immediately under the ruins of a magnificent Temple, which marks the site of the antient capital of the Ombite Nome. They are upon a high sandy hill, whence the spot has taken its present name of Koum Ombos; around it are the rubbish and old walls of an antient Saracen town; though there is now no habitation within the distance of two miles. The top of the hill is surrounded by a wall of very hard sun-burnt bricks; the dimensions of which are one foot two inches and a half in length, six inches in height, and eight in width; the wall is in some places 50, 60, and even 70 feet high, of great solidity and thickness. In one side a small stone-built Propylon is

[181] See below.
[182] See also chapter 1, 21.
[183] Denon 1802, 227–228. For his illustrations see chapter 3, 52; fig. 8.
[184] Hamilton 1809, 75–78.

inserted into it, forming one of the entrances into the sacred inclosure, and at the South-western angle it is supported by a very high and wide stone buttress, ornamented with hieroglyphics, and apparently constructed with the same skill and labour as the walls of the temples. Near the centre of the inclosure stands the venerable and picturesque Temple of Ombos…"[185]

"The country on both sides of the Nile is here low and marshy: the river expands itself into two very distant branches, which inclose the island of Monsourieh, and has besides in both its beds a number of low islands, some of which are cultivated, others are left a barren sand. … One of these [crocodile] catacombs is to be seen about a mile from Ombos; the entrance is very low, and in the side of a high sandy bank."[186]

Hamilton also visited the village of "Ashoodp", modern el-Shutb, a little south of Kom Ombo, and the town of Daraw ("Deroo"). Both were populated by Ababda, Eastern Desert nomads.[187] The Ababda from Daraw escorted caravans to the Red Sea and to Sennar in the Sudan, making the town an important and wealthy trading centre.[188]

Giovanni Battista Belzoni visited Kom Ombo on 22nd August 1816.[189] He was impressed by the temple, noting: "The columns of the portico form one of the richest groups of architecture I have seen: the hieroglyphics are well executed, and some still retain their colours",[190] and of the Mammisi:

"On the water-side are the remains of a smaller temple, part of which is fallen into the Nile. The stones of this little temple are not so large as most of the rest; which proves, that the Egyptians paid great attention to the proportion of masses, as one of the principal points in the effect they were intended for. The aspect of this little temple is somewhat graceful; and some of the figures retain part of their colours, though exposed to the open air. In this temple the same state of decay was apparent as in various others. The altar is fallen down, and may be seen when the water is low. It is a piece of gray marble, without hieroglyphics."[191]

He describes other remains:

"Close to the water-side are some landing-places, with covered staircases, leading up to the temple: but these are quite filled up with sand."[192] These can be identified with the passageways from the riverbank leading to the Ptolemaic Nilometer.[193]

In 1822, the British traveller and Egyptologist John Gardner Wilkinson left detailed descriptions of the main temple and the Mammisi,[194] noting that the temple had "… a double entrance and two parallel sanctuaries, (in which respect indeed it is singular among the existing temples of Egypt)."[195]

He described the Mammisi and the surviving tower of the pylon,[196] and also mentioned the temple enclosure wall which was visible but partly collapsed:

"The sacred precincts of the temple were surrounded by a strong crude brick enclosure, much of which still remains; but from its crumbling materials and the quantity of sand that has accumulated within it, the buildings now appear to stand in a hollow: though, on examination, the level of the area is found not to extend below the base of the wall."[197]

He mentioned the 18th Dynasty gateway:

"On the eastern face of this enclosure is a stone gateway, which bears the name of the third Thothmes, and of the queen who erected the great obelisks of Karnak, and is dedicated to Savak, the Lord of Ombos. And this satisfactorily proves that though the ruins only date after the accession of the Ptolemies, or from about the year 173 to 60 B. C., there had previously existed a temple at Ombos of the early epoch of the Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty, demolished, no doubt, at the time of the Persian invasion."[198]

Regarding the settlement, he saw that it continued to the east of the temple enclosure wall and remarked on the burnt condition of the remains, without assigning a date to them:

"The mounds of the town and remains of houses extend considerably to the east of this enclosure; and, to judge from their appearance, Ombos must

185 Hamilton 1809, 75.
186 Hamilton 1809, 78 and 80.
187 Hamilton 1809, 81.
188 For the 18th century see Walz 1978, 10–11.
189 For Belzoni see in detail chapter 3, 54; fig. 42–43; chapter 4, 106.
190 Belzoni 1820, 58.
191 Belzoni 1820, 58–59.
192 Belzoni 1820, 59.
193 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-8.
194 Wilkinson 1835, 447–451. See also Porter and Moss 1991, 179–203.
195 Wilkinson 1835, 448–449.
196 Wilkinson 1835, 449–450.
197 Wilkinson 1835, 450.
198 Wilkinson 1835, 450–451.

have suffered by fire, like many other cities of Upper Egypt."[199]

In 1826, the British orientalist Edward Lane described the temple, the Mammisi and the remains of the town outside the temple enclosure wall:[200]

"Proceeding above Geb'el el-Sil'si'leh, we find the river, at some parts, bordered by a scanty stripe of cultivated land; in other parts the sands of the desert and west reach to the desert's end. At the distance of about eleven miles, is a large, fertile island, called El-Mun'soo'ree'yeh; opposite which, in the eastern side of the Nile, is *Ko'm Oom'boo* …(the site of the ancient city of *Ombos*), a rocky hill, overspread with sand; high and steep; particularly towards the river, which washes its base. Upon the summit of this hill are the ruined temples of Ombos, which was the capital of the southernmost nome of Egypt. "Ko'm Oom'boo" signifies the "Hill of Oom'boo", or "– Ombos" The upper part of the hill is surrounded, excepting on the side next the river by a very high thick wall, composed of large, strong bricks, which appear to have been half burnt. As the surface upon which it rests is irregular, this wall is not of uniform height throughout: in some parts it is fifty feet high; and in one part, considerably more. In many places, only the top appears above the drifted sand, which has nearly buried all the remains of the ancient town, and almost filled the sacred enclosure. The town was probably situated on the slopes, around the wall; where ruins of brick buildings are still seen. There are also some brick ruins within the wall; but they are probably of a later date."[201]

He mentioned the doorway of Tuthmosis III in the enclosure wall and suggested it led to an older temple:

"At the southern angle of the great enclosure, next the river, is one remaining side of a lofty and handsome Ptolemaic portal: the other side has fallen down the steep. It is richly sculptured; and bears the name of Philometor. Near this is a small, but very ancient portal of stone, built into the exterior side of the great brick wall. It originally formed an approach to an equally ancient (or more ancient) temple, no longer existing; and may afterwards have become one of the gates of the sacred enclosure; but the passage within it is now closed by loose bricks and rubbish. The lintel and cornice have been sculptured by a Ptolemy, whose name is illegible; but upon the front of the two jambs is sculptured a figure of Thothmos 3rd, standing in an attitude of adoration, with one hand uplifted. …. We learn by the hieroglyphic record above mentioned that there was, at least, one Pharaonic temple at Ombos: and that it was dedicated to the great god Sovk. The greater of the two ruined temples now remaining within the enclosure (both of which are Ptolemaic building) probably occupies the site of the older building above alluded to."[202]

Lane also recognised the bilateral division of the temple into spaces for two gods:

"To the great portico which forms the front of this temple, and to each succeeding apartment of the building, there are two entrances. The right half of the temple was dedicated to Sovk; …The front of the temple is towards the river. …. The drifted sand has buried those columns to about half their height; and rises still higher in other parts of the temple."[203]

He described the Mammisi:

"Upon the edge of the steep, above the river's side, is a small and much ruined temple, which appears to have been chiefly dedicated to Athor. It was built and decorated under Physcon and the later Ptolemy before alluded to. The side of the building is towards the river (the front being towards the south-east); and it seems that the great ruined portal which I have already mentioned led directly to this small temple. The entrance to this building was through a portico, which consisted of four columns; three of which remain: ... The body of the temple is so much ruined that its plan cannot be made out; but it appears to have consisted of at least four or five apartments."[204]

He noted the passages from the Nile to the temple seen by Belzoni:

"In the side of the hill, above the reach of the water, are some covered passages, which were perhaps constructed for the convenience of landing. The accumulation of sand and rubbish above makes them appear like subterranean passages; but it seems they were not so originally; for in one which is near the foundations of the temple of Athor there are apertures, of the usual

199 Wilkinson 1835, 450.
200 Thompson 2000, 413.
201 Thompson 2000, 412–413.
202 Thompson 2000, 413.
203 Thompson 2000, 415.
204 Thompson 2000, 415.

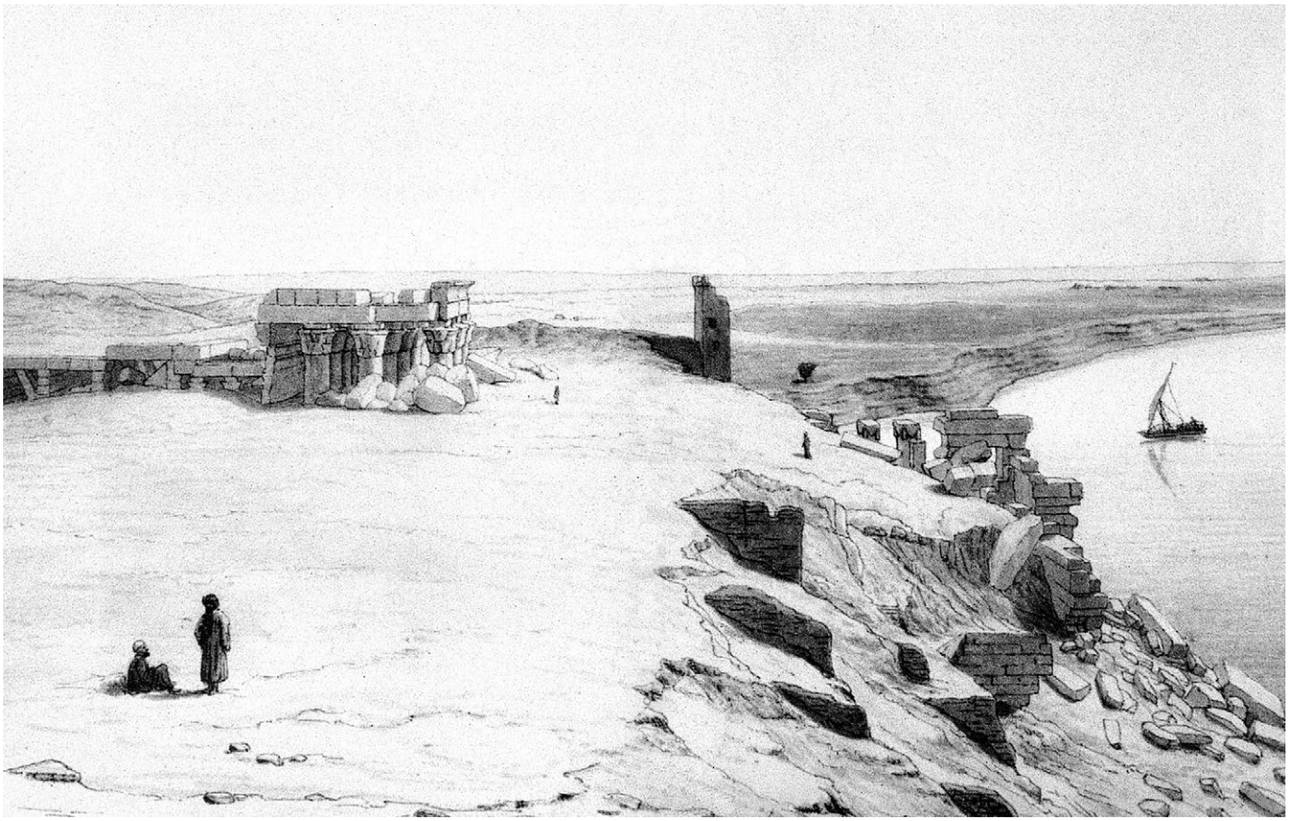


Fig. 17 Edward William Lane, Kóm Umboo, *Description of Egypt* (ed. Jason Thompson), Cairo 2000, fig. 130.

> form, for the admission of light, in the sides and roof. The passage is about nine feet high, and three feet and a half in width. At the distance of about fifty feet, I found it closed with rubbish."[205]

Lane drew one of the first known views of the site from the north (Fig. 17).[206]

The Austrian Crown Prince Rudolph von Hapsburg visited Kom Ombo in 1881 accompanied by Heinrich Brugsch as his Egyptological adviser. He was not only interested in the antiquities but also a passionate hunter, and to that end had a small goat tethered within the temple as bait for the wolves he intended to hunt.[207] He described the temple as a beautiful if lonely place:

> "Nichts regte sich; es war ein schaurig schönes Bild; der alte Tempel mit seinen düsteren Säulenreihen, die endlose Wüste, nur durch einige Trümmer und Felsblöcke unterbrochen, das alles vom herrlichen, echtinner-afrikanischen Mondschein verklärt …."[208]

Brugsch himself saw Kom Ombo as a wretched place full of sand and snakes:

> "Wir gelangten bei Sonnenuntergang ein wenig oberhalb von Kum Ombu an, welches gegenwärtig hart am Flusse liegt, sodass die Flut einen Stein nach dem andern und damit eine Wand nach der andern verschlingt. Die Tempelruinen liegen tief im Sande vergraben da, aus dem die mächtigen Säulen wie riesige Baumstämme emporragen.
> Die Umgebung ist eine vollständige Einöde zu nennen, denn soweit mein Auge blickte, konnte ich keine Spur von Vegetation, oder ein Haus entdecken. Meine Ungeduld noch den Abend den Tempel zu sehen, war so gross, dass ich sofort aus der Barke sprang und den Tempel unter

[205] Thompson 2000, 415 and see above.
[206] See chapter 3, 54.
[207] See also chapter 3, 70, 74; fig. 72.
[208] Österreich 1884, 112.

> Fackelschein zum ersten male besichtigte, wiewol meine Matrosen, von denen mich ein Theil begleitet hatte, mich selbst noch auf dem Wege von dem abendlichen Besuch abriethe. Sie fürchteten die Schlangen, an denen, wie ich mich selbst überzeugte, der Tempelboden von Kum Ombu eine reiche Fülle hat. Ich kehrte satt vom Sehen in meine Barke zurück, um in der Frühe des folgenden Morgen frisch die Arbeit zu beginnen."[209]

Brugsch described the Ptolemaic temple in his notes,[210] mentioning reused blocks of kings Tuthmosis III and Ramesses III. He commented on the gate of Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut in the enclosure wall and assumed that there was a temple of New Kingdom date:

> "Einige herausgestürzte Blöcke dieses Tempelchens zeigen auf ihren Hinterseiten die wohlbekannten Schilder der Könige Thutmes III. und Ramses III. und liefern somit den Beweis, dass schon in ältern Zeiten hier dem Sebek-Ra ein besonderes Heiligthum errichtet war. Auch die Thür an der Südseite des obenerwähnten Walles rührt aus der Zeit Thutmes III. und seiner, die Vormundschaft führenden Schwester Ramake her, deren Schilder gemeinschaftlich die Thür schmücken, welche zum alten Tempel des Sebek in der „Sebekstadt" gehörte."[211]

Finally, he mentioned the heavily damaged Mammisi next to the river and the tower of the pylon, the rest of which had been washed away by the Nile.[212]

Amelia Edwards sailed by Kom Ombo on 16th March 1874. She describes the place as completely covered in desert sand and in danger of being washed away by the Nile:

> "The sand here has been accumulating for 2000 years. lt lies forty feet deep, and has never been excavated. It will never be excavated now; for the Nile is gradually sapping the bank, and carrying away piecemeal from below what the desert has buried from above. Half of one noble pylon – a cataract of sculptured blocks – strews the steep slope: from top to bottom. The other half hangs suspended on the half brink of the precipice. lt cannot hang so much longer. A day must soon come when it will collapse with a crash, and thunder down like its fellow."[213]

Scholarly research at Kom Ombo

It is difficult to draw a formal distinction between the impressions recorded by travellers passing through the site on the one hand, and scholars of Egyptology on the other, particularly at an early date. In this section we discuss the accounts made by expeditions which documented the monuments of Kom Ombo systematically and in detail.

The first and most important contribution to the understanding of the site was that of the scholars who travelled to Egypt with Napoleon I between 1789 and 1801 in order to study ancient and modern Egypt and its natural history. Their work was published in multiple volumes as the *Description de l'Égypte*.[214]

As well as placing Kom Ombo within an accurate map (see chapter 4), the savants created the first overall plan, showing what could be seen of the main temple (the "Grand Temple"), the Mammisi (the "Petit Temple"), the bastioned enclosure wall with two gates at the western end of the southern wall, and an indication of the surrounding tell.[215] They illustrated details of the columns and decoration, and went so far as to attempt to reconstruct the original aspect of the temple and its surroundings as seen from the river. The accompanying text volume discussed the surrounding terrain and the movement of the river, details of the temple and Mammisi, and commented on the bastioned layout of the enclosure wall and the burning that had taken place.[216] Within the enclosure they noted that a mound at the north end was composed of the remains of mudbrick structures covered by sand.[217] This documentation provides an invaluable resource for the current work at Kom Ombo (Fig. 8).

The Franco-Tuscan expedition led by Jean-François Champollion and Hippolito Rosellini travelled in Egypt from 1828–1830. At Kom Ombo they conducted an epigraphic survey of the hieroglyphic inscriptions in the temple, the Mammisi and the pylon tower.[218] Rosellini

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209 Brugsch 1855, 276.
210 Brugsch 1855, 276–278.
211 Brugsch 1855, 278–279.
212 Brugsch 1855, 278. For descriptions of the damage caused by the Nile see also chapter 4, 106.
213 Manley and Abdel-Hakim 2008, 393–395. See also chapter 3, 70; fig. 68.
214 For the illustrations of this work see chapter 3, 50–52; fig. 34–36.
215 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl 39.
216 See chapter 2, 34–35.
217 Description de l'Égypte 1809a, 2–11.
218 Champollion 1868, 90, 142–143; 1844, i. 232–245; Rosellini 1844, 63–233. See also chapter 3, 77.

described the doorway of Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut[219] although misidentifying the king as Tuthmosis IV (Fig. 5).

The *Königlich Preußische Expedition nach Aegypten und Aethiopien* headed by Richard Lepsius worked at Kom Ombo for two seasons in October 1843 and October 1844.[220] The expedition produced a detailed plan of the temple area and copied selected inscriptions and reliefs in the temple and the Mammisi,[221] as well as the door jambs of Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut.[222]

The work of all these expeditions was epigraphic and architectural in nature, reflecting the priorities of the time. No archaeological work was carried out nor clearances within the temple, not even to facilitate epigraphic recording. This was because of the temple's precarious condition, which would have made such work extremely dangerous without specialist expertise.[223]

Such work only began in 1893, when George Daressy and Jacques de Morgan and their successors undertook clearance, restoration and documentation of the temple on behalf of the Egyptian Antiquities Service.[224] Their work in the series *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de L'Égypte Antique*[225] gave the first detailed description of the site and the first contour map showing the temple, the tell and the Nile.[226] Under their direction, the temple area was systematically cleared by hand, using wagons on narrow-gauge rails (a Decauville railway) to remove the spoil. The first court and central area of the temple were emptied down to the Ptolemaic pavement. In the course of these activities, an arbitrary modern ground level came into existence around the temple that corresponded with the Ptolemaic floor visible today.[227]

The extensive clearance caused increased risks to the monument. Only a few years later, in 1903, Howard Carter had to repair the eastern mudbrick enclosure wall, part of which collapsed in 1902 from the pressure of the sand against its exterior (Fig. 18).[228]

In December 1913 and January 1914, Alexandre Barsanti carried out restoration work within the temple

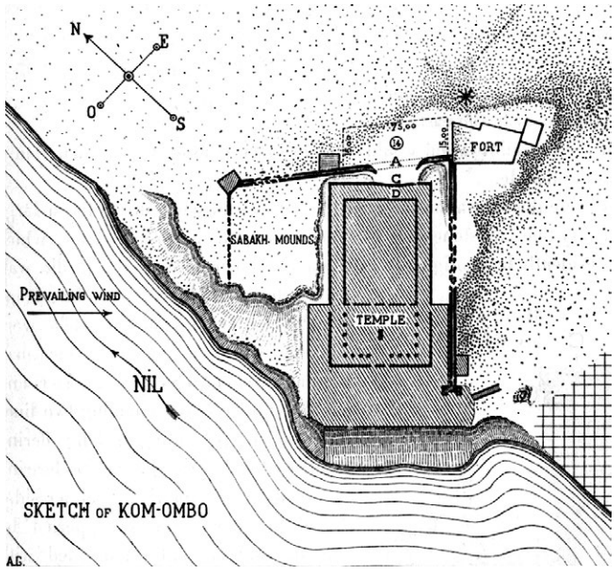


Fig. 18 Temple and tell of Kom Ombo (Carter 1903, 171–18, fig. 1)



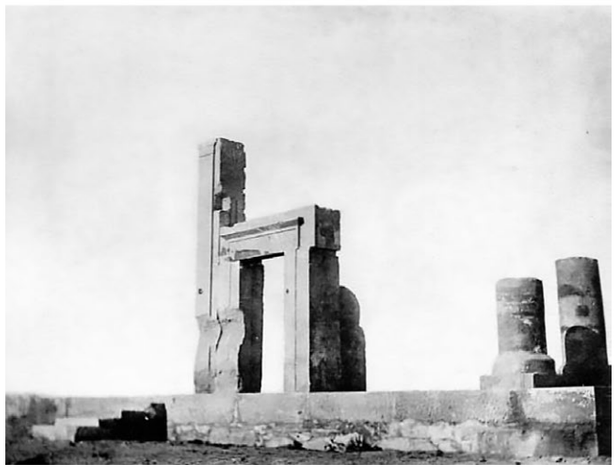


Fig. 19 Removal of deposits around the Roman gateway (Barsanti 1915, pl. 2)

219 Rosellini 1844, 196–198.
220 See also chapter 3, 77.
221 Sethe 1901, 100–115.
222 Lepsius 1849, III, 28, 1a and 1b.
223 Morgan et al. 1895, 5.
224 Morgan et al. 1895, 1902, 1905; Carter 1903; Barsanti 1915.
225 Morgan et al. 1894, 1895, 1909. The first volume (1894) was on the hinterland of Kom Ombo, the area between Assouan and Kom Ombo, the other volumes concentrated on the site itself.
226 Morgan et al. 1895, 1–5.
227 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-19.
228 Carter 1903.

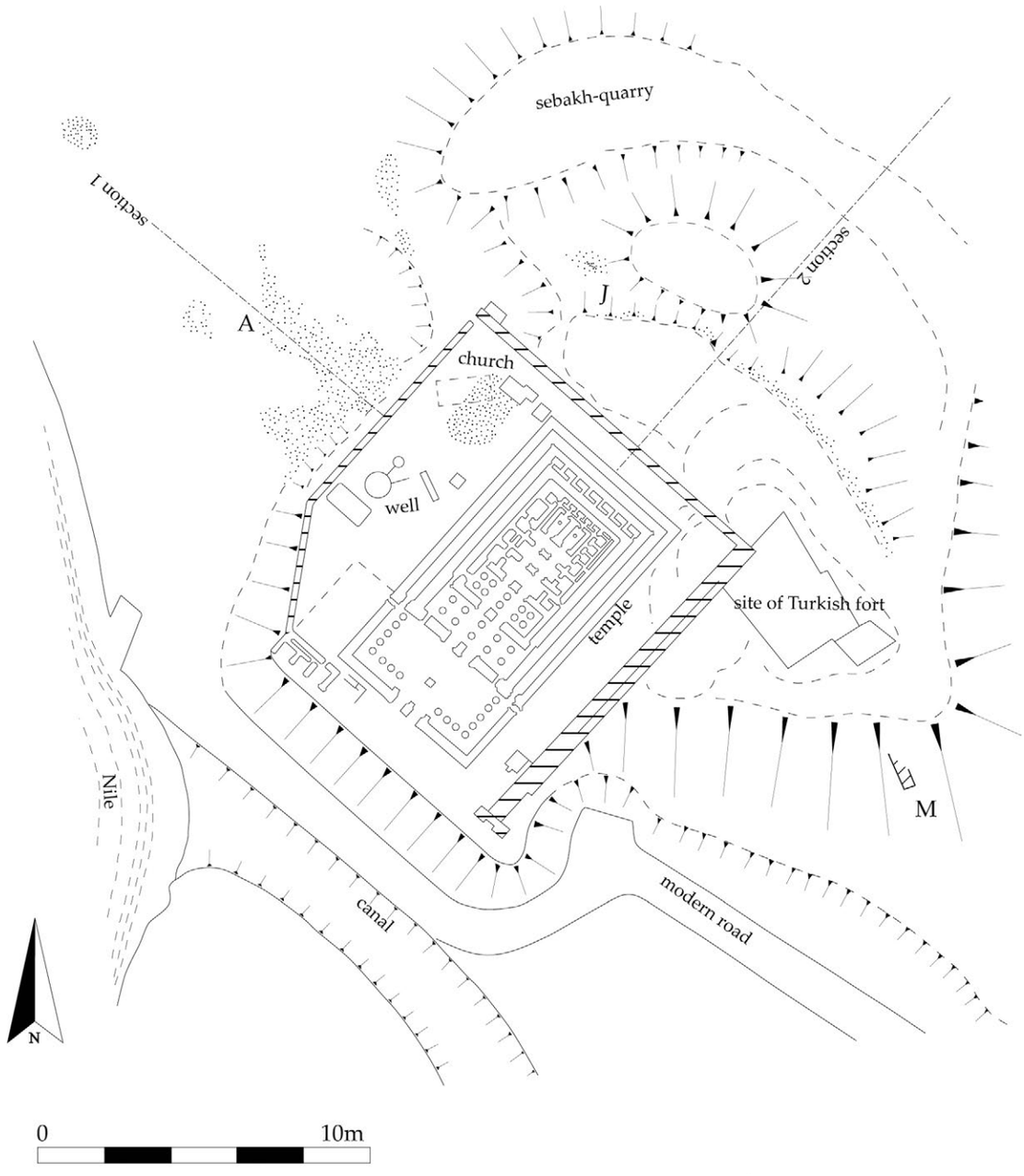


Fig. 20 Plan of Kom Ombo (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn and adapted from Kemp 1985, fig. 1)

and further clearance northwest of the temple.[229] It was then that the Roman well, the "Roman gateway", "Coptic house", "Coptic church" and the chapel of Caracalla (also known as the Sobek chapel) were exposed (Fig. 19).

Work at the site then ceased and was not resumed until, in 1951, Adolphe Gutbub began a long-term study of the epigraphy of the temple on behalf of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale.[230] The epigraphic survey resumed again in 2010.[231] Alexander Badawy

[229] Barsanti 1915.

[230] Sauneron 1971, 237, § 53; Gutbub 1973, 1974; Gutbub and Inconnu-Bocquillon 1995.

[231] Led by Francoise Labrique (University of Cologne) and Shafia Bedier (Cairo University). See Bedier et al. 2021; also IFAO/Labrique.

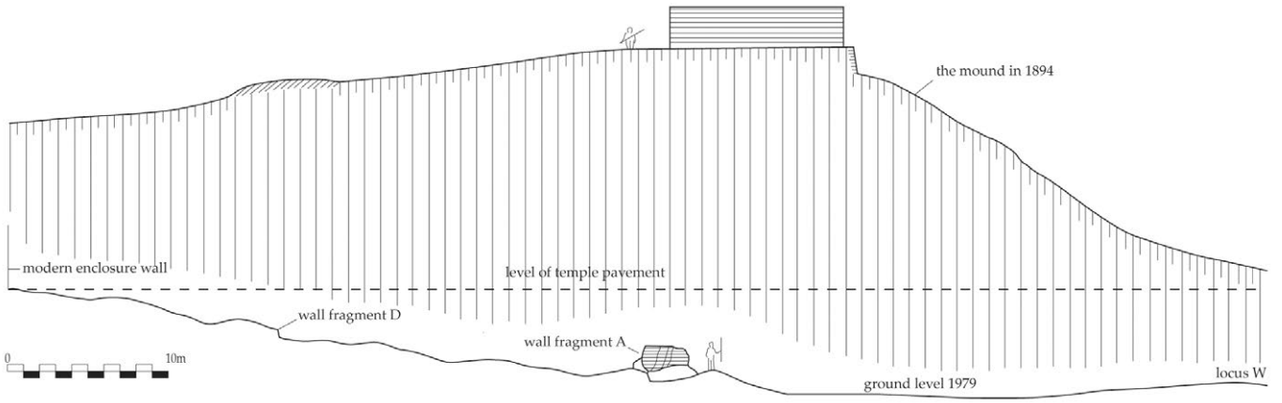


Fig. 21 Section 1 through the tell (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Kemp 1985, fig. 4)

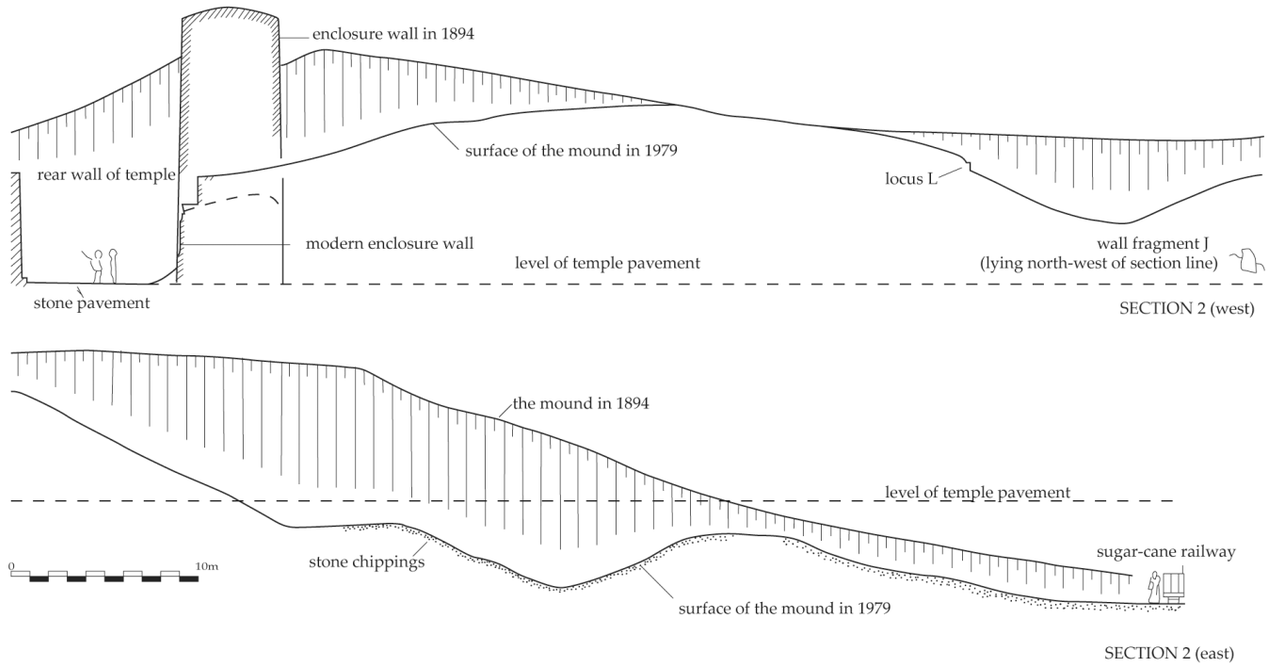


Fig. 22 Section 2 through the tell (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Kemp 1985, fig. 6)

carried out a comprehensive study on the architecture of the temple, the Hathor chapel, the Mammisi and the Nilometer.[232]

Twenty years later, work focusing on the tell began. A brief archaeological survey was carried out in 1979 by Kemp,[233] who reconstructed changes to the tell between 1894 and 1979 (Figs. 20–22).[234]

Critically, Kemp established for the first time that settlement activity at Kom Ombo began at a much earlier date than previously assumed, and dated the layers of reddened and burnt soil that occurred widely across the tell to the late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period (Figs. 23–28). He estimated the town's size at the end of the 3rd millennium BC at a maximum of three

[232] Badawy 1952.
[233] Kemp 1985.
[234] Kemp 1985, fig. 2 and fig. 3. See also chapter 4, 107, 110; fig. 121.



Fig. 23 View from the top of the tell to the northwest towards the river, “reddish” structures of the First Intermediate Period visible on the surface of the temple courtyard (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)

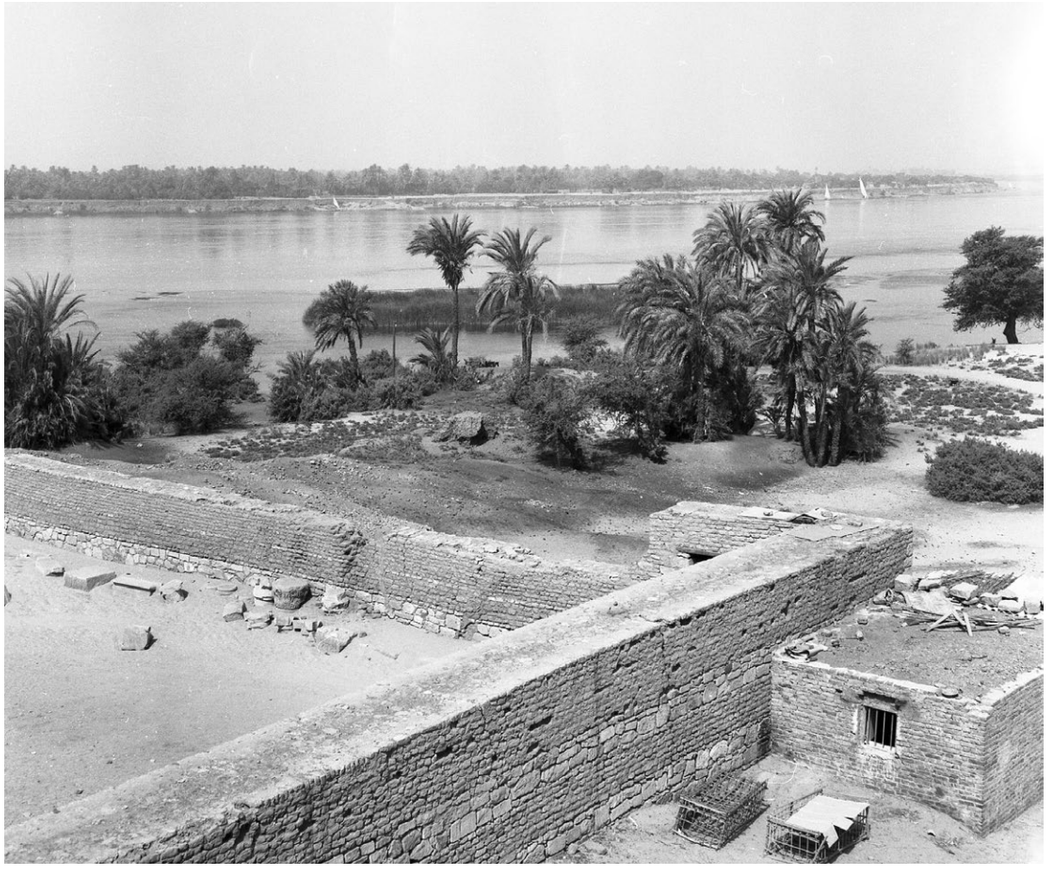


Fig. 24 View from the top of the tell to the northwest towards the river, “reddish” structures of the First Intermediate Period visible on the surface outside of the modern temple enclosure wall (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)



Fig. 25 Area in the northwest with remains of "wall A", where later the Crocodile Museum was built (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)



Fig. 26 "Wall A" (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)



Fig. 27 View from the north towards the temple and “wall A” (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)



Fig. 28 View from the northwest towards the temple, First Intermediate Period remains visible (image kindly provided by B. Kemp)

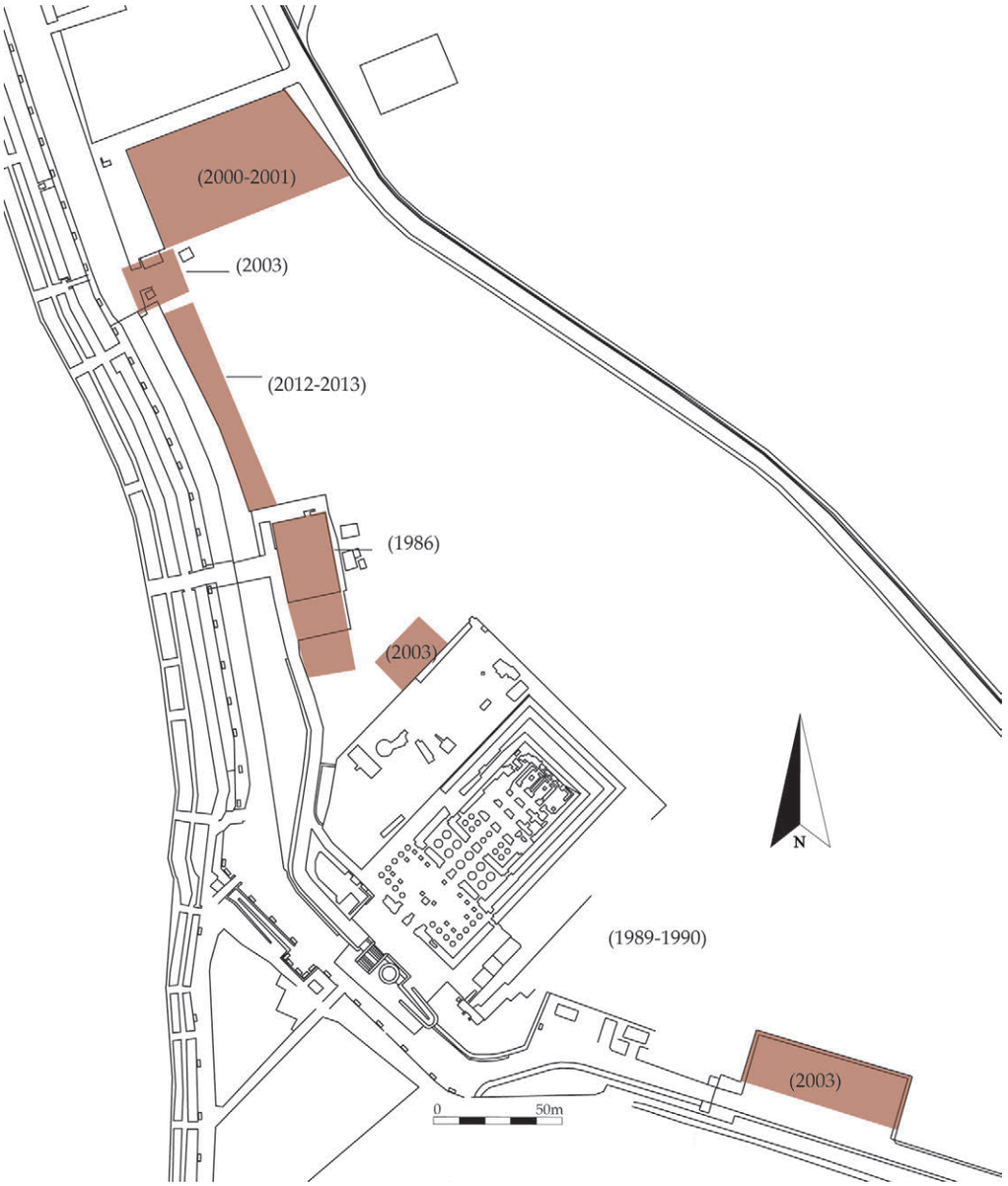


Fig. 29 Location of documented excavations and archaeological research between 1986 and 2014 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Sadarangani et. al. 2015, fig. 11)

hectares.[235] Kemp's "wall A", to the north of the temple, may be an enclosure wall of the Old Kingdom or First Intermediate Period.[236]

In the 1980s, both salvage excavation and site development took place, carried out by the local inspectorates of the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation (EAO) (Fig. 29).[237]

Between 1982 and 1984, building works saw the enlargement of the road in front of the temple, the creation of an embankment for mooring cruise ships, and the construction of a stone enclosure wall along the front of the temple. An agricultural drain south of the temple was infilled.[238] Salvage excavations in 1986 preceded the construction of an EAO office, a

[235] Kemp 1985, 50.

[236] Kemp 1985, 43–44, pl. IIa.

[237] The following passages are based on the report by Sadarangani et al. 2015, 29–35 and Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-22. The information on which this report is based was not available to the author.

[238] Sadarangani et al. 2015, 29. This drain was visible during Kemp's survey in 1979, see Kemp 1985, 42.



Fig. 30 Google Earth image depicting the tell of Kom Ombo and the village of Shibaka (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

rest house and a small coffee shop.[239]

In the same year, emergency excavations were carried out near the Kom Ombo inspectorate by Osama Abdel Waris and Mohi ed-Din Ahmed, because a private citizen wanted to plant sugar cane on the land. They discovered crocodile mummies and pottery, some of which are now in the Crocodile Museum.[240]

North of Kom Ombo, Osama Abdel Waris and Abdel Haqim Karar excavated a late Roman cemetery at Shibaka, finding human mummies and pottery. Some of the finds were left on site and some were transferred to the MOTA's antiquities magazine in Kom Ombo. In 2021, further excavations were carried out there by Hassan et-Taher (Fig. 30).[241]

Between late 1989 and the middle of 1990, an area of the tell southeast of the temple was cleared of sand and partly excavated by the EAO, intended to protect the temple from insect infestation and ground water

[239] Sadarangani et al. 2015, 29.

[240] We are indebted to MOTA inspector Hassan el-Taher for this information.

[241] We are indebted to MOTA inspector Hassan el-Taher for this information.

damage.[242] Well-preserved mudbrick structures were revealed that are still visible today.[243] In October 1993, the areas inside the enclosure wall north of the temple and outside the southeast corner of the temple enclosure were 'cleaned'.[244]

From early 1995 to the middle of 1996, the focus of cleaning was an area behind the rear (northeast) wall of the temple.[245] From mid-1996 to early 1997, attention moved to the areas in front of the Mammisi on its northeast side, between the Sobek chapel and Nilometer, and inside the subterranean chambers beneath the temple,[246] and in 1998, to the area between the mudbrick enclosure wall and the sandstone rear wall of the temple.[247] In late 2000 and early 2001, a salvage excavation north of the temple was carried out prior to the construction of a magazine. These excavations stopped for financial reasons.[248]

In 2003, excavations by the then director of Kom Ombo took place north of the modern enclosure wall of the Ptolemaic temple in an area that was later identified by the ÖAI-Egyptian mission as an administrative building of the First Intermediate Period.[249] No more details are known about this work.

A major site development project took place between 2002 and 2010. Along the riverside the Crocodile Museum, a ticket office, new pathways and a new mooring area for cruise ships, shops and a restaurant were built.[250] Three new terraces allowed access to the temple from the riverside, because of which a large sandy area of the river bank was removed.[251] The main road between the villages of el-Shutb and Bayara was relocated to run behind the temple. In mid-2003, the area southeast of the tell on the site of the present car park was excavated,[252] but no structures were found.[253] Two further areas were excavated, the first west of the modern northwestern enclosure wall, where mudbrick structures were exposed and are still visible on the surface. The second was c. 170 m north of the first, and was south of the Supreme Council for Antiquities' (SCA, formerly the EAO) store room. Work ended prematurely for financial reasons.[254] Here, according to local inspectors, "broken potsherds" were discovered.[255]

In 2010, the Egyptian National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics (NRIAG) and the SCA made a geophysical survey of the temple, including the main entrance, the area of the Crocodile Museum and part of the tell.[256] "The objectives of the survey were 'to study and follow up the negative (destructive) human and environmental impacts on the temple site from the polluted subterraneous/ground water level rise and invasion from the vicinity area due to the lateral urban sprawl and increasing cultivation activities.'"[257]

From late 2012 into early 2013, excavations were carried out north of the Crocodile Museum in order to move the tourist bazaars from the landing place for cruise boats.[258] The skeleton of an infant was found,[259] probably part of a larger cemetery that has not otherwise been identified. This project was cancelled and the tourist bazars were not relocated.

The extensive clearances that took place had the effect of exposing the monuments to the threat of rising ground water,[260] and in 2014 the GWLP began to install a system of pumps and pipes around the tell and temple (Fig. 31). The project's results[261] established, amongst other points, that Kemp's assumption[262] that the Ptolemaic temple was built on layers dating to the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period was correct; that the Ptolemaic temple had a New Kingdom predecessor, although not necessarily in the same place, as none of the remains was in situ; and that around the Crocodile Museum, part of the cemetery of the First Intermediate Period and below it remains of the Old Kingdom town[263] were present.[264] An exciting find here was the discovery of a pottery workshop of the 4th Dynasty, including a limestone wheel and moulds for shaping vessels.[265]

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242 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 29.
243 Wareth and Wagner 1993; Wagner 1995. See also chapter 1.
244 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 32.
245 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33.
246 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33.
247 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33.
248 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33.
249 Personal communication, Mohamed Ali en-Naggar, General Manager of Kom Ombo.
250 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 34–35.
251 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 131.
252 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33.
253 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 130.
254 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 33–34.
255 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 119.
256 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 35.
257 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 176.
258 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 35.
259 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 119.
260 See above.
261 Sadarangani et al. 2015 and Sadarangani et al. 2019.
262 See above and Kemp 1985.
263 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-206, 4-207, 4-21to 4-213, 4-217, 4-222, 4-223, 4-227, 4-231, 4-234, 4-236, 4-272 to 4-275, 4-282, 4-286 to 4-287, 4-290, fig. 422 and the report of Müller in chapter 10. For the Old Kingdom on the other sites see Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-2, 4-20, 4-21, 4-55, 4-57, 4-69, 4-70, 4-73, 4-131, 4-164, 4-169, 4-206, 4-207, 4-319, 5-to 5-2, fig. 422.
264 These continued levels discovered by the ÖAI-Egyptian mission in 2017, see Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 68–76.
265 Sadarangani et al. 2019, 4-264–271, figs. 337–361.

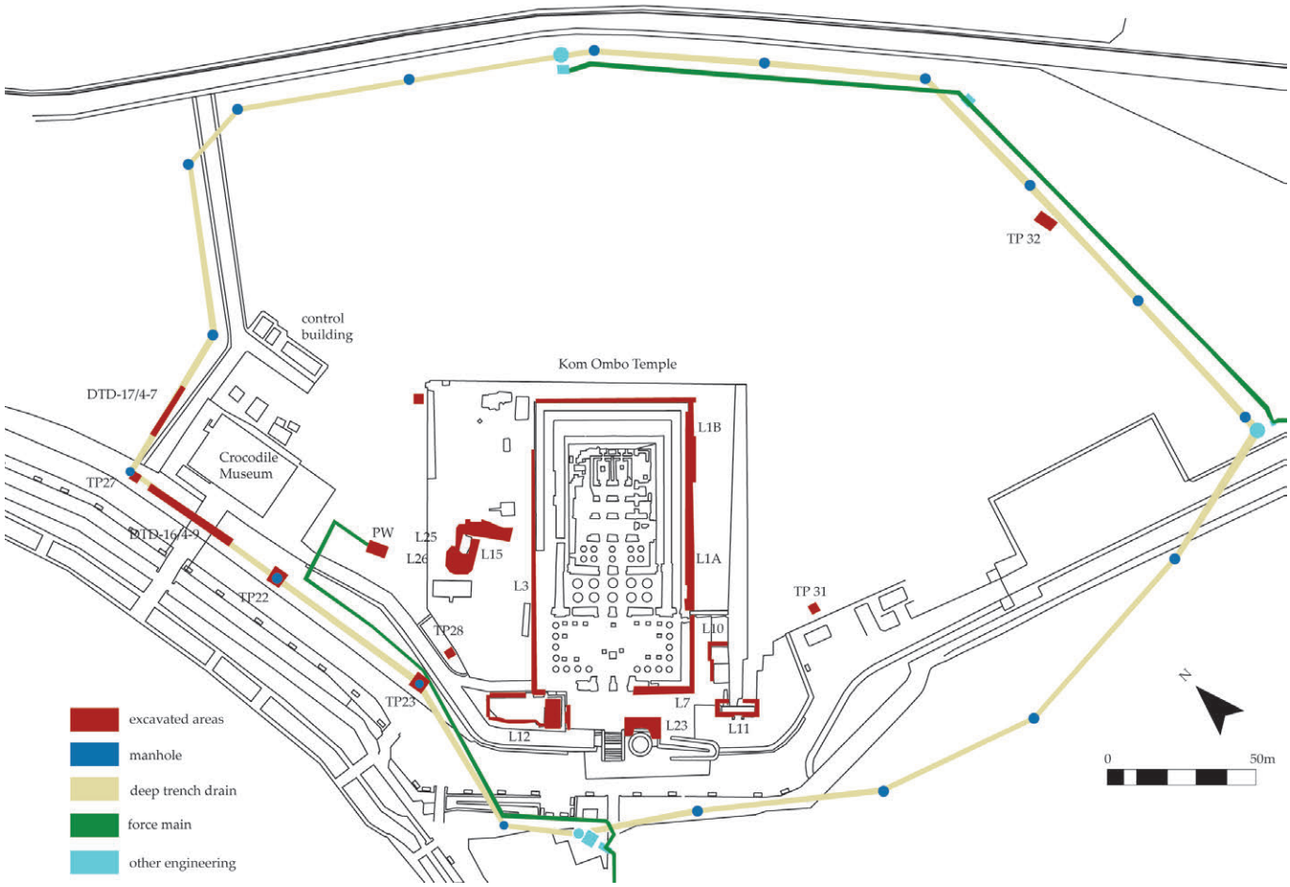


Fig. 31 Work done by the Groundwater Lowering Project (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Sadarangani et al. 2019, fig. 5)

Whilst the GWLP was underway, a team from the Ministry of Antiquities (MoA, the renamed SCA) investigated an area on top of the tell east of the temple in April 2018, with the aim of identifying the New Kingdom temple. The pottery left in place there suggests that late antique and early medieval structures were found. In December 2018 another MoA team worked in the courtyard north of the temple and found several burnt structures, some with plastered walls. These are probably the southern continuation of the First Intermediate Period town identified outside the temple wall.[266]

The region surrounding the tell of Kom Ombo

If the tell and its surroundings have only been subjected to limited systematic investigations before the work of the joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission, the area beyond the modern tell has been even less explored.

At the beginning of the 20th century, an expedition from the Preussische Museen zu Berlin led by Friedrich Zucker came to Kom Ombo to search for Ptolemaic burials with papyrus cartonnage. For five weeks it excavated a raised area of land about 1 km east of the temple that was surrounded by recently developed

[266] See Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, fig. 1.

cultivation. There they found part of a necropolis,[267] mostly of the Ptolemaic period, with anthropoid coffins and cartonnages.[268] One of the tombs, that of the official *Sbk-ḥtp* and his wife *Nfr-wrt*, was a chamber tomb dating to the beginning of the Middle Kingdom and reused in the Ramesside Period and the Third Intermediate Period (chapter 1).[269]

In 1979, 2 km east of the temple, the EAO found more Ptolemaic and Roman tombs with coffins and gilded cartonnages that were probably part of the same cemetery.[270]Another cemetery was discovered by Wilbour in 1890, about 0.5 km south of the temple at el-Shutb. One tomb was excavated and fragments of an inscribed mummy case were reconstructed and documented.[271] Development work and the creation of a new tourist road connecting the Eastern Agricultural Road to the temple cut the cemetery into two parts.[272] The southern part was excavated by the MoA between 1965 and 1967,[273] and the northern part between 1971 and 1991.[274] The cemetery was briefly described as follows: "the cemetery covered an area of c. 42 acres and divides into the northern (164 tombs excavated) and southern (73 tombs excavated) sections. … There was a concentration of human burials in the southern area and a concentration of crocodile burials in the northern area."[275] The southern part contained chamber tombs with mummified bodies, some in anthropoid coffins, similar to those found by Zucker.[276] From the information available, the bulk of the cemetery dates to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, although possibly beginning in the Third Intermediate Period. There is no evidence for earlier burials. The finds have not been published but are partly displayed in the Crocodile Museum.

[267] The "cemetery of Nbjj.t" (Gomaà 1982, 415).

[268] Zucker 1909, 200–201, see also Helmbold-Doyé in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 84–85. The research on this topic is a cooperation between the ÖAI and the Ägyptisches Museum Berlin. See also chapter 1, 18.

[269] Wenig 1968.

[270] Leclant 1982, 87, 56 and Wolfgang Mayer, personal communication, who informed the authors that the DAI was asked by the Egyptian authorities to support them by taking photos. Some of the remains were transported from the Aswan store room to the National Museum of Civilization in 2020 and were seen there by Forstner-Müller.

[271] Wilbour 1936, 554–555.

[272] Sharawi 1979, 170.

[273] Sharawi 1979.

[274] Sadarangani et al. 2015, 144.

[275] Especially Sadarangani et al. 2015, 144.

[276] Sharawi 1979.

Chapter 3 Kom Ombo in the Visual Arts: The Site and its Sanctuaries in Historic Painting and Photography

Ernst Czerny

The site of Kom Ombo has been designated by many travellers as 'picturesque', and thus it does not come as a surprise that visual representations have a long-lasting tradition, first in graphic arts and painting, later also in photography. The ruined Ptolemaic temple, lying on a gentle hill above and close to the Nile, was a significant feature of the Upper Egyptian landscape, visible from any passing boat, and could not be overlooked. How appealing that view was for most travellers may be demonstrated by the words of Anton von Prokesch-Osten, who visited the site in 1827:

> The sanctuaries in Nubia may be more astonishing, the temples in Thebes more majestic, those in Esne and Tentyra more graceful, but there is no ruin whose location is more picturesque than that of the two temples of Kom Ombos. Due to the simplicity and grandeur of its construction, as well as due to the dignity of the execution, in particular one of these sanctuaries is apt as a school for the traveller who desires to cast more than a hasty glance at the works of Egyptian architecture.[277]

The site remained more or less unexplored and unexcavated until 1893. Until then, the temple and its satellite buildings were for the most part buried in sand. For a long period, only the upper part of the Pronaos of the main temple was visible, as well as the remaining door jamb of the pylon-like main entrance gate, parts of the Mammisi – which was critically endangered by the escarpment towards the river –, a large quantity of fallen blocks scattered around the area, parts of the brick enclosure wall and hardly visible remains of brick buildings, supposedly houses of a town or settlement that once surrounded the sanctuary.

Kom Ombo thus still offered a 'romantic' view at a time when most other major sanctuaries in Egypt had already been cleared. It is noteworthy that travellers in the first half of the 19th century often regarded the temple of Kom Ombo, like any other well-preserved monument, mainly as an object of study and a source of Egyptological information, notwithstanding its picturesque qualities. Later, when Kom Ombo became the most easily accessible specimen of an 'untouched' site in its 'original state', its romantic appeal became prevalent. In consequence, few renderings of details exist. Most pictures either show the magnificently located ruins seen from the river or the sanctuary seen from close by, always emphasising its ruined state and isolated location. Only exceptionally was the interior of the Pronaos depicted, and even more rarely the minor structures or the vestiges of the settlement. Rather, a clear tendency exists to suppress those features that could disturb the picture of the fallen temple surrounded by nothing but endless sands and, sometimes, a glimpse of the Nile. As a result, the pictures of Kom Ombo are relatively uniform with only few variations. Only after the clearing of the temple area in 1893 can a new approach be seen.

Travellers to Upper Egypt in the 18th century were already attracted by the site of Kom Ombo, but few of their accounts were illustrated. However, the two best-known travelogues, by Frederic Norden[278] and Richard Pococke,[279] both include views of Kom Ombo, perhaps due to the fact that the site was so easily accessible from the river. Captain Norden, who explored Egypt on behalf of the Danish king Christian VI in 1737–38, left a comprehensive and richly illustrated account that was first published in 1755,[280] saw a series of re-editions and translations, including in Paris in 1795 ("the third year of the Republic")[281] and appeared in a German edition

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277 Prokesch-Osten 1829, 212: "Die Tempel in Nubien sind erstaunenswürdiger, die Tempel von Theben sind majestätischer, diejenigen von Esne und Tentyra zierlicher, die Lage keiner Ruine aber ist malerischer, als diejenige der beiden Tempel von Kom Ombos. Durch die Einfachheit und Größe der Anlage, so wie durch den Adel der Ausführung, eignet sich besonders der eine dieser beiden Tempel zur Schule für den Reisenden, der mehr als einen flüchtigen Blick auf die Werke der ägyptischen Baukunst werfen will." (Translation Ernst Czerny).

278 Born Holstein-Glückstadt 1708, died Paris 1742.

279 Born Southampton 1704, died Tullamore 1765.

280 Norden 1755.

281 Norden 1795.

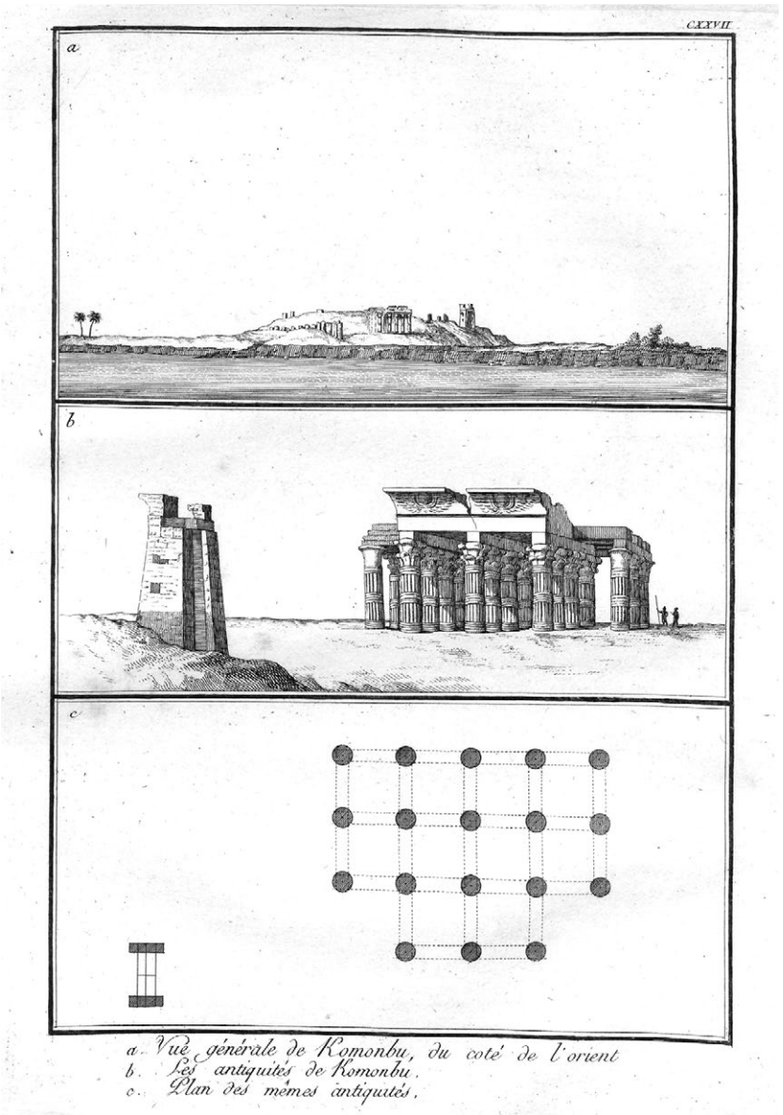


Fig. 32 Frederick Norden, Vue générale de Konombu, avec ses Antiquités (Norden 1755, pl. CXXVII)

in 1779.[282] The representation of Kom Ombo in engravings is tripartite: Plate 127[283] shows a) the overall view seen from the river when approaching the site by boat, b) the main sanctuary from close by, including the "Pylon", and c) the ground plan of the Pronaos (Fig. 32). The accuracy of the pictures is surprisingly good, even if the pylon is mistakenly plotted on the wrong side of the complex, in the actual location of the Mammisi, which, in its turn, is absent from the picture. Norden was not able to explain the purpose of the pylon tower, and he suggested that it might have been an altar.[284] Original drawings by Norden are preserved at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences in Copenhagen and were published by Marie Louise Buhl. Among these is one of the pylon of Kom Ombo, which perfectly displays the architectural structure and the proportions of the ruined building (Fig. 16).[285] It is remarkable that he depicted it correctly, whereas in many later images, it was mistaken for some sort of tower or a structure of undefined purpose. Thus, already in this early representation, the

282 Norden 1779.
283 Norden 1755, "CXXVII. Vue générale de Konombu, avec ses Antiquités".
284 Norden 1755, II, 188.
285 Buhl 1993, pl. 86v.

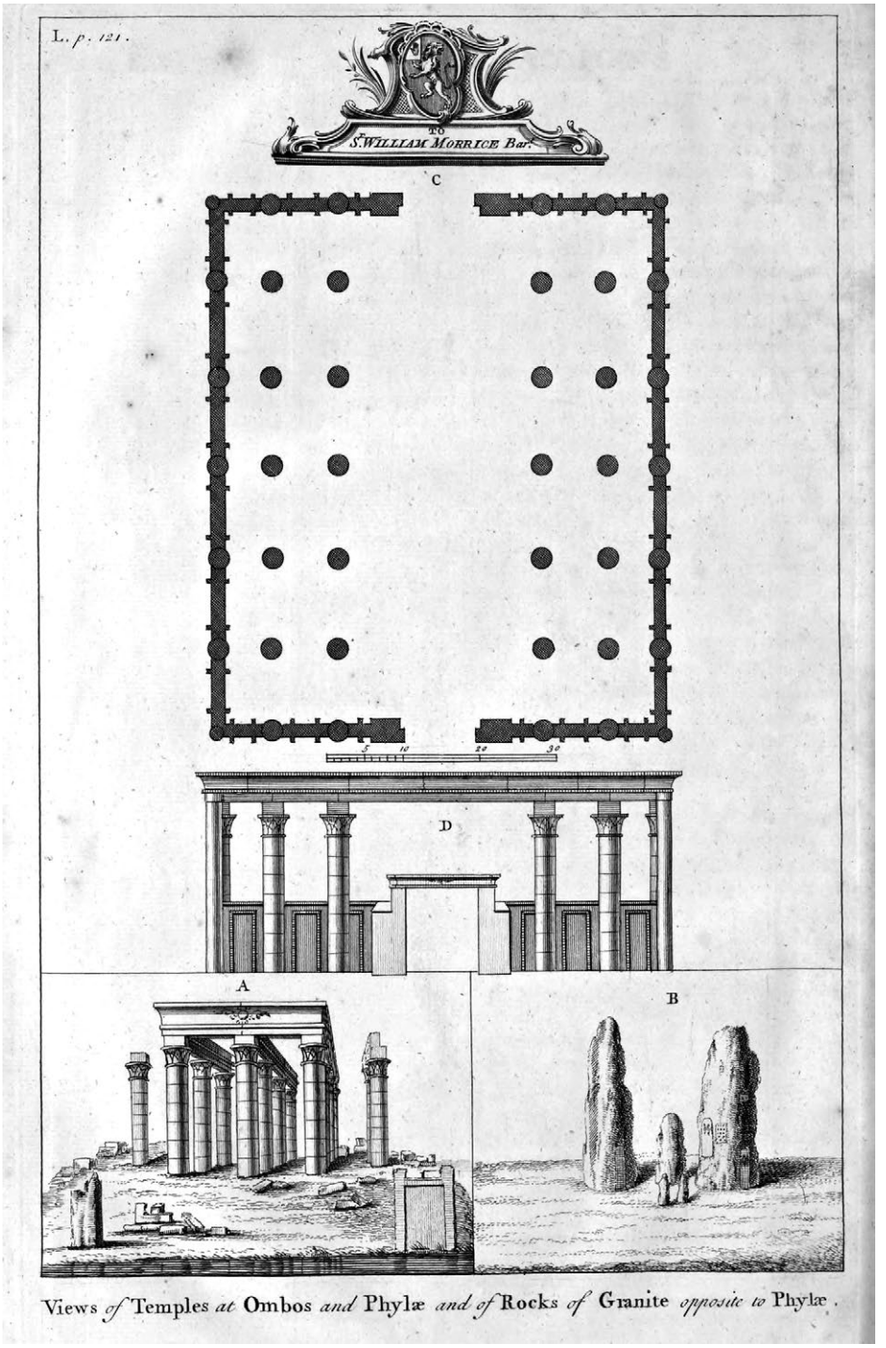


Fig. 33 Richard Pococke, Views of Temples at Ombos and Phylae (Pococke 1743, pl. L)

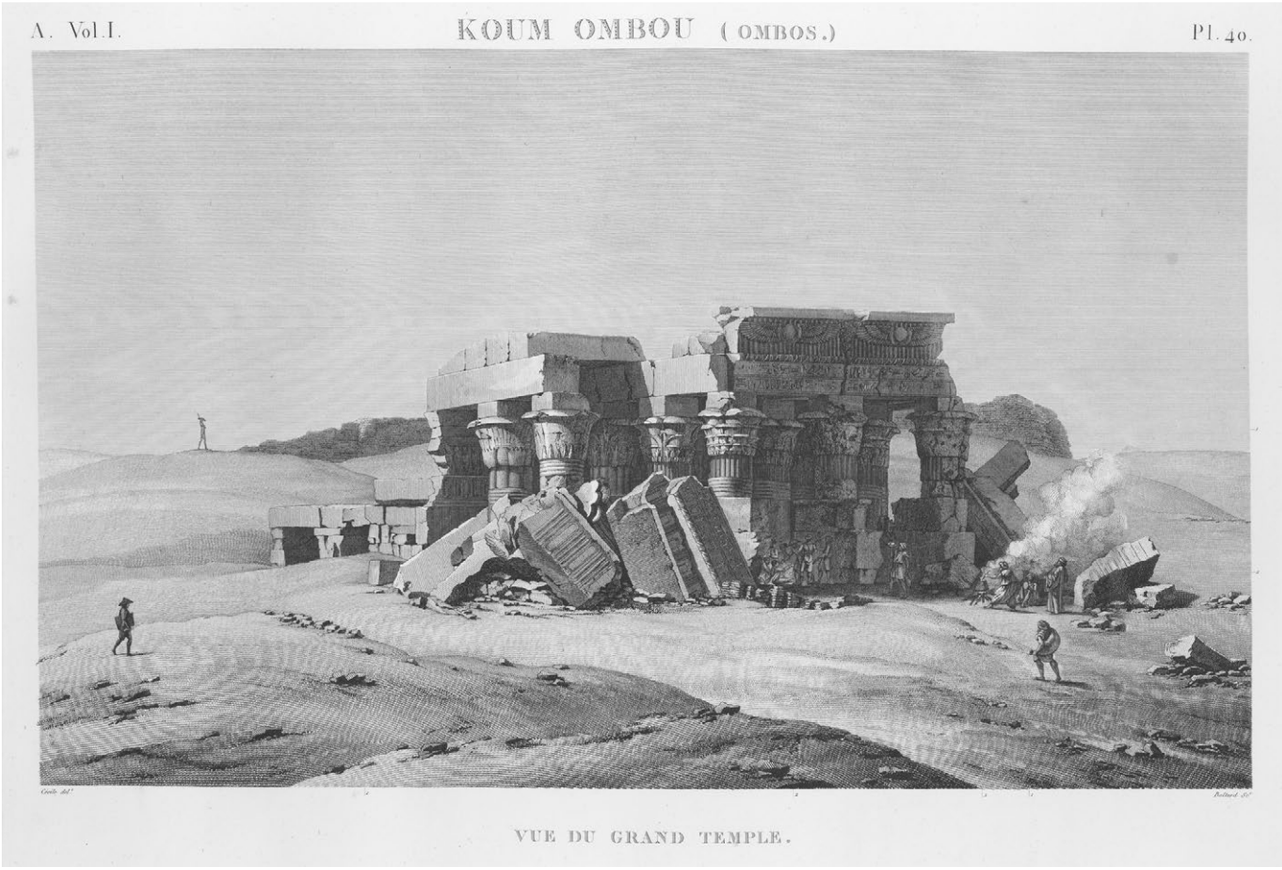


Fig. 34 François-Charles Cécile, Koum Ombou (Ombos), Vue du grand temple (Description de l'Égypte 1809a, I, pl. 40)

three main aspects of the visual history of the sanctuary of Kom Ombo are present: the conspicuous location by the river, the deserted albeit magnificent ruin with a couple of human beings nearby, emphasising the building's bygone grandeur, and the ground plan as a witness of some research activity.

Richard Pococke's illustration, which was published in 1743,[286] is far less accurate and even misleading in several details (Fig. 33).

The *Description de l'Égypte*, the great scientific reference work of the French expedition to Egypt in 1798–1801, whose first edition was published between 1809 and 1828, included no fewer than eight plates concerned with Kom Ombo. These include François-Charles Cécile's display of the actual state[287] seen from close by, emphasising the contemporaneity of the view by the addition of a campfire (Fig. 34), which is not there in a watercolour by Cécile[288] in the Paris Bibiothèque Nationale (Fig. 35). The almost obligatory view from the river is omitted, which may be explained by the fact that the French army did not travel by boat but was marching and thus approached Kom Ombo from the landward side. Besides that, a visual reconstruction of the temple was offered. The view, by J. Jollois and R. E. Duvilliers showed the main façade of the Pronaos, clearly visualising the particular feature of the temple as a double sanctuary with two parallel entrances, with the Mammisi to its left and the pylon gate to its right (Fig. 36).[289] The reconstruction is complemented by a section drawing through the main temple[290] and the façade and section drawing of the Mammisi, displaying its Hathor capitals.[291] Many details of capitals and wall decoration are given. The ground plan of the temple precinct shows the actual, ruined state, but seems

286 Pococke 1743, pl. 50.
287 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 40.
288 Born Paris 1766, died Bougival 1840.
289 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 46.
290 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 41.
291 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 42.



Fig. 35 François-Charles Cécile, Kom Ombo, watercolour (Source Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10513931g)

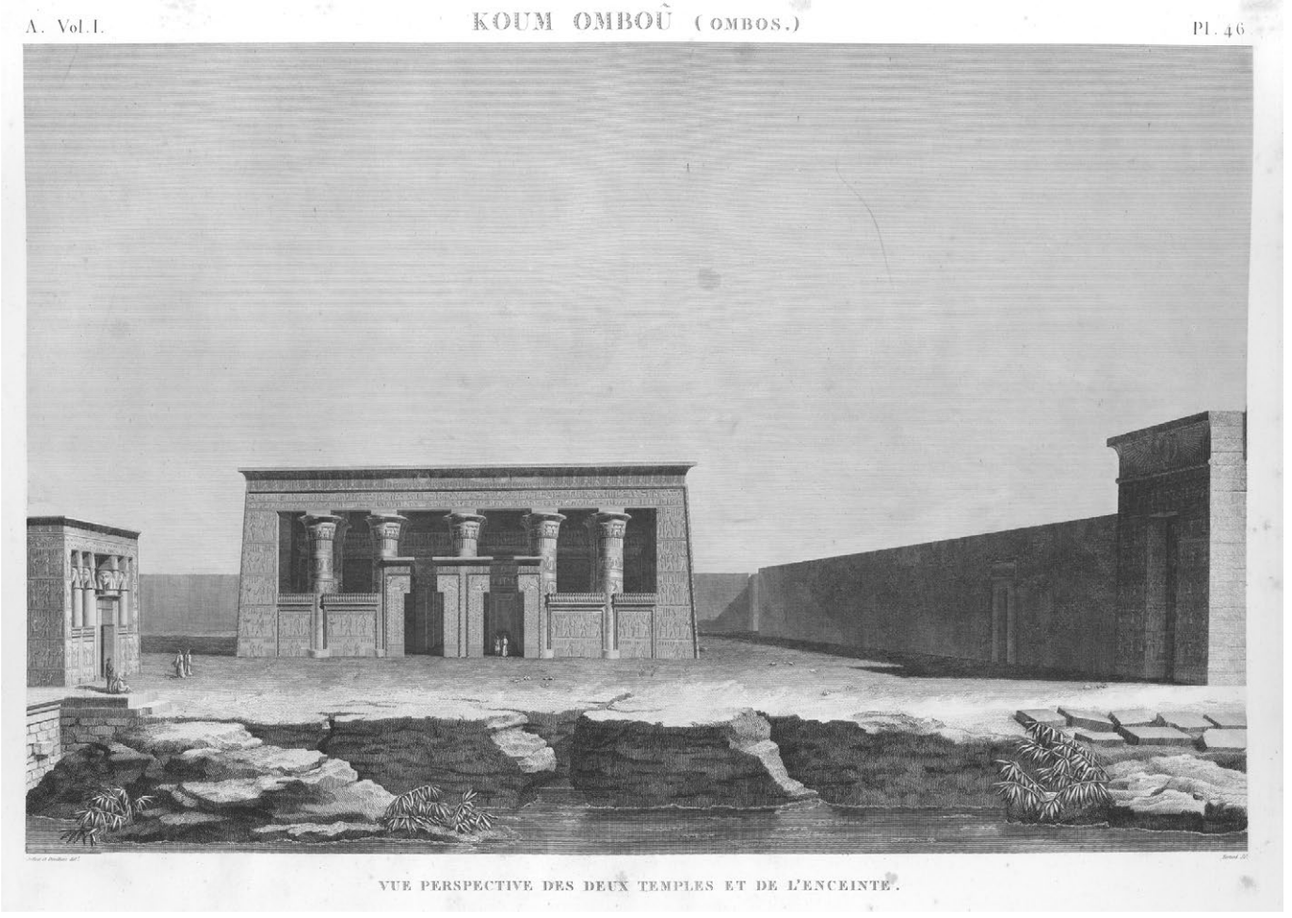


Fig. 36 Koum Oumbo (Ombos), Vue perspective des deux temples et de l'enceinte (Description de l'Égypte 1809a, pl. 46.

to indicate that two door jambs of the pylon gate were still preserved,[292] whereas Norden's and even Cécile's images clearly show that this was not the case.

Until the clearing of the sanctuary in 1893, reconstructed views of the temple were no longer a subject of interest, since its ruined state was more and more understood as a specific romantic quality. One noteworthy exception appeared in Wilhem Goedsche's[293] popular *Vollständige Völkergalerie*,[294] where a wood-engraving "Tempel in Ombos" reveals itself as a vulgarised version of the reconstruction taken from the *Description de l'Egypte* (Fig. 37).[295]

A further outcome of the French expedition was Dominique Vivant Denon's[296] *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte*, which appeared in 1802.[297] Denon passed the site of Kom Ombo by boat, and there was no time to stop even for an hour.[298] All he could do was to take a quick sketch drawing from the fast-moving boat.[299] Under these unfavourable circumstances, it is amazing to see how beautiful and accurate Denon's view is, which shows the temple complex encircled by heaps of debris (Fig. 8). Only the relative position of the levels of particular elements, that is, the main temple, the Mammisi and the pylon gate, is wrong, but details such as the Hathor capitals or the small 18th Dynasty gate in the enclosure wall are correctly rendered.

The steadily increasing number of mostly British travellers ascending the Nile produced a constant stream

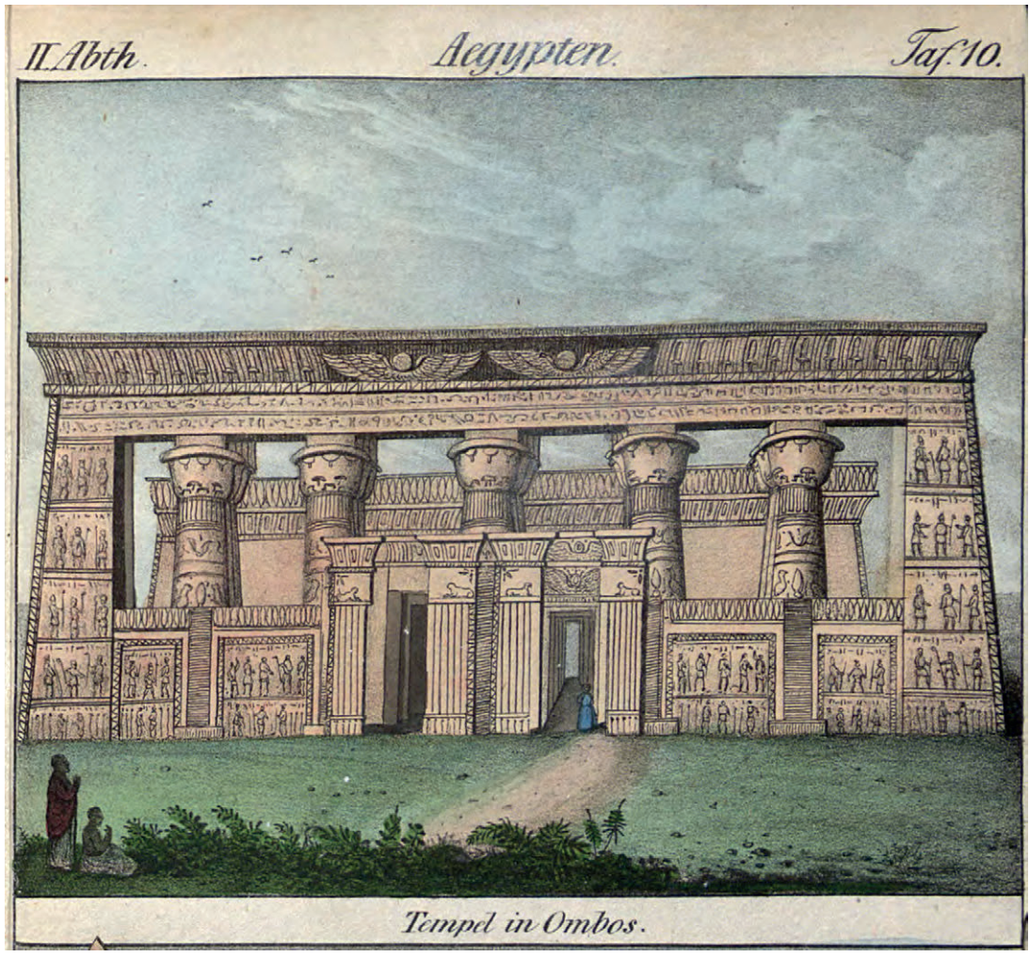


Fig. 37 Wilhelm Goedsche, Temple in Ombos (Goedsche 1832, Vol. 1, sec. 2, pl. 10)

292 Description de l'Égypte 1809b, pl. 59.
293 Born Silesia 1785, died (?) 1863.
294 Goedsche 1832, Vol. 1, sec.. 2, pl. 10.
295 For the renewed interest in the architecture of the temple and attempts to reconstruct its facade after it was uncovered, see e.g. Terrier 2021, 214-242, especially Figure 22.
296 Born Chalon-sur-Saône 1747, died Paris 1825.
297 Denon 1802.
298 Denon 1802, 227.
299 Denon 1802, pl. 76.2.



Fig. 38 Charles Barry, Koum Ombos (Royal Institute of British Architects)



Fig. 39 Temple of Koom-Ombos (from a sketch by W. H. Newnham Esq., engraved by J. Clark, London 1830)



Fig. 40 William Light, Ombas (State Library of South Australia: PRG 1/5/195)

of views of sites in Upper Egypt, including Kom Ombo. Many of these travellers stressed the gigantic fallen blocks which surrounded the building, such as Charles Barry[300] (1819, Fig. 38),[301] W. H. Newnham (1830, Fig. 39).[302] William Light[303] (1830–35, Fig. 40),[304] Sir William Eden[305] (1834),[306] William Lane (1825–28, Fig. 17),[307] the Russian architect Dimitri Yefimov (1834, Fig. 41)[308] and many others. Giovanni Belzoni published two images, one of which nicely displays the area from a new angle, a view from the south down the Nile valley towards the north, thus looking over the site and its buildings (Fig. 42).[309] It seems that Belzoni portrayed himself in the bearded man who is sitting on a rock in the foreground, obviously making a drawing. The second plate[310] is a close-up of the Pronaos which renders the capitals of the columns with great care, but also juxtaposes two men onto the gigantic blocks fallen from the temple (Fig. 43).

Joseph Bonomi did not neglect Kom Ombo and left a series of interesting drawings. One especially stands out (Fig. 44). It was drawn on 8th May 1827 and is kept in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland. It displays a view down the valley from a similar angle as Belzoni's, but focuses on the Mammisi or "Temple of Hathor". At the time, three columns with Hathor capitals were still well preserved, as visible in Bonomi's drawing. The bank is densely covered with blocks and slabs stemming from the crumbling building.[311]

A couple of remarkable drawings of Kom Ombo were produced by the German architect Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, who travelled in Egypt in 1829/30.[312] In one of these, the main temple, seen from the south, is conveniently displayed in the middle ground. Quite unusually, much attention is given to its back rooms, whose extension and state are carefully rendered (Fig. 45).[313] Even more striking is another drawing, taken from a most unusual angle, which prominently features the decorated door jamb in the middle of the sheet, the Mammisi to its left and the 18th Dynasty gate to its right (Fig. 46).[314] Due to its position behind the enclosure wall as seen from a low level, the main sanctuary is hardly visible. Compared to Bonomi's image of the Mammisi, it is a surprise to note that in Hessemer's drawing only one of the Hathor columns is standing upright. Have two columns (and the lintel of the entrance gate) fallen within the two years (1827–1829) separating the two drawings? Both drawings seem to be accurate and realistic renderings of their respective actual states. Be that as it may, after around 1830 the Mammisi with its upright columns and Hathor capitals conspicuously disappears from the visual record.

Hessemer's drawings inspired the romantic landscape painter Wilhelm Ahlborn[315] to create a phantastic *capriccio* painting of Kom Ombo, without ever having seen it with his own eyes (Fig. 47).[316] Ahlborn put the temple on top of a rather mountainous landscape, more greenish than sandy, and deliberately added elements such as an additional column, a sphinx and an animal skull, but removed the river from the vicinity of the sanctuary to the far background of the picture. Just behind the temple, the sun is rising, creating a most romantic atmosphere, which seems to be, however, far more German than Egyptian.

Two of the most significant visual reporters of Egypt in the first half of the 19th century, the French architect Héctor Horeau[317] and the Scottish artist David Roberts[318] both visited Kom Ombo in 1838, albeit not at the same time. The Griffith Institute in Oxford keeps four watercolours by Horeau that show Kom Ombo.[319] One of these (MSS 43.1) is a close-up of the façade of the Pronaos, which nicely elucidates the architectural structure of the building (Fig. 48). The view from the Nile (MSS 43.3) is striking because of the tower-like appearance of the pylon (Fig. 49). Likewise, the display of the precinct (with the main temple in the middle ground) is lacking archaeological accuracy and is more scenic than documentary (MSS 27.1, Fig. 50). Still, it was used by Horeau for the Kom Ombo plate in his publication

300 Born London 1795, died London 1860.
301 Clayton 1983, 145, no. 61.
302 In: Webster 1830 (e.g. British Library HMNTS 1046.k.23), between pp. 164 and 165.
303 Born Kuala Kedah 1786, died Adelaide 1839.
304 State Library of South Australia, PRG 1/5/195.
305 6th Baronet, 1803–1873.
306 <https://www.watercolourworld.org/painting/koum-ombos-tww46095f7a526464> (last access 14 April 2023)
307 Thompson 2000, fig. 130.
308 Nabatchikov 2000, IV.27.
309 Belzoni 1822, IV-View of the ruins of Ombos and adjacent country.
310 Belzoni 1822, V-Ruins of Ombos.
311 The Temple of Hathor, Koom Ombo. Joseph Bonomi the younger, 8th May 1827. The Duke of Northumberland Collection.
312 For Hessemer see Eichenauer and Greve 2001.
313 Frankfurt a.M., Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Graphische Sammlung, Inv. no. 5071.
314 Frankfurt a.M., Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Graphische Sammlung, Inv. no. 5072.
315 Born Hanover 1796, died Rome 1857.
316 Hanover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, KM 222.
317 Born Versailles 1801, died Paris 1872.
318 Born Stockbridge 1796, died London 1864.
319 University of Oxford, The Griffith Institute, Archive, Horeau 1841, MSS 27.1, MSS 43.1, MSS 43.2; MSS 43.3.



Fig. 41 Dimitri Jegorjevich Jefimov, Ruins of the Temple in Qum-Ombus, Upper Egypt (Nabatchikov 2000, IV.27)



Fig. 42 Giovanni Battista Belzoni, View of the ruins of Ombos and adjacent country (Belzoni 1822, IV)



Fig. 43 Giovanni Battista Belzoni, Ruins of Ombos (Belzoni 1822, V)



Fig. 44 Joseph Bonomi the younger, The Temple of Hathor, Koom Ombo, 8th May 1827 (Collection of the Duke of Northumberland)

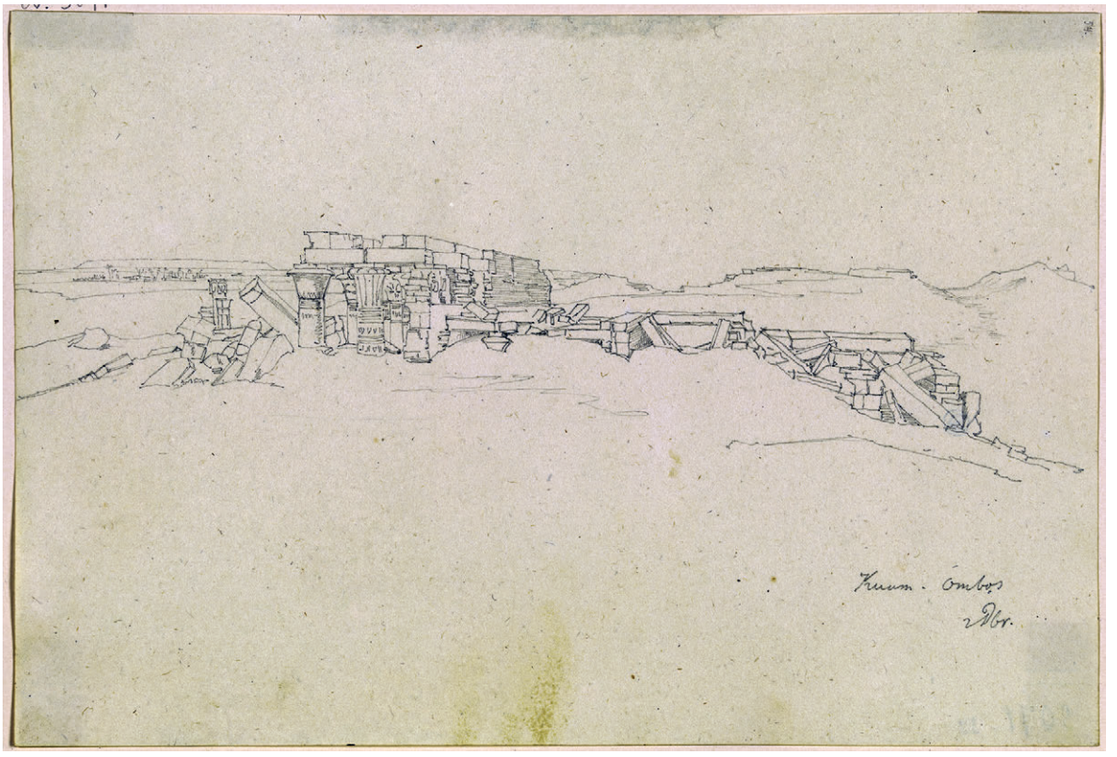


Fig. 45 Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, Kuum Ombos (Städelsches Institut, Inv. no. 5071: CC BY-SA 4. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main)

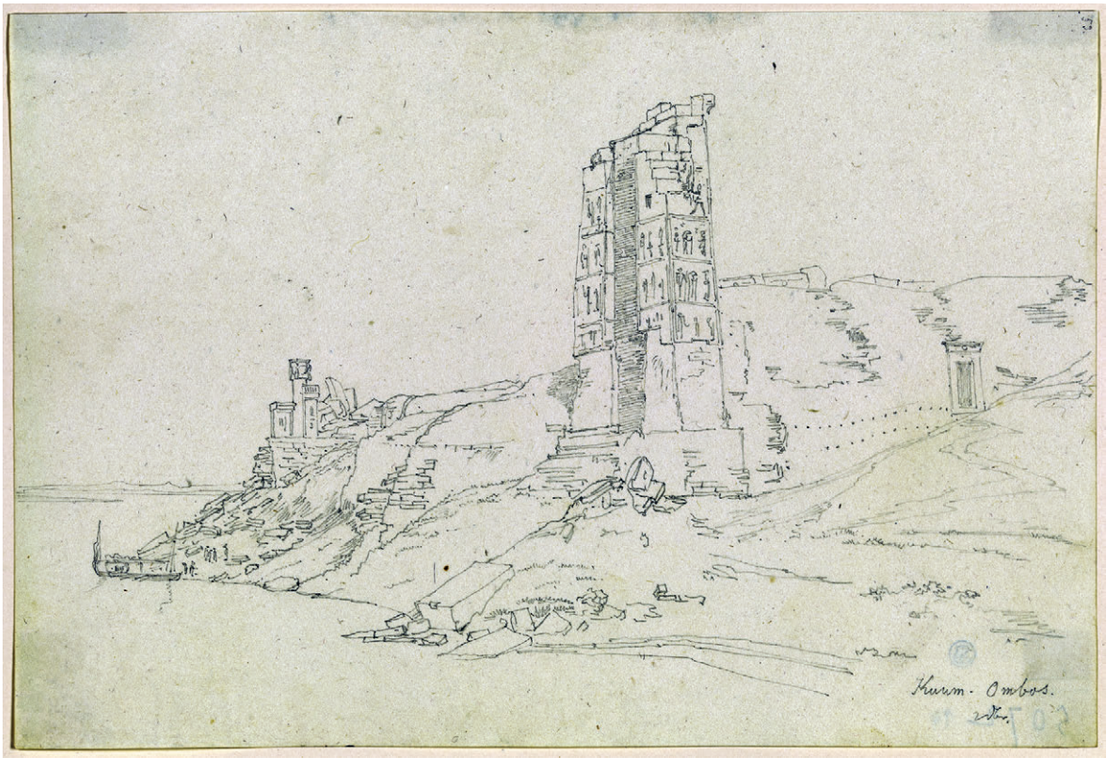


Fig. 46 Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, Kuum Ombos (Städelsches Institut, Inv. no. 5072: CC BY-SA 4. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main)



Fig. 47 Wilhelm Ahlborn, Der Tempel von Kom Ombo in Ägypten (Landesmuseum Hannover – ARTOTHEK)

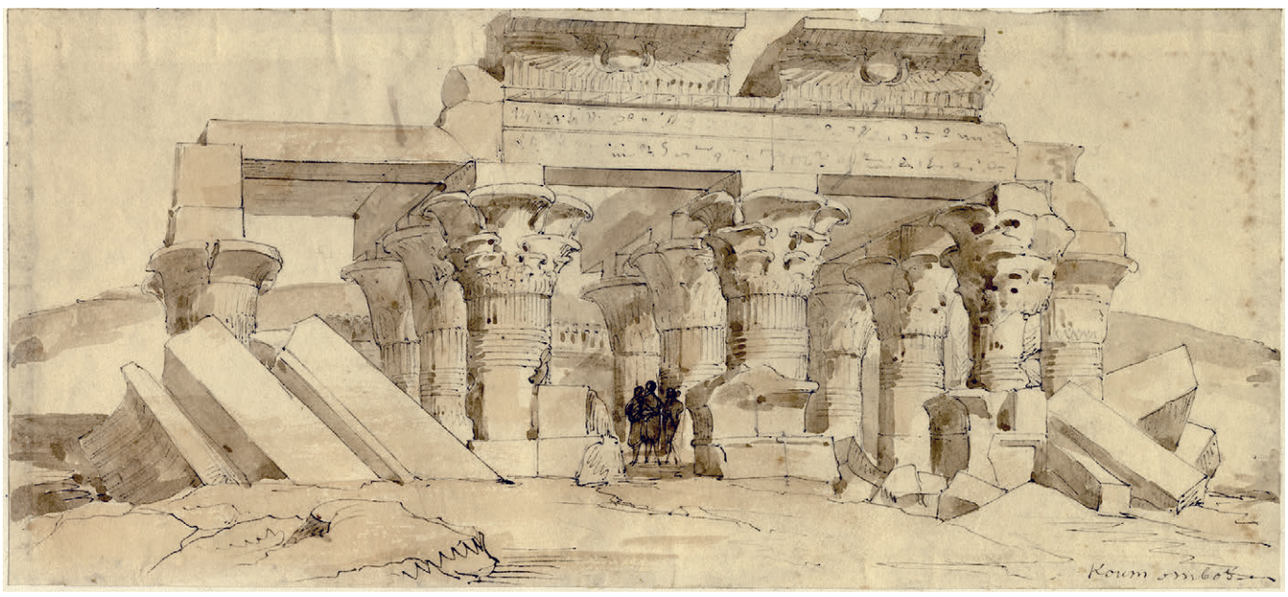


Fig. 48 Héctor Horeau, Kôm Ombo, Great Temple view (Horeau MSS 43.1. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 49 Héctor Horeau, Kôm Ombo, Great Temple. View from river (Horeau MSS 43.3. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 50 Héctor Horeau, Kôm Ombo, Great Temple view (Horeau MSS 27.1. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

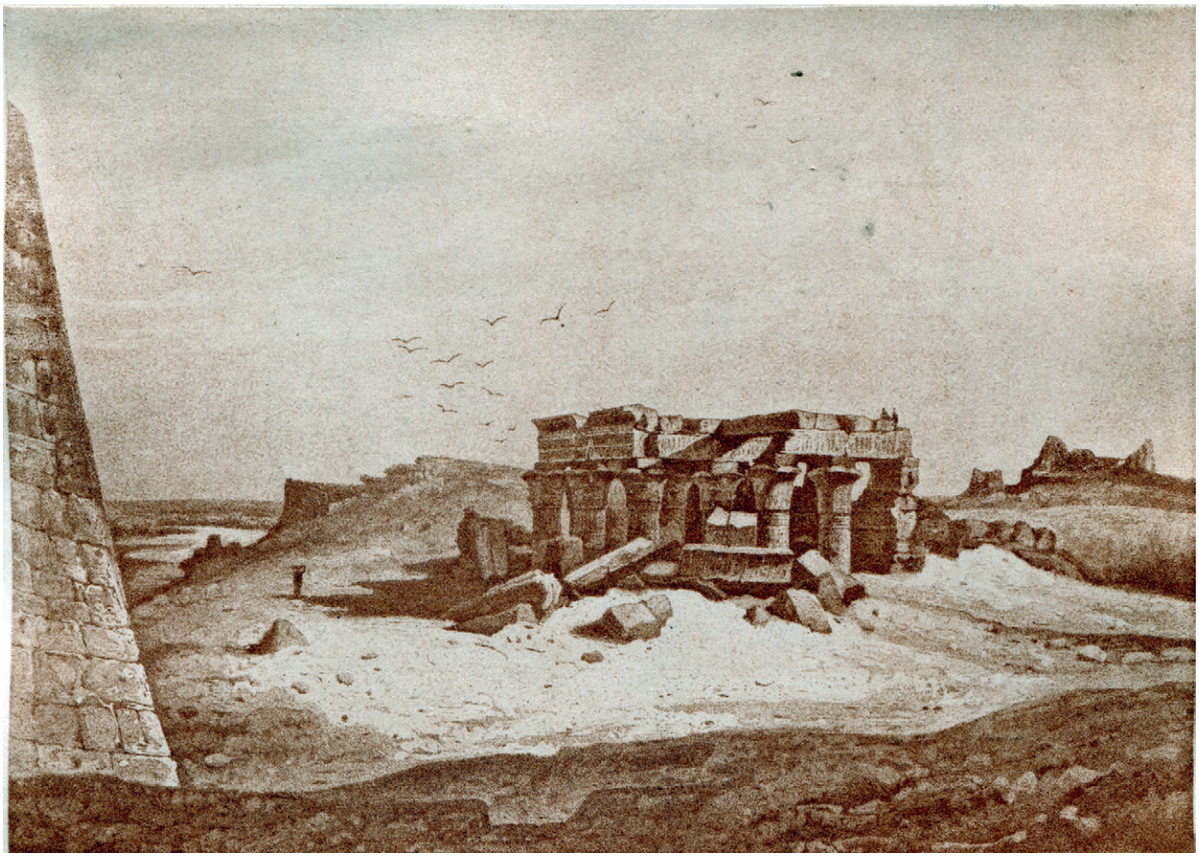


Fig. 51 Héctor Horeau, Koum Ombos (Horeau 1841, Pl. 24)

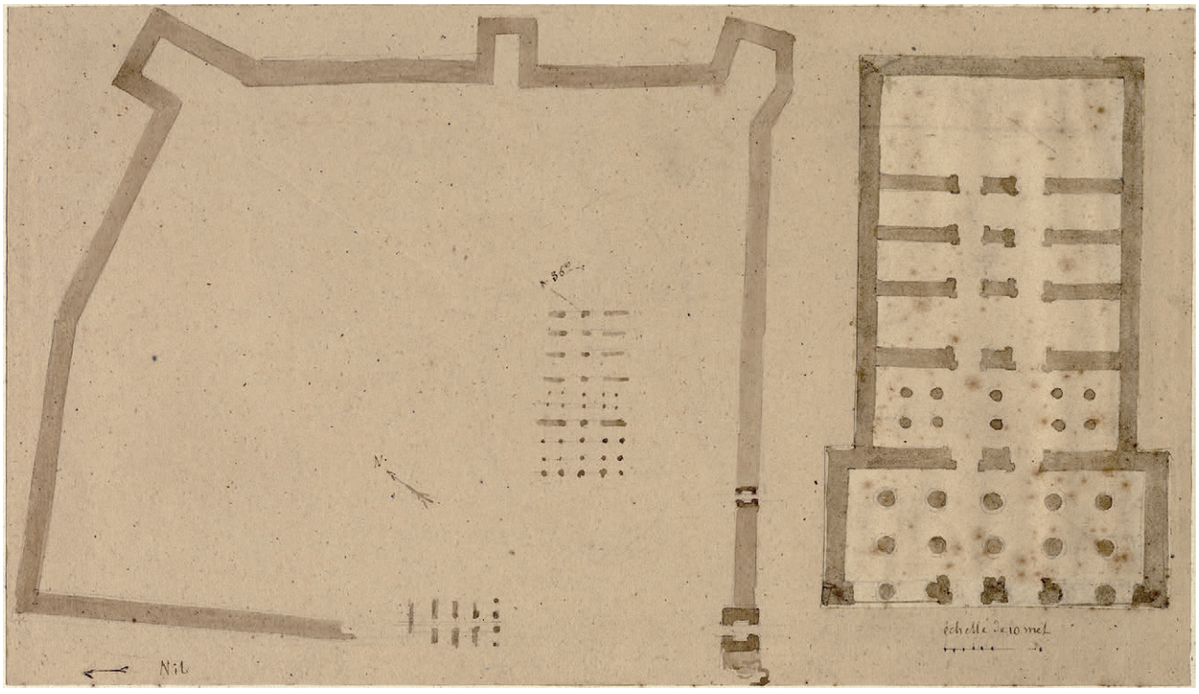


Fig. 52 Héctor Horeau, Kôm Ombo, Great Temple plan (Horeau MSS 43.2. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)



Fig. 53 David Roberts and Louis Hague, Kom Ombo Nov 21st 1838, Lithography (Roberts 1846–49, Vol. 1, pl. 6; Library of Congress, reproduction no. LC-USZC4-3953)

Panorama d'Égypte (1841, Fig. 51).[320] Finally, the ground plan (MSS 34.2) is a mere copy from the *Description de l'Égypte* (Fig. 52).

In November 1838, David Roberts spent two days at Kom Ombo, where he produced sketches and beautiful watercolours, which were, after his return to England, lithographed by Louis Haghe to be published in the magnificent *Egypt and Nubia* volumes.[321] Two views of the main temple appeared, one seen from southwest (Fig. 53), the other from the south (Fig. 55). Both display the temple as a majestic *solitaire* of sublime forms without any connection to its actual surroundings, the first one in the middle ground,[322] the other one seen from close by.[323] Roberts was masterly in creating an air of unequalled grandeur, even underscored by the gigantic fallen blocks scattered around picturesquely, which dwarfed the small groups of men present on the spot. Some specimens of the hand-coloured lithographs show vivid colours, but it is not clear to what extent Roberts actually saw colours in situ. The original watercolours by Robert's own hand of both the view from southwest in a private collection (Fig. 54),[324] and the view from the south, preserved at the Yale Center for British Art, show hardly any traces of faded colours (Fig. 56).

Roberts also used his sketches for the creation of a large oil painting in 1842/3,[325] which is much more colourful when compared to the lithos (Fig. 57). A very blue sky is set against the yellow of the desert sand, the temple itself is abundantly colourful, but it seems that the colours were deliberately applied by the artist. Again, the main temple, moved almost to the background of the picture, towers like a dazzling marvel. All secondary buildings are removed from the picture to stress the temple's uniqueness, but at a considerable respectful distance (hence in the foreground), men and camels are grouped around a couple of large fallen granite columns, which are definitely not there in reality. In 1853, Roberts painted two more pictures of Kom Ombo, referred to as "Morning" and "Evening". Christie's auctioned the former on 29th March 1996.[326] Although undoubtedly a beautiful picture, it fits more closely into the conventional framework of Victorian painting than the earlier versions, which display a more distinct style.

In sharp contrast to Roberts' pictures is the view of the site by Heinrich von Mayr,[327] who travelled in the entourage of Duke Maximilian Joseph in Bayern (the father of the future Empress Elisabeth of Austria) and published his images in a folio volume in 1840.[328] Kom

320 Horeau 1841, pl. 24.
321 Roberts 1846–49.
322 Roberts 1846–49, vol.2, pl. 41.
323 Roberts 1846–49, vol.2, pl. 42.
324 Private collection, courtesy of Bridgeman Images.
325 Ruins of the Temple Kom Ombos, Upper Nile, Egypt. Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service, accession no. 52.
326 <http://www.artnet.com/artists/david-roberts/morning-ruins-of-kom-ombo-exjkiP80_4_w2MuktMsUgA2> (last access 13 April 2021).
327 Born Nuremberg 1806, died Munich 1871.
328 Mayr 1840, 79.



Fig. 54 David Roberts, Koum Ombo Nov. 21st 1838, pencil and watercolour on grey paper (photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images)



Fig. 55 David Roberts and Louis Hague, Lithography, Kom Ombo Nov. 21st 1838 (Roberts 1846–49, Vol. 2, pl. 42; Library of Congress, reproduction no. LC-USZC4-3999)



Fig. 56 David Roberts, Koum Ombo Nov 21st 1838, watercolour (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, call no. B1977.14.6252)



Fig. 57 David Roberts, Ruins of the Temple, Kom Ombos, Upper Nile, Egypt. Oil (Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service, accession no. 52, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial licence (CC BY-NC))

Ombo is seen from quite a distance, and the temple precinct is just a part of a larger picture, which includes more remains of the adjacent brick walls of a settlement than any earlier image (Fig. 58). Considering the scarcity of depictions of the ruins that surrounded the temple precinct, it is tempting to grant Mayer's picture a particular significance. However, it is far from clear how accurately these ruins are rendered and how much is just made up. For clarification, a watercolour by the Viennese painter Alois Schönn[329] may have been helpful. This was exhibited in 1852 at the Austrian *Kunstverein* under the promising title "The ruins of the temple of Ombos in Upper Egypt and the remains of the former capital Ombo",[330] but most unluckily, the whereabouts of the picture are unknown and no reproduction of it exists.

In the 1840s and 50s, a rather large number of engravings and otherwise mechanically reproduced images of Kom Ombo became available, but hardly any new aspects were displayed and most of these products were of only average artistic quality. However, there were still outstanding pictures.

A special case is Adrien Guignet's painting "Flight to Egypt" from 1848, where the distinctive outline of the temple of Kom Ombo is positioned in a completely strange environment, used together with a couple of pyramids as a visual marker for "Egypt" as the place of refuge for the Holy Family (Fig. 59).[331]

The multitalented poet and prolific painter Edward Lear[332] visited Kom Ombo during his second and third trips to Egypt in 1853/4 and 1866/7. En route, he sketched landscapes and monuments in his distinctive luminous style, and later he made use of these sketches to work up elaborate watercolours and oil paintings. During both trips, he made several sketches at the site, which all have in common the fact that the sanctuary is

329 Born Vienna 1826, died Krumpendorf am Wörthersee 1897.

330 Ausstellung des Österreichischen Kunstvereines. Monat November 1852, No. 69. "Die Tempelreste von Ombos in Ober-Egypten mit den Trümmern der alten Hauptstadt Ombo."

331 Musée des Beaux Arts, Angouleme. See Meulenaere 1992, 124.

332 Born Highgate (London) 1812, died San Remo 1888.

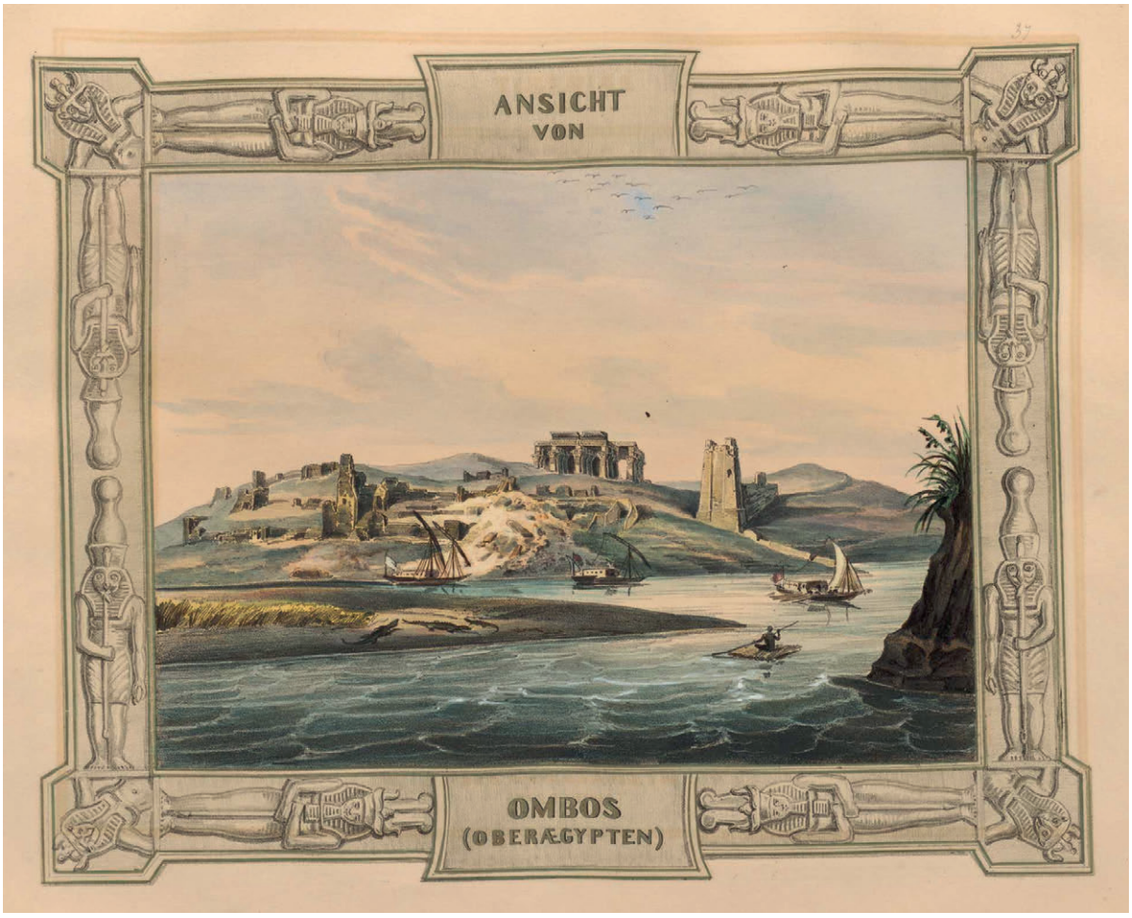


Fig. 58 Heinrich von Mayr, Ansicht von Ombos (Oberaegypten) (Mayr 1840)

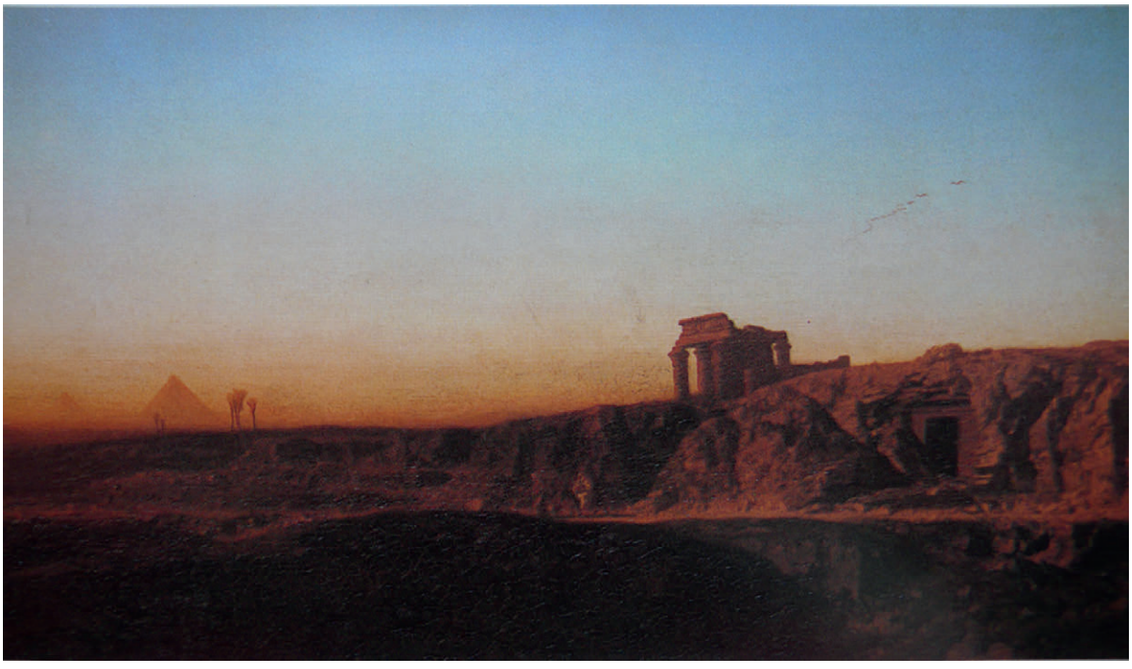


Fig. 59 Adrien Guignet, Fuite en Egypte (n° inv. 849.1.1. © le Musée d'Angoulême)

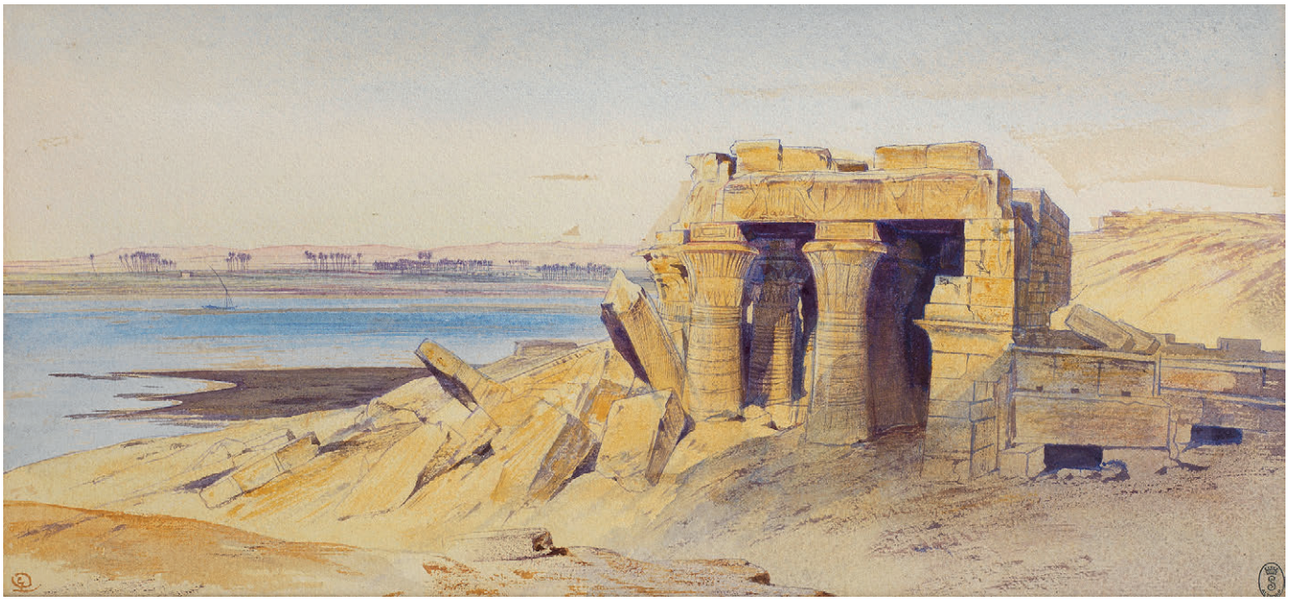


Fig. 60 Edward Lear, Kom Ombo, pencil and watercolour (Bonhams)

embedded in a wide landscape panorama, usually allowing long distance views along the Nile valley, often with a most evocative lighting.

The University of Harvard's Houghton Library keeps among its large collection of Lear pictures two sketches of Kom Ombo, both made on 10th February 1854. One, seen from the south, offers a beautiful view over the Nile towards the west bank. The shadows seem to indicate that it was drawn in the morning.[333] A more sophisticated version of the same view, probably accomplished after the artist's return to England, was formerly in the Earl Spencer collection.[334] The differences mainly lie in the further elaboration of the latter image (Fig. 60).

The second sketch shows the sanctuary from the north in the afternoon.[335] In 1855/6, Lear reworked a similar view from the north into a spectacular oil painting that lets the eye wander over a wide panorama of the river (Fig. 61). The shadows indicate that it is early morning, when the sunbeams have just arrived at the upper parts of the temple. Reddish, bluish, and purple mists still linger over the water, and formations of wild geese are starting their morning flight, whereas a couple of vultures seems to have just awoken. A watercolour bearing the note "Kom Ombos Febr 20 1867" displays an almost identical view, but was made slightly later in the day, when the colourful morning mist had vanished and given way to the clear Egyptian daylight; a first felucca is floating on the smooth water of the river (Fig. 62). Clearly, Edward Lear was more concerned with nature than with architecture, and in some way, the temple of Kom Ombo in his pictures was reduced to the role of a sumptuous frame for the incredible beauties of Egyptian nature.

The young gifted Austrian artist Hubert Sattler[336] seems to have visited Kom Ombo on his way back from Nubia early in the year of 1845, but it was several years later, in 1861, that he made the temple of Kom Ombo the subject of one of his monumental "Kosmorama" paintings (Fig. 63).[337] This was a series of large-scale oil paintings displaying beautiful and interesting places worth seeing from all over the world, which the artist painted after his extensive travels and did not sell but exhibited at a pavilion specially constructed for that purpose.[338] There is no doubt that Sattler made sketches and drawings at the site, but unfortunately, except for a

333 Houghton Library, pga_ms_typ_55_26_812.

334 See <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/26001/lot/73/> (last access 17 June 2021).

335 Houghton Library, pga_ms_typ_55_11_813

336 Born Salzburg 1817, died Vienna 1904.

337 Salzburg Museum Inv. no. 5655-49. See: Salzburger Museumshefte 2014, Cat. no. 10: Die Ruinen des Tempels von Ombos in Oberegypten.

338 The Salzburg Museum keeps 136 of these "Kosmoramas".



Fig. 61 Edward Lear, Kom Ombo Temple, oil on canvas (private collection, photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images)



Fig. 62 Edward Lear, Kom Ombos Febr 20 1867, pencil & watercolour on paper (photo© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images)



Fig. 63 Hubert Sattler, Die Ruinen des Tempels von Ombos in Oberegypten (Salzburg Museum Inv. no. 5655-49)

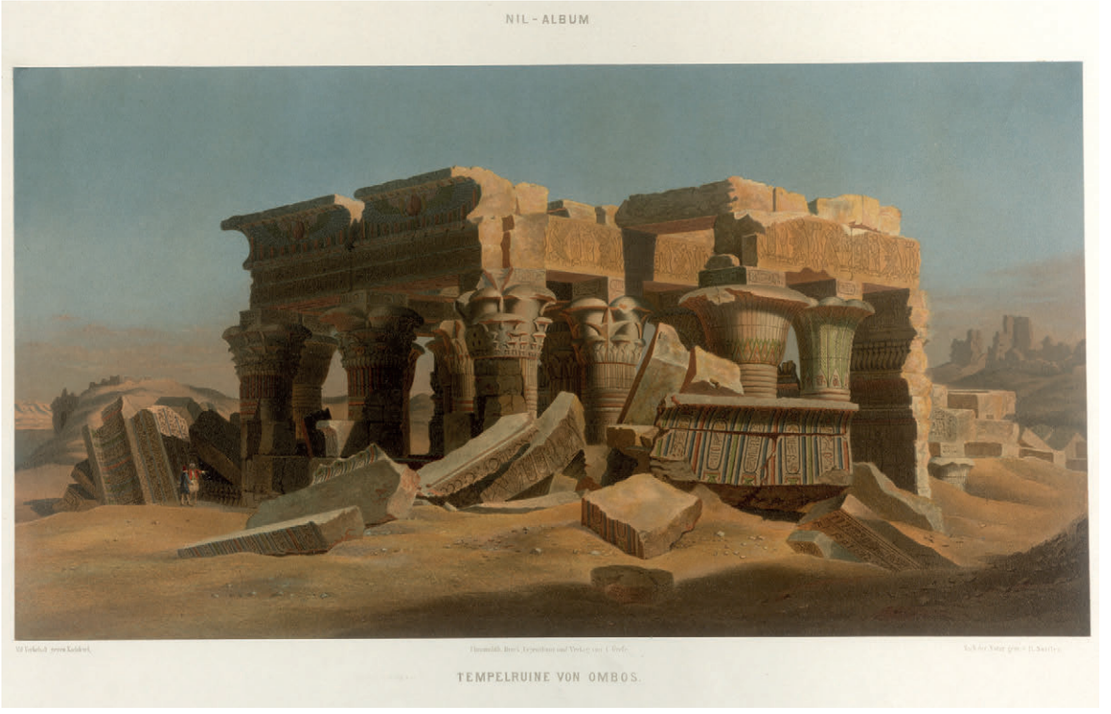


Fig. 64 Anna Lynker und Conrad Grefe nach Hubert Sattler, Tempelruine von Ombos, Lynker and Grefe n.d. (ÖNB: https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DOD_53017&order=1&view=SINGLE)

few sketched details of capitals and decorations, these materials seem to be lost. Probably Sattler, after having worked up his preparatory pictures to a large oil painting, discarded them and only kept those which could possibly be useful in the future as models for more "Kosmorama" paintings. Under a very wide blue sky, the temple is exposed to strong sunlight, which creates heavy contrasts of light and shade. Sattler must have been there in the late morning, since the main façade of the temple, oriented westward, lies in heavy shade and is almost unrecognisable. This unusual feature adds an element of originality to a subject that had otherwise become somewhat conventional. Looking more closely, it becomes clear that Sattler was greatly concerned with details, such as wall decoration, capitals and hieroglyphs. In contrast to most other painters, Sattler's rendering of hieroglyphic inscriptions is always correct, as if made by an Egyptologist. Some of the fallen blocks show the remains of faded colours, and there can be no doubt that Sattler saw them on the spot. Despite the picture's detailed accuracy, Sattler created a lively work of art, including an enjoyable view down the river with its boats, a picturesque brick ruin in the background and finally, a group of visitors. Hardly visible in the shadow stands an admiring traveller in a light-coloured tailcoat, probably the artist himself.

The Austrian Anna Lynker[339] was a trained artist, but seems to have earned her living as the housekeeper of the Austrian ambassador at the Sublime Porte, Anton von Prokesch-Osten.[340] In that capacity, she lived for some time in Constantinople and obviously took the opportunity to travel in the countries of the Ottoman Empire, including Egypt and even Nubia (between c. 1864 and 1870), where she reportedly made a great number of drawings and watercolours, whose whereabouts, for the most part, are not known today.[341] At an unknown time in the latter half of the 19th century (probably between 1870 and 1875), Anna Lynker published a folio volume called *Nil-Album* with 32 of her Egyptian images, which Conrad Grefe had transformed into chromolithographs.[342] Surprisingly, two of the pictures were not by Lynker herself, but by a "guest artist": Hubert Sattler. Thus, Sattler's views of Soleb (Sudan) and Kom Ombo found their way into this beautiful but extremely rare volume (Fig. 64). Compared to Sattler's painting, the temple is moved slightly into the foreground, the contrasts between light and shade are mitigated and the group of visitors is altered, but the lithographer maintained Sattler's painstakingly correct rendering of hieroglyphs and decorations.

The Austro-Hungarian artist Ludwig (Lajos) Libay[343] also published a magnificent folio volume in 1857, with 60 lithographed plates of Egypt and Nubia (and one of Constantinople).[344] Libay travelled in 1855/6 in Egypt and Nubia in the company of the wealthy Viennese Count Joseph Breunner, who also funded the magnificent publication. On 29th February 1856, their dahabiya moored at Kom Ombo, where the Count went hunting, while the artist was drawing at the temple site (Fig. 65). In his picture, a strange air of destruction is perceptible instead of the traditional romantic decay. The ruined temple seems to be threatening to collapse and the area around it looks dirty rather than sandy. Libay's art is positioned exactly between the old tradition of Biedermeier and the evolving realism of the latter half of the century. In Egypt, Libay was one of the first painters who realised the particularity of the strong Egyptian light and its special atmospheric conditions and sought to make that visible in his paintings. His imbalanced Kom Ombo picture testifies to Libay's experimental approach, but not its final success.

Interestingly enough, a watercolour from 1861 by another painter of the same generation, the German Friedrich Otto Georgi,[345] displays a similar instability and sense of impending collapse of the temple as well as showing the inhospitable surroundings (Fig. 66).

Bernhard Fiedler[346] came to Kom Ombo in 1855, travelling in the company of King Leopold II of Belgium. His rendering of the site (a drawing with watercolour) juxtaposes the buildings highlighted in white against a colourless gloomy background, thus creating a rather odd pictorial effect (Fig. 67).[347]

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339 Born Vienna 1834, died Abbazia (Opatija) 1928. For Anna Lynker see Danzer 2020, 98–193.

340 According to G. Danzer, "Lynker worked as (travel) companion and scientific assistant for Prokesch-Osten." Danzer 2020, 99.

341 But see Tavčar and Buh 2013.

342 Lynker and Grefe n.d. Only five copies of this edition seem to be known, one of these in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Rar 2350), BSB-ID 8492004. Ferdinand de Lesseps is reported to have owned a copy of Nil Album (Danzer 2020, 99). Three copies from former Imperial Austrian ownership are kept in the Austrian National Library.

343 Born Banská Bystrica (Neusohl) 1814 or 1816, died Vienna 1888.

344 Libay 1857.

345 Born Leipzig 1819, died Dresden 1874. Georgi was a draftsman of the Prussian scientific expedition to Egypt led by Carl Richard Lepsius from 1844 until 1845.

346 Born Berlin 1816, died Trieste 1904.

347 See <https://www.watercolourworld.org/painting/view-temple-kom-kombo-tww470d5875526464> (last access 23 March 2021).



Fig. 65 Karl Ludwig Libay, Tempel von Kom Ombu (Libay 1857, pl. 71)



Fig. 66 Friedrich Otto Georgi, Kom Ombo (© Berko Fine Paintings, Knokke-Heist)



Fig. 67 Bernhard Fiedler, Ombos febr. ¯855 in Ober Egypten (Archives of the Royal Palace (Brussels))



Fig. 68 Amelia Edwards, Temple of Kom Ombo, Upper Egypt (Edwards 1877)

After the visual crisis that accompanied the evolving of a new artistic style in the second half of the century, younger artists returned to a more quiet and balanced view of Kom Ombo. Amelia Edwards, who was more than just an amateur artist, made drawings and sketches during her famous voyage "1000 miles up the Nile" in 1873, and published one view of the temple of Kom Ombo in her celebrated travelogue (Fig. 68).[348] She starts her description with the words "Kom Ombo is a magnificent torso". After this enthusiastic revelation, it is slightly disappointing to see that the illustration is a fine, but rather conventional image.[349]

The German watercolourist Carl Werner belonged to the former generation,[350] but the pictorial harvest of his journeys to Egypt in 1862 and 1864 followed the prevailing style of his time. After his return from the Orient, he reworked his sketches taken on the spot into accomplished watercolours, 24 of which were transposed into lithographs, which he published in a beautiful folio volume (*Nilbilder*) in 1881.[351] Among these is his image of the site of Kom Ombo, based on a watercolour from 1877 (Fig. 69). The picture seems to radiate a civilised placidity, the former wildness and inaccessibility of the site has vanished. The buildings are reflected in the calm waters of the smooth river, whose idyllic appearance is not even altered by the presence of a crocodile, and the long shadows of late afternoon are nicely spread over the picture.

Carl Werner also contributed to Georg Ebers' magistral publication Ägypten in Bild und Wort, whose second volume, which covers Upper Egypt, appeared in 1880.[352] The volumes are sumptuously illustrated by woodcuts, including a close-up view of the Pronaos of Kom Ombo by Werner,[353] a quiet, well-balanced image, which is both informative in details and aesthetically appealing (Fig. 70). In 2011, an excellent watercolour from 1877 that was clearly the basis of the woodcut illustration in Ebers' book was auctioned at Sotheby's.[354] The masterly picture testifies to Carl Werner's reputation as one of the leading watercolour painters in Germany (Fig. 71).

When Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria visited Egypt in spring 1881, he was accompanied by the painter Franz von Pausinger.[355] Pausinger worked up his sketches taken on the spot into large-size charcoal drawings, which were later transformed into xylographs to illustrate the Prince's travelogue.[356] Pausinger's

348 Edwards 1877.

349 For an authentic watercolour of Kom Ombo by Amelia Edwards see: <https://thamesandhudson.com/news/the-unsung-women-of-egyptology/> (last access 2March 2021).

350 Born Weimar 1808, died Leipzig 1894.

351 Werner 1881.

352 Ebers 1879/1880. English edition: Ebers 1881/1884.

353 Ebers 1879/1880, vol. II, 379.

354 Sotheby's November 2011, Travel, Atlases, Maps & Natural History, London, lot 125.

355 Born Salzburg 1839, died Salzburg 1915.

356 Österreich 1884.



Fig. 69 Carl Werner, Kom Ombo, Werner 1881 (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



Fig. 70 Carl Werner, Tempel von Kom-Ombu (Ebers 1880, 379)



Fig. 71 Carl Werner, The Temple of Kom Ombo, watercolour (courtesy of Sotheby's)

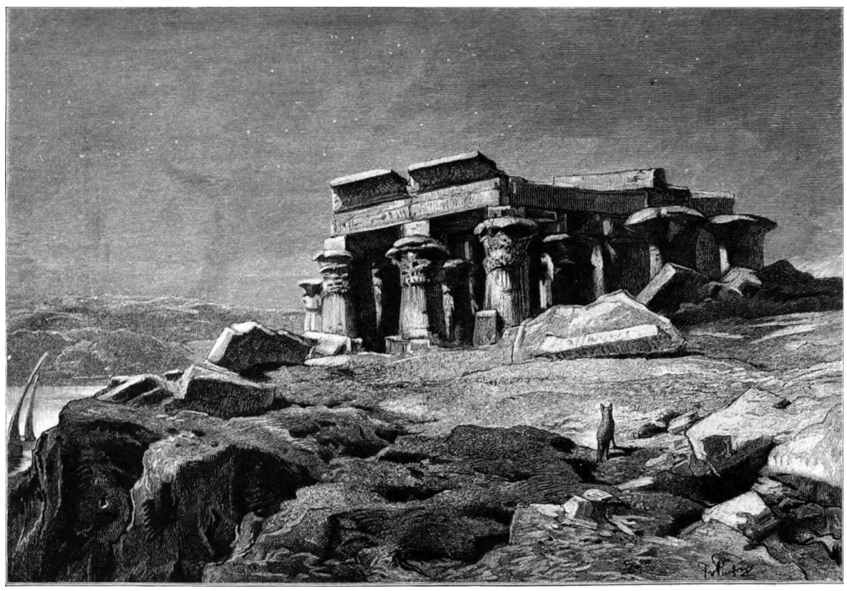


Fig. 72 Franz von Pausinger, Kum Ombu (Österreich 1884, 63)



Fig. 73 Elihu Vedder, Nile Journey, No. 27: Kom Ombo, February 23, 1890. Oil chalk on blue paper (Collection of the Hudson River Museum. Gift of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1955 (55.24 K))



Fig. 74 Ivan Fedorovich Choultsé, The Ruined Temple of Kom Ombo (courtesy of Sotheby's)



Fig. 75 John Somerscales, The temple of Kom Ombo, 1912 (Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library, Preston, England)

picture of Kom Ombo is a rare image of the site at night (Fig. 72).[357] Rudolph remembers that it was a wonderful night, the moon being so bright that he could easily hunt. Consequently, a fox is depicted on Pausinger's illustration. The temple of Kom Ombo appears as a remote, almost mystical spot, home of wild animals.

The first major transformation of the site of Kom Ombo, which considerably altered its skyline, occurred in 1886, when a fortress was built on top of a hill close to the southeast corner of the enclosure.[358] This military structure, which came into being as a defence against a possible invasion by Mahdist troops from Sudan, was in use for only about 15 years,[359] and therefore, it scarcely appears in pictures. A drawing by the American artist Elihu Vedder from February 23, 1890, displays the new buildings annexed to the temple precinct (Fig. 73).

A much larger transformation of the site happened in 1893, when Jacques de Morgan cleared the sanctuary of sand. A big step forward for archaeology and Egyptology, it changed the appearance of Kom Ombo for ever. Many hitherto unknown structures were revealed, such as the forecourt, several minor chapels and cultic installations, and the inner rooms of the main temple became accessible. However, the romantic appeal of the site was gone. Thus, it is no wonder that some artists continued to depict Kom Ombo as it had looked previously. Such a case seems, for example, to be manifest in two paintings by Ivan Fedorovich Choultsé,[360] a Russian landscape painter, who lived in French exile from 1921 onwards. Both paintings show the temple of Kom Ombo in its former appearance under a dark blue starry sky. One of the paintings is dated to 1911 and was exhibited in Moscow in the same year; the second one was probably painted after Choultsé had emigrated, because his signature is in Latin letters instead of Cyrillic (Fig. 74).[361] Choultsé travelled to Egypt in the early 20th century, so he was probably aware of the temple's actual appearance, but did not use it for his paintings. Choultsé is usually labelled as a 'realist' painter, but in his non-realistic Kom Ombo paintings, traits of Art Nouveau style as well as symbolism are discernible.

It is obvious that after its clearance Kom Ombo lost much of its appeal to artists, but, in fact, orientalist landscape painting was generally approaching its end in the early 20th century. However, two large oil paintings by John Somerscales[362] from 1910 and 1912 (both elements of the magnificent "Egyptian Balcony" at the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston[363]) demonstrate that even with its new appearance, the site of Kom Ombo had a large potential for landscape painting (Fig. 75).

As already said, the interior of the temple of Kom Ombo, which was mostly – but not entirely – buried by sand, was very seldom depicted before it was cleared. A rare exception is Richard Phené Spears' excellent watercolour from 1865 in the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects (Fig. 76).[364] The wide room of the majestic Pronaos is tangible, and the magnificent capitals of the giant columns, which are in close proximity to the spectator due to the filling of the room, are meticulously rendered. A watercolour sketch by Frederic Arthur Bridgeman from 1874, seen from a similar angle, is far less accomplished and shows hardly any details but rather catches the feeling of a largely filled interior (Fig. 77).[365]

357 Österreich 1884, 63. For this picture see Dornig 2016, 127–129.
358 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019; Rose forthcoming.
359 Rose in Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 76.
360 Born Saint Petersburg 1874, died Nice 1939.
361 https://www.artnet.com/artists/ivan-fedorovich-choults%C3%A9/the-ruined-temple-of-kom-ombo-egypt-Gt55gwl6KlLMDU08Jp0iMg2 (last access December 2023).
362 1846–1945.
363 1910, accession no. PRSMG: EB4; 1912, accession no. PRSMG: EB7.
364 RIBA99040.
365 <http://www.artnet.com/artists/frederick-arthur-bridgman/kom-ombo-Eu4Uvn-Pwc64EZzjrKvdpg2> (last access 29 March 2021).



Fig. 76 Richard Phené Spiers, Topographical drawing of the Temple of Kom Ombo (Ombos), Egypt (Royal Institute of British Architects, RIBA99040)



Fig. 77 Frederick Arthur Bridgeman, Kom Ombo, watercolour (Guy Peppiatt Fine Art)

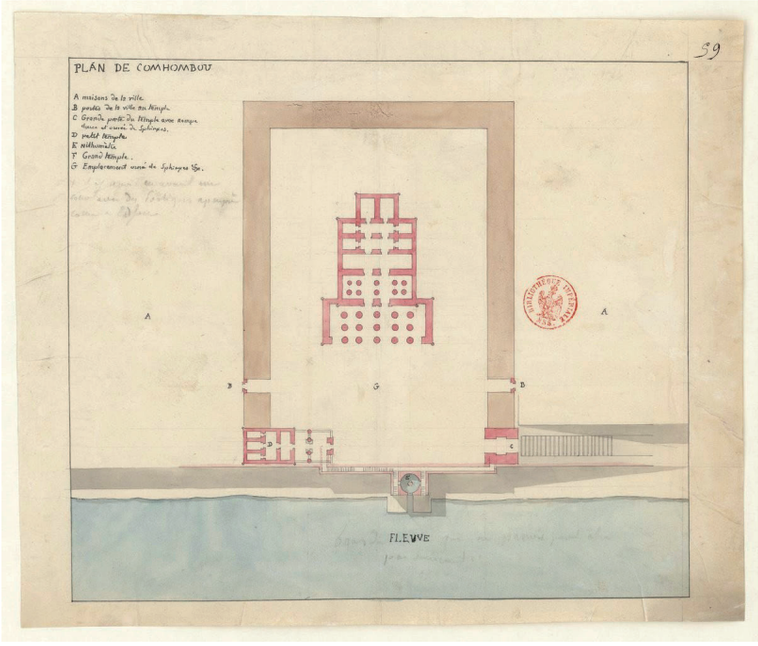


Fig. 78 Nestor l'Hôte, Plan de Comhombou (Source Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53103965n/f77.item)

Compared to other major sanctuaries in Upper Egypt, such as Edfu, Dendera and Philae, very little attention was given to details and the decoration of the buildings at Kom Ombo prior to its clearing. However, starting with the *Description de l'Égypte*, occasional records of such features were made. For example, Alessandro Ricci, when following Ibrahim Pascha into the Sudan in 1820, made a couple of sketch drawings, one of which was an unusual offering scene from the door jamb of the pylon.[366] In Champollion's *Panthéon Égyptien*,[367] a coloured plate with the goddess "Tésonénofre, Mistress of Nubt", was published, and Owen Jones displayed one capital of the Pronaos in his *Grammar of Ornament*.[368] Champollion, Rosellini and Lepsius published descriptions and some epigraphic details; studies of decoration, layout (Fig. 78) and capitals by Nestor l'Hôte (1829) and Prisse d'Avennes (1858–60?) have survived at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.[369] This kind of handmade documentation in drawing and watercolour, which is typical of the first half of the 19th century, belongs to the worlds of both research and art.

A drawing published in Rosellini's *Monumenti di Culto*[370] is highly interesting. It is of a door which was located on the outer face of the south wall of the enclosure in the vicinity of the much bigger pylon gate (Fig. 5). Its lintel was Ptolemaic, but the door jambs were original pieces of the 18th Dynasty, displaying the cartouches of Tuthmosis III and of another mysterious Pharaoh, who is known today as Hatshepsut. This enigmatic cartouche had not remained unnoticed by early travellers, and it played a certain role in the establishment of the sequence of pharaohs, which was a major topic of research in the early 19th century. This door can be seen in many early pictures, but no details are ever visible. According to de Morgan,[371] the door was removed by Gaston Maspero in 1882 and sent to the Boulaq Museum.[372]

Only a couple of months after the French scientist and politician François Arago first presented a new method of visual record, invented by Louis Daguerre and Nicéphore Nièpce, on 7th January 1839 at the Académie des sciences in Paris, the first pioneers of photography left France bound for Egypt. Arago argued that the new technique would be especially useful for the recording of the masses of hieroglyphic inscriptions, thus linking photography and Egyptology from the very beginning. However, almost nothing has survived of the earliest production of *daguerreotypes* in Egypt. It was not until the early 1850s that Upper Egypt, and thus Kom Ombo,



Fig. 79 Claudius Galen Wheelhouse, Egypt - October 03: Albumen print of "The Nile, Ruins of 'Kom Ombos' a temple a little to the north of Assouan." Dimensions 15.4 × 20.8 cm (photo by The Royal Photographic Society Collection / © Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

366 Salvoldi 2018, 116; 382, pl. 50.
367 Champollion 1823–25.
368 Jones 1856, pl. VI, 12.
369 <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc6664f> (last access 17 June 2021); <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc956028> (last access 17 June 2021).
370 Rosellini 1844, pl. 28.
371 Morgan 1895, 1.
372 See chapter 1, 15.

became a subject of photography. Once it had happened, the temple of Kom Ombo became established as an almost obligatory motif for photographers. The first two surviving photographic records seem to have been made almost at the same time, in 1850: by the Briton Dr. Claudius Galen Wheelhouse[373] and by the prominent French writer and journalist Maxime Du Camp.[374] Wheelhouse was a physician and surgeon from Leeds, who joined a private yacht touring the Mediterranean as the medical doctor aboard in 1849–50. The party, which included Lord Lincoln, travelled in Egypt as far as the First Cataract. Wheelhouse took many photographs (or rather 'calotypes' according to the procedure invented by Henry Fox-Talbot) during the journey, of which he later published a selection.[375] Despite the difficult conditions, his pictures are of amazingly good quality. The Pronaos of Kom Ombo is seen from the southwest in a close-up, a view that was later repeated countless times (Fig. 79).

Maxime du Camp, on the other hand, was travelling as part of an official mission of the French state to document the Egyptian monuments,[376] a journey which became immortalised through the participation of his friend Gustave Flaubert. He took his Kom Ombo picture on 20th April 1850. Despite du Camp's designation of his pictures as "dessins photographiques", thus implying a certain closeness to drawing, his photograph can be considered as an iconic landmark of the photographic rendering of the temple of Kom Ombo (Fig. 80). Again, the Pronaos is seen from close by, but this time from the northwest. The majestic dignity of the building is underscored by the small figure of a dark-skinned, almost naked boy, who sits on top of a column. Du Camp often added a figure to his pictures to reveal the size of the monument. The Nubian boy is recognisable in several photographs and has been identified as the boatman Hadji Ismael.[377] It is a strange coincidence that both Wheelhouse and du Camp gave up photography after returning to their respective homes. However, this may be an indication of how immensely demanding and complicated photography still was in the early 1850s.

The French civil engineer Félix Teynard[378] travelled in Egypt and Nubia in 1851–52, with the intention of creating a photographic complement to the *Description de l'Égypte*. He published his many photographs ('Calotypes') in 1853.[379] His sober image of the Pronaos, seen from a distance, testifies to the attempt at objectivity in many early photographs, as opposed to the more romantic and individual images of the painters (Fig. 81).

Robert Murray[380] was a Scottish civil engineer, who from 1851 on was employed by the Viceroy of Egypt.[381] He taught himself photography while in Egypt, took his pictures in about 1852 and published 163 of them in 1856, accompanied by a text by Joseph Bonomi.[382] Murray produced three images of the temple of Kom Ombo, one of them displaying the Pronaos directly from the front (Fig. 82),[383] and another from an elevated point of view (Fig. 83),[384] both new and surprising angles that create strong visual effects.

John Beasly Greene[385] was an American citizen who was born and subsequently lived in Paris, France.[386] He was seeking a career as an archaeologist and Egyptologist and carried out excavations at the temple of Medinet Habu in Thebes in 1855, the results of which he published in the same year.[387] In 1853, he studied photography with Gustave le Gray[388] in Paris and left for his first trip to Egypt in 1854. After returning home, he published a folio volume with 94 of his Egyptian pictures, including one of Kom Ombo (Fig. 84).[389] John Beasly Greene passed away in 1856 at the age of only 24. When his former teacher in photography, Le Gray, took a picture of the Pronaos of Kom Ombo many years later (in the 1860s), he chose exactly the same angle (from the southwest) as Greene had done in the pioneering days, with the difference that Greene's image is not a close-up but puts the temple in the middle ground and leaves quite a large portion of the picture for the sky above the building (Fig. 85).

By far the most prolific and innovative photographer active in Egypt in the 1850s was the Briton Francis Frith.[390] He first came to Egypt and Nubia (and the Holy Land) in 1856–57, again in the following year, and a third time in 1859–60. Supported by a couple of assistants,

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373 Born Snaith (Yorkshire) 1826, died Filey 1909.
374 Born Paris 1822, died Paris 1894.
375 Wheelhouse 1858–59. In 2006, a re-edition together with Wheelhouse's diary became available, Wheelhouse 2006.
376 Published as Camp 1852–54.
377 Derwitz and Schuller-Procopovici 1997, 38; 39, and fig. 11.
378 Born Saint-Flour 1817, died Saint-Martin-le-Vinoux 1892.
379 Teynard 1853; 2nd edition Teynard 1858.
380 Born Edinburgh 1822, died Sidcup (Kent) 1893.
381 For Robert Murray see Osman 1999, 10–12; 144–45, and passim.
382 Murray 1856.
383 Albertina Vienna, Inv. no. Foto2002/35/28.
384 Albertina Vienna, Inv. no. Foto2002/35/27.
385 Born Le Havre or Paris 1832, died Cairo 1856.
386 Jammes 1981; Hüttner 2016, 93.
387 Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier 1995, 177; Greene 1855.
388 Born Villiers-le-Bel 1820, died Cairo 1884.
389 Greene 1854.
390 Born Chesterfield 1822, died Cannes 1898. For Frith see e.g. Arnst 2010, 14–16; Osman 1999, 142–143.



Fig. 80 Maxime Du Camp. Haute Égypte. Temple d'Ombos, negative April 20th, 1850; print 1852, Salted paper print. 16.4 × 21.9 cm, 84.XO.1303.2.4 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 81 Félix Teynard, Kom-Ombou (Ombos). Vue générale des ruines (Teynard 1858, pl. 79; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. 1976.607.79)



Fig. 82 Robert Murray, Koum-Ombo (Albertina Vienna, Inv. no. Foto 2002/35/27)



Fig. 83 Robert Murray, Koum-Ombo (Albertina Vienna, Inv. no. Foto 2002/35/28)



Fig. 84 John Beasly Greene, untitled (Greene 1854, Tab. 22; Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52510610b/f63.item)



Fig. 85 Gustave Le Gray, Kom Ombo, Epreuve sur papier albuminé (Delon-Hoebanx, Auction : Photographies, livres et manuscrits, autographes et documents, imagerie et illustrations, cartes et plans. Mercredi 14 Novembre 2018, lot 46)



Fig. 86 Francis Frith or Frank Mason Good, Koum Ombos – columns etc. of S. E. corner, RCIN 2701202 (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021)



Fig. 87 Francis Frith. Temple of Koum Ombos, 1850–1865, albumen silver print. 15.6 × 20.8 cm, 84.XO.1180.128 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 88 Francis Frith or Frank Mason Good, Koum Ombos (Library of Congress, reproduction no. LC-DIG-ppmsca-04501)



Fig. 89 Francis Frith. Part of the Temple of Koum Ombos, 1859–1860, albumen print 7.2 × 14.5 cm, 84.XM.633.64 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 90 Francis Frith. Koum Ombos: Columns with Composite Capitals, 1859–1860, albumen print 7.4 × 14 cm, 84.XM.633.66 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

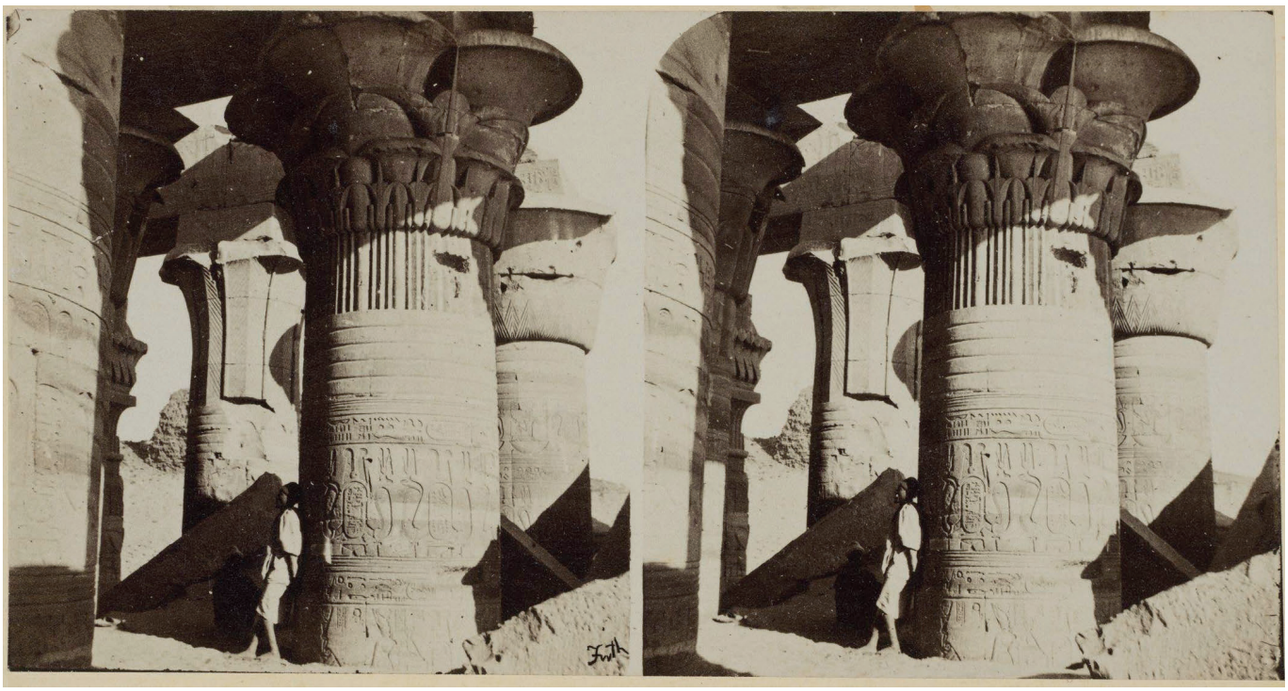


Fig. 91 Francis Frith, Koum Ombos. Columns with Palm leaf Papyrus Capitals (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



Fig. 92 Henry Cammas. [Ruins of columns and capitals], negative 1859–1860; print 1862, albumen silver print from a waxed paper negative, 8.5 × 11.2 cm, 84.XB.1233.52 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 93 Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, Kom Ombo, Temple (Colmar, Musée Bartholdi. akg-images)



Fig. 94 Jakob August Lorent, Das Nil-Thal. Kum Ombos (Lorent 1861 [1985], pl. 65)



Fig. 95 Wihelm Hammerschmidt. Outer Hypostyle Hall at Kom Ombo, mid-19th century, albumen silver photograph, image/sheet: 19.7 × 26 cm (Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Matthew Dontzin, 85.305.43)

Frith produced an enormous quantity of excellent pictures, which he subsequently published in a series of books.[391] It is often stated that Frank Mason Good, also an excellent British photographer, started his career as one of Frith's assistants. However, this is questioned by Colin Osman, who thinks that Good travelled independently and just sold his pictures to Frith. Be that as it may, Frith published in his books several pictures which were taken by Good, and in several cases, it is still not clear whether the photographs were taken by Frith himself or Good. One of these is an excellent photograph of Kom Ombo seen from the south, a copy of which the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) acquired for the Royal Collection, and which is attributed to Francis Frith (Fig. 86).[392] Another copy of the same picture is catalogued at the Library of Congress under the name of Frank Mason Good.[393] Most successful – and most amazing for the modern viewer due to their originality and overwhelming artistic quality – were a large number of stereo photographs, published in 1862.[394]

Frith repeatedly photographed the sanctuary from all sides, from near and far, devoid of humans and peopled, thus greatly augmenting the photographic repertoire in respect of Kom Ombo (Figs. 87–88). In his stereoscopic pictures, he went even further, because there he was more concerned with details, hitherto completely neglected. One picture displays the monumental door jamb of the pylon gate alone (Fig. 89), others single or small groups of columns and capitals (Figs. 90–91). With these pioneering images, Frith completely dissociated photography from painting and established it as a new, independent branch of visual art.

The Frenchman Henry Cammas[395] departed in 1859 for a lengthy stay in Egypt, and published a travelogue, followed by a photographic volume.[396] His image of Kom Ombo is a view from low down, implying decayed grandeur and loneliness. Cammas' image has a strong aesthetic impact, but a more painterly quality than those mentioned previously (Fig. 92).

Several more pictures from the late 1850s and early 1860s can be mentioned, such as those by the French sculptor Auguste Bartholdi (1855, Fig. 93),[397] the German Jakob August Lorent (Fig. 94),[398] the German Wilhelm Hammerschmidt (Fig. 95),[399] and the French photographer C. G. Fountaine, who in 1862 published an extremely rare elephant folio album, called *Photographic views taken in Egypt and Greece*, one copy of which is kept in the British Royal Collection (Fig. 96).[400]

With the establishment of commercial tourism, photography in Egypt changed its aim and character. Professional photographers opened studios in Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor and started a sort of mass-production of pictures destined for tourists. Most of these studios offered images of Kom Ombo, such as those by the photographers Antonio Beato (Fig. 97), Félix Bonfils (Fig. 98), Gabriel Lekégian, Pascal Sébah (Fig. 99), and the Zangaki Brothers (Fig. 100). All of these studio photographers (and many more) produced high quality pictures and contributed to the visual exploitation and documentation of Egypt and her ancient monuments, but as long as the site of Kom Ombo remained untouched by archaeological investigation, the pictures of it show little variety or innovation; the photographs greatly resemble each other and differences are hardly discernible. It is amazing to note how little the site changed in the approximate half century between Dr. Wheelhouse's picture and Jacques de Morgan's rendering of the temple "avant le déblaiement",[401] both photos having been shot from exactly the same angle. Only the crack in the lintel lying in the foreground increased in size.

The pictures could be purchased as souvenirs, but the production of deluxe photographic folio albums continued, such as Emile Béchard's *L'Egypte et la Nubie* from 1887 (Fig. 101).[402]

In the late 19th century, pictures which show parties of travellers near the monuments make their appearance. Whereas at more prominent sites such as Giza or Luxor these may be shots by professional photographers waiting there for tourists, in a remote place like Kom Ombo, such pictures were probably taken by well-equipped amateurs. A rare early example displaying women in hand-coloured crinolines and men in top hats at Kom Ombo has survived in the archives of the Brooklyn Museum (Fig. 102).[403]

391 I.a. Frith 1858–59; Frith 1860; Frith 1862a.
392 RCIN 2701202.
393 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.04503> (last access 2 June 2021).
394 Frith 1862b.
395 1813–1888.
396 Cammas and Lefèvre 1862; Cammas 1864.
397 Colmar, Musée Bartholdi.
398 Lorent 1861. Kom Ombo: Plate 65.
399 Brooklyn Museum Accession no. 85.305.43.
400 RCIN 2081553.
401 Morgan 1895, 3.
402 Béchard 1887. Kom Ombo: Plate 117.
403 Brooklyn Museum Archives (S1008 General Views_People, image 9816), n.d.



Fig. 96 C. G. Fountaine, Temple of Kom-Ombo, Upper Egypt 1862, albumen print | 36.2 × 47.8 cm (image), RCIN 2081569 (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021)



Fig. 97 Antonio Beato, untitled (The Temple of Kom Ombo) (Minneapolis Institute of Art, gift of Charles Herman 82.57.17)



Fig. 98 Félix Bonfils, Koum-Ombos (Égypte), 1870s, albumen silver print, 20.9 × 27 cm, 86.XA.750.30 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 99 Pascal Sébah, Der Tempel des Haroeris und der Sobek-Triade von Kom Ombo (von Süden), albumen print, before/c. 1873 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Inv. no. Ph. 145)



Fig. 100 Adelphoi Zangaki, Temple of Sobek and Horus (The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection. The New York Public Library)



Fig. 101 Emile Béchard, Le Temple d'Ombos (Bechard 1887, pl. 117; Bibliothèque nationale de France. Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84469679/f153.item)



Fig. 102 Egypt, Temple half-buried in sand (Brooklyn Museum Archives, Lantern Slide Collection: Views, Objects: Egypt. General Views; People. View 073)



Fig. 103 Théodule Devéria, [View of the Nile Through the Pillars of the Temple of Ombos], 1865, albumen silver print, 12.2 × 16.7 cm, 2009.85.58 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

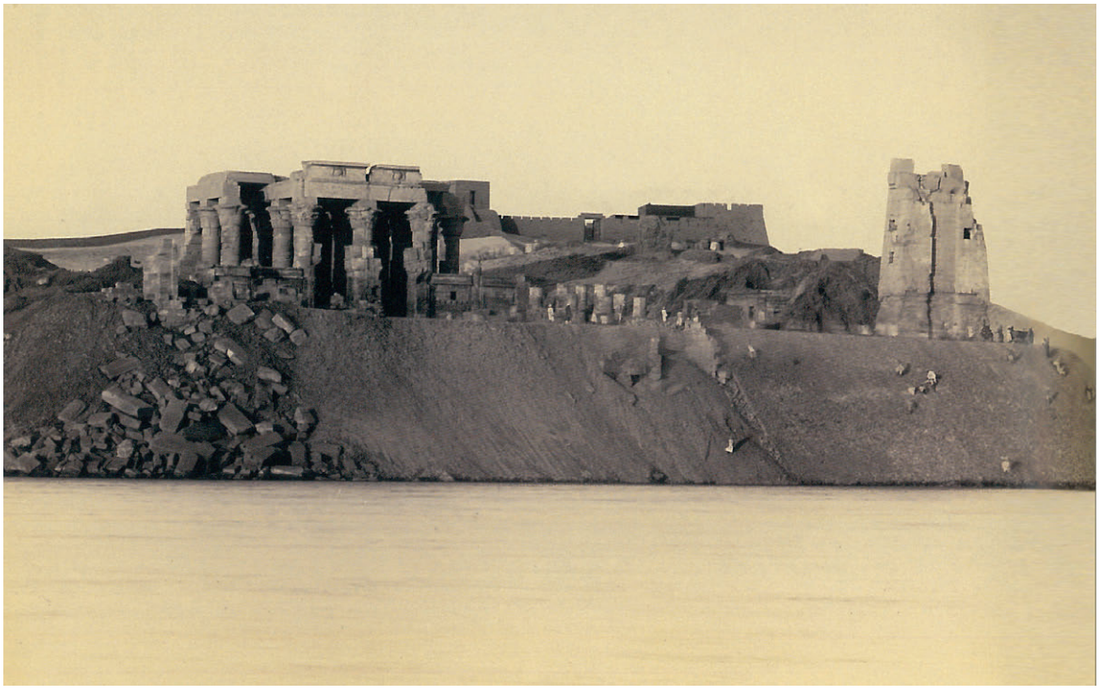


Fig. 104 Gabriel Lekégian (?), The temple of Haroeris and the triads of Sobek. View from the river (Gr. Inst 769/4167. © Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

Professional Egyptologists made increasing use of photography. One of these was Théodule Devéria,[404] who worked for the Louvre and was a close collaborator of Auguste Mariette, with whom he worked several times in Egypt in the late 1850s and 1860s. Besides being a scholar of Egyptology, Devéria was both a lithographer and a photographer, who documented his work in Egypt and the Louvre as well as his voyages in Egypt. After a trip with some friends to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1865, he published an *Album,*[405] whose purpose was not strictly scholarly. Besides two overall views of the sanctuary of Kom Ombo from the north[406] and the west[407] respectively, both of which are well-composed albeit conventional images, there is one highly innovative experimental picture. It is a *contre-jour* shot, which displays a view from the dark interior of the Pronaos to the valley and the Island of Mansoureya[408] in bright daylight (Fig. 103).[409]

The clearance of the temple by Jacques de Morgan in 1893 had a strong impact on photography. In contrast to painting, which lost one of its best beloved romantic subjects, photography now found a much more varied area of operation. The magnificently carved wall decorations now exposed to the light could be photographed, as well as the 'pillar forest' of the Pronaos, seen from new angles from inside the building, many architectonical details of the newly accessible back rooms and much more. De Morgan in his report published views of the temple before and after clearing,[410] but he offered no visual documentation of the ongoing work. Thus it seems that one photograph, presumably by Gabriel Lekégian,[411] is the only available picture which documents the transitional state of the site in 1893 (Fig. 104). It is shot from the river and displays the area at a moment when the main temple is already freed from sand, thus revealing the columns of the forecourt, but the slabs and blocks fallen from the crumbled Mammisi are still there. A lorry and workmen can be seen on the right-hand side. The Anglo-Egyptian fort is prominently visible next to the temple.[412]

A younger generation of studio photographers, such as the Austrian-born Paul Dittrich,[413] who established himself in Cairo in 1894 and became photographer to the Egyptian Court until WW I, produced new series of Kom Ombo pictures displaying the site's and the temple's altered appearance (Figs. 105a–b). In the late 1890s, the first pocket cameras became available, which enabled tourists to make their own photographic shots, as did many artists, who instead of sketches reworked their *Kodak* pictures into paintings.[414]

A very interesting, rare picture was recently found in the private archive of the Baron von Suttner family in Achau, Lower Austria. It appears to be an amateur photo taken by a member of the family during a trip to the Nile in 1901 or 1907. The picture shows the Temple of Kom Ombo seen from the river after the completion of de Morgan's work and the consolidation of the terrain by a gravel embankment, as can also be seen in the painting by John Sommerscales from 1912 (Fig. 75). The remains of the Anglo-Egyptian Fort are discernible in the background (Fig. 106).[415]

After 1899, the German pioneer of colour photography, Adolph Miethe, worked on the so-called *Dreifarbentechnik*, which was already perfected to such a degree by 1909 that it allowed Miethe to publish a collection of 45 colour pictures of monuments in Upper Egypt, including three images of Kom Ombo (Fig. 107).[416]

For a long time, colour photography remained a rare and somewhat exotic technique. Black and white photography remained prevalent, sometimes complemented

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404 Born Paris 1831, died Paris 1871. Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier 1995, 124.

405 Bajac 2013; Plantureux 1999.

406 The J. Paul Getty Museum, Object no.: 2009.85.55.

407 The J. Paul Getty Museum, Object no.: 2009.85.57

408 See chapter 4, 97.

409 View of the Nile Through the Pillars of the Temple of Ombos, Théodule Devéria, 1865. See The J. Paul Getty Museum, Object no.: 2009.85.58.

410 Morgan 1895, Le temple d'Ombos avant le déblaiement, 3; Vue générale du grand temple après le déblaiement, frontispiece; Le temple d'Ombos déblaié, 4.

411 Published by Monika von Wilmowsky in Wilmowsky 2009, No. 91, as by an unknown photographer. It is ascribed to G. Lekégian in Kunze 2010, 106, no. II.68, although the picture is not signed. The photo is also available in the archives of the Griffith Institute, where the following information is given: "Photographer: not known, perhaps Lekegian, G. ... in an album dated 1904". <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/mirage/gi04167.html> (last access 13 April 2023). See Rose forthcoming.

412 The fort is also prominently displayed on a picture shot from the Nile in de Morgan's report (Morgan 1895), p.1.

413 Born Vienna 1868, died after 1934. According to Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._Dittrich>), Dittrich passed away on "30 December 1939, Salzburg", but no reference is given. For Dittrich see Lehnert 2017, 94–107.

414 See Mariel-Seeböck 2013, 8–9; passim; fig 71, 72.

415 We would like to thank Rainer Pauer, the editor of the family archive, for pointing out this picture, and to Mr Hubertus Suttner for allowing us to reproduce the picture here. The original image is reversed. For printing, it was mirrored horizontally and digitally edited by Gernot Blümel.

416 Miethe 1909, 149–151. For Miethe see Förster 2012.



Fig. 105a Paul Dittrich, Kom Ombo (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University; Anonymous gift, 1978.233.1)



Fig. 105b Paul Dittrich, Doppeltempel von Kom Ombo, Ägypten (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv)



Fig. 106 Unpublished amateur photo from the Baron von Suttner family archive, horizontally mirrored (Baron von Suttner family archive, Achau, Lower Austria; digitally edited by G. Blümel)



Fig. 107 Adolf Miethe, Säulenhof in Kom Ombo (Miethe 1909, 151)



Fig. 108 Carl Simon, Kom Ombo, Main Entrance to the Temple (foticon-simon-008-072, © foticon images/coll. Carl Simon)

by hand colouring. The *Lichtbildanstalt Carl Simon & Co*. in Dusseldorf, Germany, founded in 1907 by Carl Simon, offered series of beautiful hand-coloured slides, which could be used for public or private lectures. One of these series was "In the wonderland of the Nile. Forays through Egypt", which included two images of Kom Ombo, possibly shot as late as 1930.[417] Available in black and white or hand-coloured, the slide "Main entrance to the temple" must have created an unforgettable impression for all who saw it (Fig. 108).

417 <https://www.foticon.de/index.php?/Bilder/sammlung carl simon/laender und regionen/aegypten/im wunderland des nils> (last access 28 March 2023).

Chapter 4 The Topography of Kom Ombo

Irene Forstner-Müller

Landscape

As is true of most of Egypt, there is a fundamental change from the ancient to the modern periods in the landscape at Kom Ombo, and the reconstruction of the ancient environment of the site and its hinterland is essential to any archaeological investigation. The riverscape defines the scope of human activity in the Nile valley both on an individual and a global level.

Both the modern and ancient cities lie in a wide basin that extends over an area of 450 km² to the east of the river Nile. The basin is filled with Late Pleistocene sediments, which are mainly alluvial river deposits but also contain material transported from the Eastern Desert into the basin via wadis.[418]

Today, as the Nile approaches the Kom Ombo area, the river begins to bend towards the east in the vicinity of the modern town of Daraw, before turning westwards again. The temple is situated at the exact apex of the bend. Approximately 2 km upriver from the apex, a small channel branches off close to the western bank, meeting the main channel downriver at the end of the bend and enclosing the island of el-Mansoureya (Fig. 109).

Until the end of the 19th century, the area around Kom Ombo was desert.[419] It was only in 1903 that it began to be converted to agricultural use, as a result of the land development and desert reclamation project initiated by the Wadi Kom Ombo Company.[420] The company funded massive irrigation works in the plain to the east of the temple, the water for which came from a pumping station in the village of Bayara. Initially, a range of crops was grown, but the success of sugarcane led to specialisation in this commodity, the construction of a sugar refinery in 1910, and the expansion of the area under cultivation.[421] The refinery and the company headquarters formed the nucleus of the modern city of Kom Ombo, which became a stop on the railway line to Aswan by 1908. The temple was then more easily accessible to visitors travelling by train, who could go from the station to the temple either by donkey or, by special arrangement, using the trolley-car belonging to the company.[422] Associated with the coming of the railway was the construction of the Kom Ombo hotel.[423] The Kom Ombo station was rebuilt in 1932 to cope with the increasing numbers of tourists visiting the site.[424]

Early accounts of the landscape of Kom Ombo

The early descriptions of Kom Ombo were, as seen in chapter 2, usually limited to the ruins of the temple and its associated structures, noting that the site was covered in sand and the ruins were collapsing into the Nile.[425] Few travellers commented on the landscape of the Kom Ombo area, and their remarks add little to the understanding of the terrain.[426] The numerous paintings, drawings and, later, photographs avoided the rather dull landscape around the temple.[427]

One can expect useful information on the landscape around Kom Ombo to come from historical maps of the region. Only in very rare cases did the cartographer have actual experience of Egypt, and instead most are reconstructions based on ancient authors or compilations derived from older sources, both written and cartographic. As an example, the map made by the French Jesuit priest Claude Sicard in 1722 was intended to show the administrative divisions and sites of ancient Egypt, although it shows the Kom Ombo area with surprising detail and plausibility.[428] Since Sicard himself

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418 Yeshurun 2017.

419 See also below and Introduction, 7.

420 Discussed in detail in Kupferschmidt 1999, 427–441.

421 An official survey map from 1927 indicates the vast scale of the ongoing land reclamation project (see below).

422 Baedeker 1908, 328.

423 "Winter in Egypt; Illustrated Guide of the Egyptian State Railways" (no author, undated), 54; the hotel is first mentioned by Baedeker (1914, 341) and was still active in 1929 (Baedeker 1929, 362).

424 Goldfinch 2010, 56.

425 For a detailed overview of the research history see chapter 2.

426 Hamilton 1809, 78 and 80. See also chapter 2, 30-31. Thompson 2000, 412.

427 See chapter 3, 47.

428 Sicard 1722.



Fig. 109 Kom Ombo and Hinterland (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

did not travel this far south in Egypt, it is not known how he obtained his information (Fig. 110).[429]

On the map, the bifurcation of the river is clear, with both branches shown as of equal width, although whether this reflected the actual situation is unknown. The map located Contra Ombos on an unnamed island in the bend of the river (see below).

Norden's map in his travelogue was orientated to the south.[430] It shows Kom Ombo and Daraw on the east bank, Binban (Banban) on the west bank, and islands,

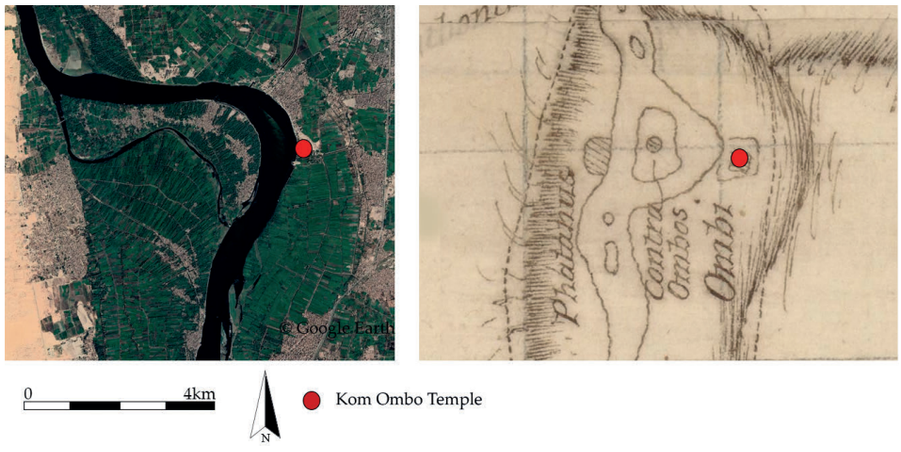


Fig. 110 Map of Kom Ombo Region: Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Map by Père Sicard, 1722 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; Sicard 1722, courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

[429] Sicard and Poncet 1845, 97–98.

[430] Norden 1755, pl. CXXVI.

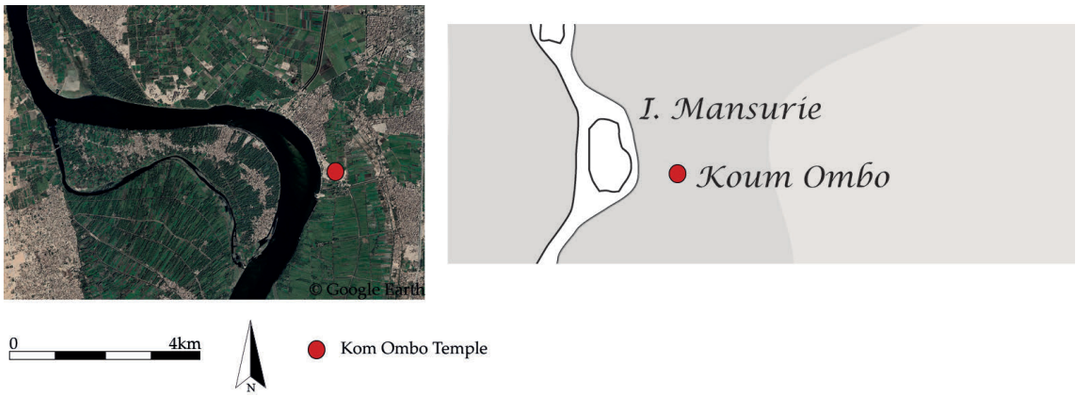


Fig. 111 Map of Kom Ombo Region: Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Map by J. d'Anville, 1765 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Antes 1800, map 1; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)



Fig. 112 Map of Kom Ombo Region: Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Map by R. Vaugondy, 1753 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; Vaugondy 1757; for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

one of which is named as el-Mansoureya, enclosed by two Nile branches of the same size. At first glance, the course of the river appears completely unrealistic, although the relationship between landmarks and settlements appears correct. However, if it is mirrored,[431] the riverine landscape and course of the river is more accurate, and suggests an error during the publication process by which the towns and villages were correctly placed onto a mirrored base map. Norden travelled in Egypt in winter when the level of the Nile was low, but whether this influenced his map is unknown (Figs. 14–15).

Vaugondy's map of 1753[432] shows Kom Ombo in relation to a large island given a slightly different name, Mansurah, which can be identified with the modern island of el-Mansoureya (Fig. 112). The main river channel runs to its west.[433] D'Anville's map of 1765 shows the same (Fig. 111).[434] Neither visited Egypt and both compiled their maps from earlier sources.[435]

The map in the *Description de l'Égypte* shows Kom Ombo and its hinterland relatively precisely and in some detail (Fig. 113).[436] Five islands are shown: el-Mansourey, el-Qalia (also on Norden's map) and three others, Daraweya, Bebabeya in the south and an unnamed island in the east. These can still be identified on the Google Earth image of 2020.

The overview plan of the site in the *Description de l'Égypte* shows that the area around the tell was not cultivated, and that there was a bay immediately to the south of the enclosure, perhaps the remains of an old Nile branch (Fig. 8).

431 I am indebted to Wolfgang Müller for this observation.

432 Vaugondy 1757.

433 <https://www.geographicus.com/P/AntiqueMap/egypte-vaugondy-1757> (last access 16 June 2021).

434 Anville 1765.

435 <https://napoleon.lindahall.org/mapping_egypt.shtml> (last access 17 February 2021); d'Anville 1766, iii–vi.

436 Description de l'Égypte 1818, flle 2, "Koum Ommbous".

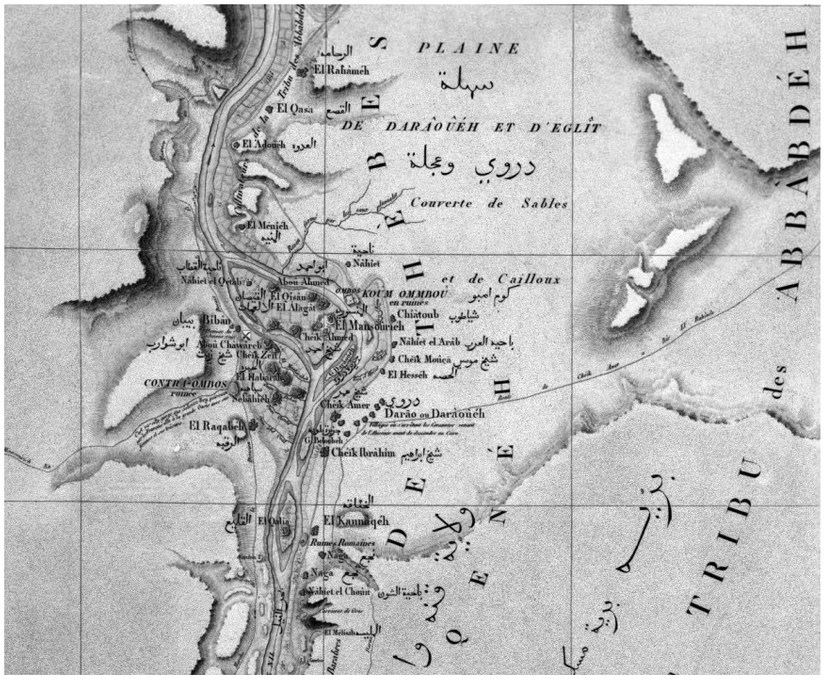


Fig. 113 Map of Kom Ombo Region (Description de l'Égypte, Vol. 37 (Atlas géographique) 1828, pl. II)

The first scientific information on the landscape around the temple was given by de Morgan and Daressy, who published a contour map of the site with the temple, tell and the river Nile (Fig. 11).[437]

They discussed the riverine landscape and the river's movement over time. De Morgan suggested that in earlier times the Nile flowed further to the west and had shifted eastwards. As a result, it had destroyed parts of the buildings on the east bank. He also assumed that at some time there was a branch of the river further to the east that encompassed the tell, an idea that will be discussed further below.[438]

> "La situation de la ville et des temples qui la desservaient explique parfaitement la disparition des ouvrages antiques et la résistance qu'ont offerte à la destruction les monuments plus récents élevés par les Ptolémées et les Romains. Le Nil, coulant du sud au nord depuis Assouan, commence à s'infléchir vers l'est à partir de Khannaqah et, passant devant Deraou, vient se heurter au pied de la colline d'Ombos d'où il reprend la direction du nord-ouest jusqu'à son entrée dans la gorge de Silsilis. Il est plus que probable qu'autrefois, au temps de la xviii[e] dynastie et aux époques antérieures, le fleuve conservait la direction sud-nord depuis Assouan jusqu'à Silsilis et passait assez loin de la rive droite actuelle du fleuve; mais la faible résistance du terrain qu'il baignait alors, terrain formé par les alluvions déposées sur un fond de sable assez mobile, ne présentait pas au courant un obstacle bien sérieux, et les eaux rongèrent peu à peu le rivage qui finit par s'émietter dans le Nil. – Pendant le siècle où nous sommes, la désagrégation du sol se continua et les travaux laissés par la Commission d'Égypte attestent qu'en moins de soixante ans une bande de terrain large de cinq mètres au moins s'est effondrée dans le fleuve entraînant avec elle une bonne moitié du petit édifice élevé au nord-ouest du grand temple. L'emplacement du sanctuaire d'Aménophis I[er], disparu maintenant sous les eaux, démontre bien aussi qu'au temps de ce Pharaon, le cours du fleuve se trouvait beaucoup plus à l'ouest. Il y a tout lieu de penser que le rivage était alors rattaché aux îles qui lui font face aujourd'hui et que le bras principal du fleuve passait au-delà de ces îles mêmes, tandis qu'un rameau secondaire se détachant vers l'est venait contourner la colline d'Ombos et rejoignait le fleuve à trois ou quatre cents mètres au nord de la ville antique. La cité et les temples d'Ombos occupent en effet

[437] Morgan et al. 1895, frontispiece.

[438] Morgan et al. 1895, 2–5.

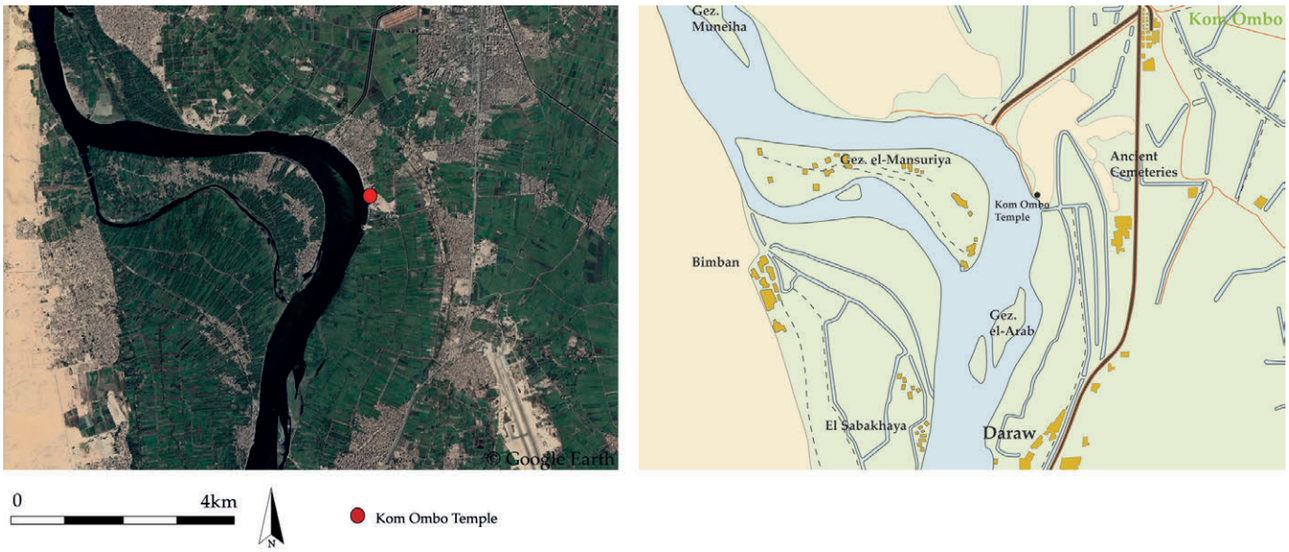


Fig. 114 Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Kom Ombo Region 1927 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from: Survey Map of Kom Ombo/Aswan Region, courtesy of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt in Cairo)

le sommet d'une colline élevée d'environ quinze mètres au-dessus du niveau moyen du Nil et séparée des terres cultivées par une vallée circulaire encombrée aujourd'hui par des sables stériles, mais qui autrefois devait laisser un libre passage aux eaux du fleuve. Ce ne sont là que des hypothèses, fort probables il est vrai, mais qui ne pourront être vérifiées que le jour où des déblaiements méthodiques auront révélé au pied du flanc occidental de la colline la présence d'un quai de pierre servant de mur de soutènement à l'enceinte de briques crues dans laquelle est enfermée Ombos.

La colline d'Ombos se termine à son sommet par un vaste plateau de forme irrégulière et d'une superficie d'environ une dizaine d'hectares; c'est sur ce plateau que s'élèvent les constructions ptolémaïques et romaines dont il a été parlé déjà et que s'étendait la ville antique noyée aujourd'hui dans des flots de sable. – Du côté sud et du côté est ce plateau descend en pente très raide à la plaine; du côté ouest la pente est plus rapide encore le terrain ayant été rongé à la base par le Nil et le sommet du plateau s'étant peu à peu écroulé. Du côté nord la déclivité est moindre et c'est par une pente relativement douce qu'on va rejoindre la vallée à deux cents mètres de là."

The riverscape

Changes to the landscape have therefore long been considered important to the understanding of Kom Ombo. This understanding of landscape transformation has been greatly enhanced by modern geoarchaeology.

The course of the Nile has changed continuously during the Holocene.[439] The most recent and significant impacts on the riverine landscape of Egypt have resulted from, firstly, the construction of the Aswan Low Dam at the beginning of the 20th century and secondly, the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, as a consequence of which the annual inundation ceased, affecting sedimentation processes and the course of the river.

Today, the most characteristic feature of the riverine landscape at Kom Ombo is the sharp bend in the river Nile already noted. Viewing it from the south, this is the first of many bends. These are typical for the course of the river in the lower Nile valley. Similar bends are located, for example, north of Luxor, in the area of Sohag and the area of Ashmunein. They are common in the Nile delta.[440]

On the modern map of Kom Ombo (Figs. 1, 109), the river splits into two branches to enclose the island of el-Mansoureya. The branches separate about 3 km south of the site, between Nagaa Baqlawis and Daraw. Today they consist of a narrow western branch (maximum width 770 m and minimum width 29 m) and a

439 Macklin et al. 2015, 122.

440 For an overview of this phenomenon in the Nile delta see the overview fold map in Bietak 1975.



Fig. 115 Left: Modern aerial view. Right: Kom Ombo Region 1949 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Survey Map of Kom Ombo Region, published in Sadragani et. al 2015, fig. 120)

significantly wider eastern branch (maximum width 2900 m and minimum width 440 m). The banks of the eastern channel are well defined, whereas those of the western branch are vague.

The narrowing of the western branch can be traced over time. On the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*, the western branch is already narrower than the eastern branch (Fig. 113).[441]

By 1927, the official survey map shows the western branch around the island was significantly smaller than the eastern one, the former being approximately 470 m wide, and the latter 860 m wide (Fig. 114).

The survey map from 1949 shows a similar situation. Whilst the bifurcation of the river around el-Mansoureya and the smaller western branch are identical to the earlier map, the riverine system to the south between Kom Ombo and Daraw is different. The older map shows a system of side branches connected to the main river, whereas on the 1949 map the connection is cut. Some of the islands on the 1927 map appear to have become attached to the east bank by 1949 (Fig. 115).

It is clear that not only did the Nile shift eastwards, but the width of the two main branches also changed over time: the western branch narrowed, while the eastern branch, which was originally narrow, became wider. The western channel was probably the main channel in earlier times and the present-day main channel may be a more recent feature.

Meandering and avulsion[442]

In fluvial geomorphology two phenomena can cause a change of the course of the river: meandering and avulsion. Both describe fluvial processes in broad alluvial plains – such as Kom Ombo – whereby a river channel changes its course. There is however a fundamental difference in the speed of the process.

Meandering is a gradual process that occurs in unconsolidated watercourses with a very low bed gradient and a high proportion of fine-grained geological material within the sediment. While the curved outer bank of a meander under formation is affected by the stronger current and thus is subject to erosion, sediments are deposited by the less strong current at the inner bank of the curve. This process can last until the ends of the river bend finally break through the soil to cut off the bend and form a new course. Once this happens, the old branch silts up because it is no longer connected to the main branch (Fig. 116).

By contrast, avulsion is a quick process in which the river changes its course and breaks through into a new bed abruptly.[443] During a very high flood event, the

441 See above.

442 The author is extremely grateful to Morgan de Dapper (†) who very generously shared his knowledge of this topic with her.

443 The author is grateful to Harco Willems for pointing out that that river landscape studies must consider the possibility of avulsion. This phenomenon was also observed in the area of el-Ashmunein, see Willems et al. 2017.

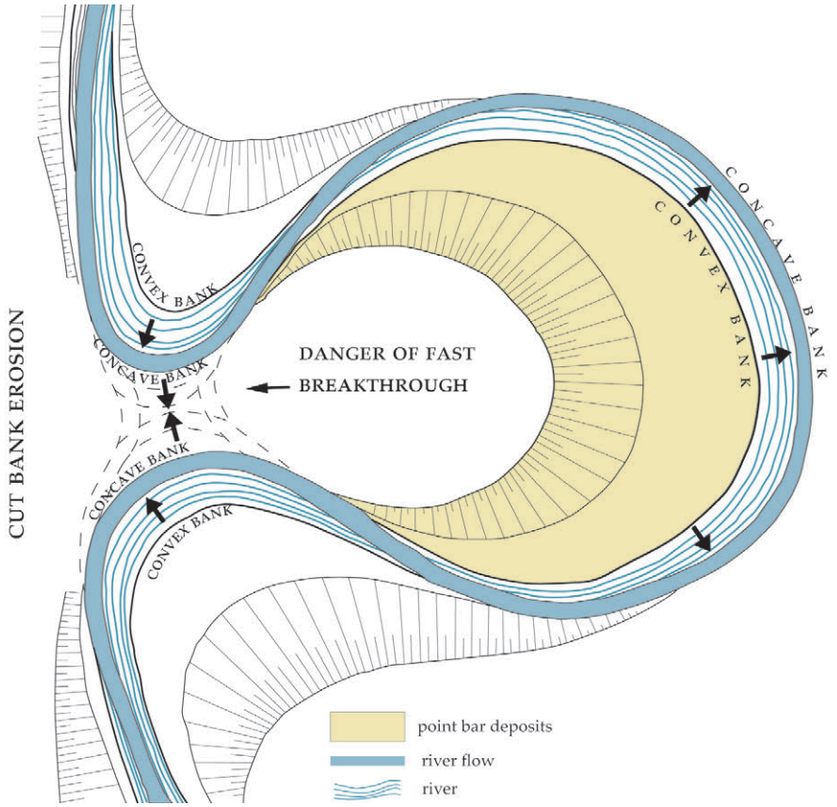


Fig. 116 Meandering (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; adapted from Bietak 1975, fig. 5)

bank/levee of the river channel is broken at a weak spot and the channel moves into a new course. The downstream part of the formerly active channel is abandoned, although it can endure for some time, be reactivated or become filled with sediment (Fig. 117).

The geoarchaeological consequences of the two processes are very different. In the case of meandering, the developing meander loops will destroy archaeological remains in their path. In the case of avulsion, a kind of island between the old and new channel is formed and archaeological remains can survive on it.

To determine which of the two phenomena, meandering or avulsion, is found at Kom Ombo, the area west of the edge of the present-day tell must be considered. On the island of el-Mansoureya a cemetery was noticed by the local inspectorate of the Ministry of Antiquities but could not be investigated[444] and is now probably destroyed. A short survey of the island in 2018 by the author did not reveal any archaeological features.

Since archaeological remains are washed away by a meandering river but are not destroyed by avulsion, the fact that traces of human activity, even if undated, were found on the island suggests that at Kom Ombo we may be dealing with the phenomenon of avulsion, with the Nile rapidly forming a new channel.

The shift of the river to the east

The movement of the river to the east and subsequent erosion of the western flank of the tell and its monuments is well documented in historical maps, illustrations and photographs.[445] On the map of the *Description de l'Égypte* (Fig. 9) the main channel of the river Nile was significantly further to the west than on de Morgan's map (Fig. 11), but even so, had made a significant impact on the remains at Kom Ombo. Denon sketched[446] and described the erosion: "Les débordements

444 Sayed el-Rekaby personal communication.

445 This river movement to the east is often observed in Egypt and can be seen at the site of Tell el-Dab'a in the eastern Nile delta (Josef Dorner personal communication) and at Memphis (Gonçalves 2024).

446 Denon 1802, pl. 41b.

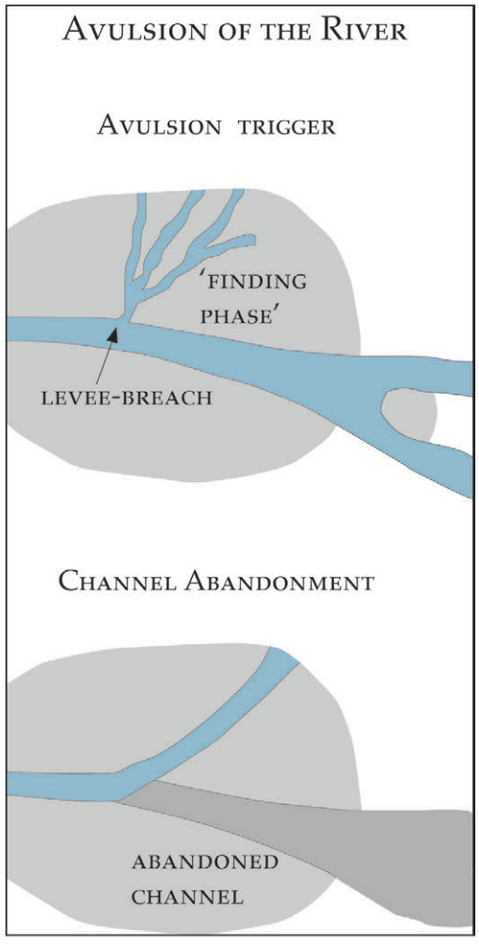


Fig. 117 Avulsion (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler adapted from Morgan de Dapper)



Fig. 119 View of Kom Ombo from the Nile, 1893 (reproduced by permission of the Griffith Institute of Egyptology, University of Oxford)



Fig. 120 Kom Ombo Region, 1904 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; redrawn from Survey map of 1904, published in Sadrangani et. al. 2015, fig. 118)

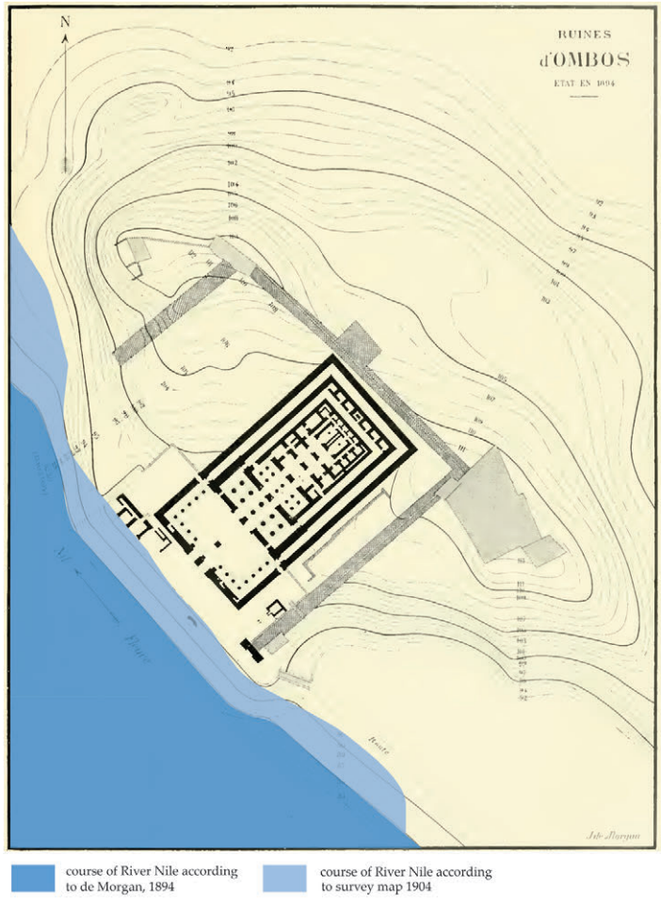


Fig. 118 Shift of the Nile to the east between 1893 and 1904 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; combination of Morgan 1894, frontispiece and Survey Map of 1904, published in Sadrangani et. al. 2015, fig. 118)

du fleuve en ont déchaussé des fondations de quarante pieds de profondeur, elles étaient construites avec la même solidité et la même magnificence que ce qui servait de décoration."[447] (Fig. 8).

The western area of the tell directly adjacent to the river edge was increasingly damaged by the river current as the river migrated. At the time of Belzoni's visit to Kom Ombo, the Mammisi bore the brunt of this damage. He recorded that parts of it had fallen into the Nile and could be seen when the water was low.[448] The precarious state of the ruins can be seen in Belzoni's image of the site from the south, with the island el-Mansoureya and the opposite (western) shore line in the distance (Fig. 42). In addition, the landing places were by then filled up with sand,[449] so that by the beginning of the 19th century, and probably much earlier, they could no longer be accessed.

As quoted above, de Morgan noted in 1895 that at least 5 m of the site had been washed away in less than 60 years. A photo from 1893 shows how dangerously close the remaining monuments were to the edge of the river by then, and shows the construction of the stone revetment to protect them from further erosion (Fig. 119).

Even between de Morgan's 1894 plan and the survey map of 1904, a significant eastward shift of the river took place, although the latter shows the location of the river bank to be similar to the modern situation (Fig. 120), which results from the revetment of the river bank. The construction of the Aswan Low Dam must also have had an effect on erosion patterns (Fig. 118).

Land expansion to the west

A more recent phenomenon is the expansion of land to the west of the temple and tell. This can be seen by

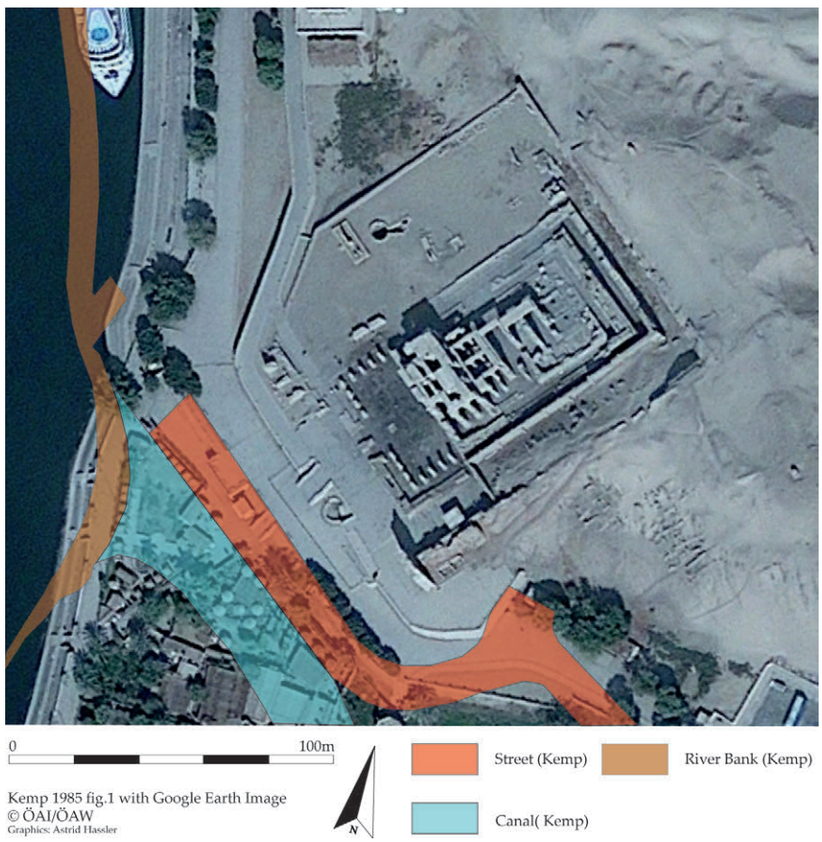


Fig. 121 The positions of the road, canal and river bank in 1979 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; adapted from Kemp 1985, fig. 1)

[447] Denon 1802, 228. Also pointed out by Sadarangani et al. 2019, 3-8.

[448] Belzoni 1820, 58–59.

[449] Belzoni 1820, 59, see also chapter 2, 32–33.

comparing the 2017 Google Earth Satellite image with the 1904 "Survey of Egypt" map (Fig. 120). This newly emerged land was already sufficiently sizeable to be utilised, as seen on the 1927 and 1949 survey maps (Figs. 114–115).[450] It presumably accumulated as a result of the change in river dynamics resulting from the construction of the Aswan dams, which meant that the alluvial land at the edge of the river was no longer removed by the annual flood.

A drain marked on the 1949 map (Fig. 115), which was still active in 1979,[451] was infilled in 1982[452] and used as the base for the asphalt road used by visitors. A sandstone block wall was built along the river's edge to stop the erosion process.[453] Thus even more new land could be used for settlement, and is today part of an archaeological park with restaurants and tourist shops along the Nile (Fig. 121).

Kom Ombo as an island

Today massive amounts of wind-borne sand overlie the edges of the archaeological remains composing the tell, the remainder of that which originally covered most of the site.[454] This obscures the landscape's appearance in antiquity.

Core drillings taken by the GWLP at the modern tell edge showed that archaeological remains did not extend beyond it.[455] They also demonstrated that the settlement originally stood on alluvial land surrounded by the Nile on all sides,[456] that is, on an island. This type of location seems to have been preferred for settlements in ancient Egypt (Fig. 122).[457] The 1949 survey map shows that the southern part of the subsidiary Nile branch that encircled the island of Kom Ombo still existed at that time (Fig. 115). Today, it remains part of the collective memory of the local population, and local farmers told the magnetometry team that part of the area under survey was previously the Nile.

The transformation of the Tell

Since the first descriptions of the temple of Kom Ombo and its surrounding landscape,[458] the size and shape of the tell have changed significantly. In addition to archaeological clearance, a huge amount of soil was removed from the tell for use as fertilizer (Arabic *sebakh*) by local farmers.[459]

The first large-scale archaeological intervention took place in 1893 under de Morgan, who removed settlement layers from within and outside the temple.[460] Parts of the tell were destroyed during this activity. Ten years later, Howard Carter made a contour map of the temple and tell area.[461] A comparison with de Morgan's map shows the enormous amount of settlement that had been removed by then (Fig. 123).

At the northern flank of the tell, which is visible on photographs from the late 19th century and on de Morgan's plan from 1894, up to 12 m of archaeological layers were removed down to the occupation level of the early First Intermediate Period,[462] the level of the modern surface from which the joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission started its excavations in 2017.[463] The enormous loss of archaeological layers can be seen by superimposing a historical photograph from 1895 over a photograph from 2019. Photos of the Roman gateway from the beginning of the 20th century show this area before and after the excessive clearing (Figs. 19, 124).[464]

Kemp demonstrated how much of the tell had been removed since the early 20th century,[465] due to "a period of some twenty years of digging around the temple".[466] He did this by superimposing the de Morgan contour map, converted into an isometric drawing, over his own sections across the tell.[467] Kemp noted that:

> "On the north-eastern side the lower slopes of the mound have been irregularly dug away along much of its length, although the sides of the quarries have been almost lost beneath sub-

450 Sadarangani et al. 2015, fig. 119.
451 Kemp 1985, fig 1.
452 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 132, fig. 121.
453 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 132.
454 See below.
455 Tom Nicholson personal communication.
456 Tom Nicholson personal communication.
457 As seen in the neighbouring towns of Elephantine, Edfu and at Tell el-Dab'a in the delta, see Müller and Forstner-Müller in print. The magnetometry survey undertaken by Herbich and his team in 2017 did not reach the depth of these layers and thus the magnetic image appears to show no structures outside of the current edges of the tell. See in detail chapter 5, 131, 133; fig. 128, 150.
458 See chapter 1.
459 See below.
460 See above and the plan of Morgan et al. 1895, frontispiece.
461 Carter 1903.
462 Kemp 1985, 41, fig. 6.
463 Forstner-Müller et al. 2019.
464 Barsanti 1915, pl. 2.
465 Kemp 1985, 41–42, figs. 1–4.
466 Kemp 1985, 40.
467 Kemp 1985, figs. 2a and 3a.



Fig. 122 Presumed course of the Nile in antiquity (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler)

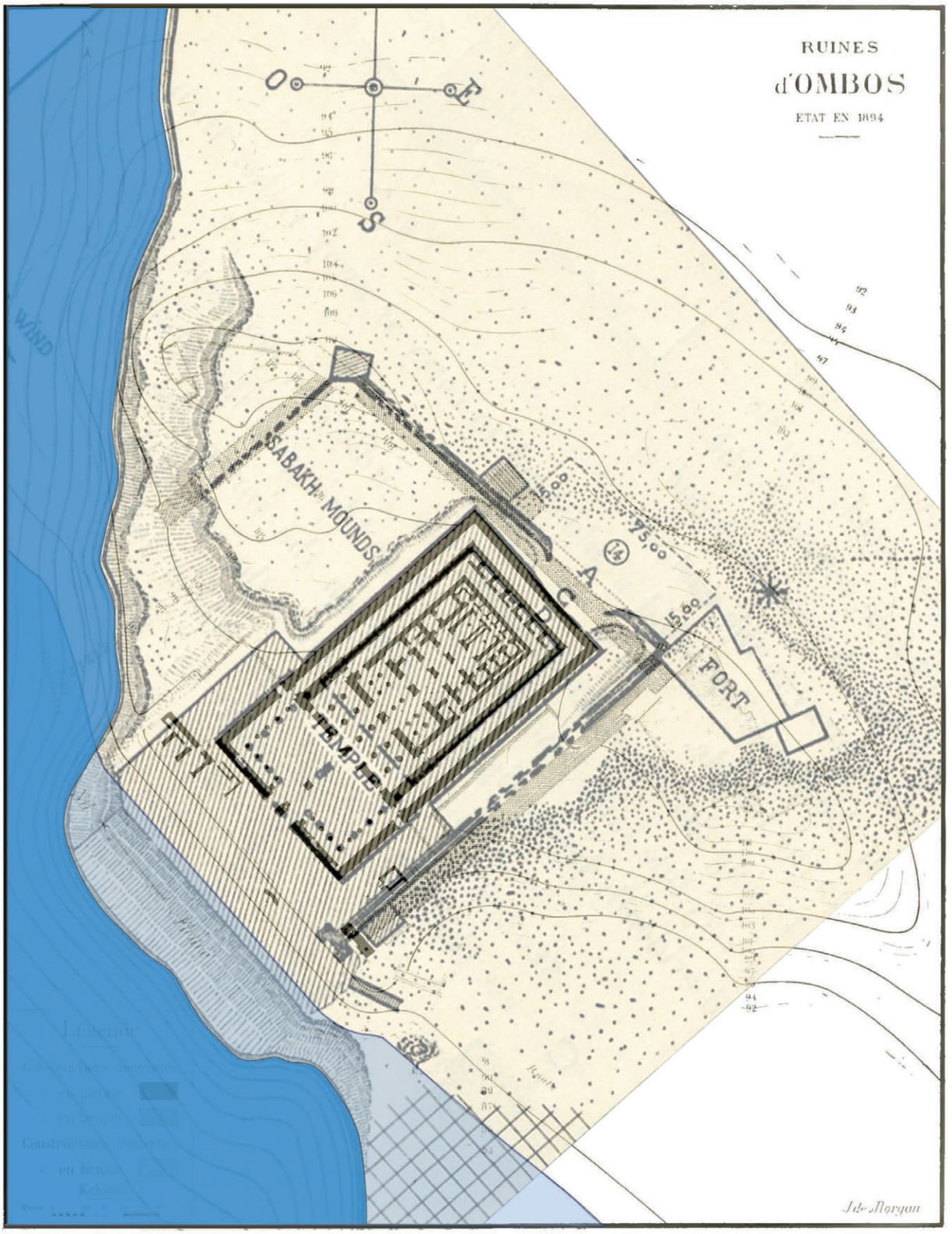


Fig. 123 Shift of the Nile between 1894 and 1903 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; combination of Morgan 1894, frontispiece and Carter 1903, fig. 1)



Fig. 124 Historical photograph from 1895 superimposed onto a recent photo from 2019 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler and S. Müller; historical photo reproduced by permission of the Griffith Institute of Egyptology, University of Oxford; photo 2019 by P. Rose)

> sequent slumping. Drifts of stone fragments lie at the bottom, and these are the tell-tale signs of old sebakh-digging, from the sifting of the soil to remove coarse material. ... Yet still the largest, indeed spectacular, loss has been at the northern end. Here, one of the two highest points of the mound which stood in de Morgan's day like a pinnacle nearly 20 metres above the surrounding ground has vanished altogether…
>
> On the north-west, where the site once rose as a mound, there is now a more or less flat piece of ground level with the surrounding fields. … The loss of matter has, as elsewhere, laid bare the heart of the mound…"[468]

Wagner calculated that between Kemp's survey of the site and 1993 approximately "45,000 cubic meters of earth and sand" were removed to the southeast of the temple by the Egyptian authorities and *sebakh* digging.[469]

More recently, site management and tourist development at Kom Ombo has further impacted the tell.[470] The greatest change was made by the site management project between 2002 and 2010, as outlined in chapter 2. In the course of these activities, a sandbank at the shore of the river was removed (Fig. 29).[471]

These large-scale removals meant that any ancient structures that were revealed were threatened by environmental conditions and human activity. The culmination of this was that the Ptolemaic temple was threatened by rising groundwater. The GWLP, initiated to deal with this problem, resulted in the moving of a huge amount of soil within the archaeological zone (see Google Earth images from 2017 and 2019). To the east of the tell, large heaps of sand were moved and redeposited along the edge of the perimeter pipe trench. These heaps are still present (Fig. 125).

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468 Kemp 1985, 41.

469 Wareth and Wagner 1993, 295.

470 For detail see chapter 2, 43.

471 Sadarangani et al. 2015, 131.



Fig. 125 Transformation of the site 2017-2019 (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler; adapted from Sadarangani et. al. 2019, fig. 5)



Fig. 126 Extension of the ancient town (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler)

The extent of the ancient settlement

The tell of Kom Ombo is today protected antiquities land covering an area of 6 ha. It is however clear that the tell as seen today was only part of a much larger area settled in antiquity. To the north, the modern village of Bayara is built on top of ancient settlement remains, and antique objects have often been discovered during modern building activity.[472] About 1 km north of the village, subterranean features were found, again during building activity.[473] It was said that it was possible to walk around in these features, so presumably they were large tombs forming part of a cemetery.

Other cemeteries east and south of the tell have been noted in chapter 2 (Fig. 126).

Whilst cemetery areas were found both within and outside the tell area, the cemeteries mainly lie beyond the Nile branches that make Kom Ombo into an island. Non-funerary areas of settlement have so far only been attested on the tell. However, as already noted, there is a hiatus from the Middle Kingdom proper to the Late Period on the surviving tell, with only a few traces of their material culture attested.[474] Since it can be assumed that Kom Ombo was settled throughout this period, the relevant settlement layers may either have been removed as part of later modifications, or the focus of the settlement in these periods lay outside the modern tell area, perhaps below the modern village of Bayara and/or to the west. The latter area would have been destroyed by the river during its eastward migration.

If one puts together the areas where ancient settlement remains have been found, the area – including the Nile branches – extends to approx. 880 hectares. As a result, any investigation of the settlement should not be limited to the tell itself but should extend into the surrounding area.

472 Personal communication local community.
473 Personal communication local community.
474 See chapter 1, 15.

The west bank (Irene Forstner-Müller and Pamela Rose)

There is little surviving archaeological evidence from the west bank opposite Kom Ombo. On the west bank of Kom Ombo, in Binban, there is a falcon mummy cemetery that has become known through illegal looting. This area is now protected as antiquities land, and some of the falcon mummies are now in the MOTA magazine in Kom Ombo.[475]

Six stelae dating to the New Kingdom (18th to 19th Dynasties) were found at Binban during the digging of a drainage ditch.[476] The stelae show the gods of the first cataract, Khnum, Satet and Anuket together with Amun-Re. They remain an isolated find and there is no reason to believe that they came from a nearby monument; rather, they may have been brought in as construction material. North of Binban lies a crocodile mummy cemetery.[477]

A site on the west bank that must be considered in relation to Kom Ombo is Contra Ombos, the Roman fort mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary. The Itinerary locates it 24 Roman miles (c. 35.5 km) from Contra Syene to the south and the same distance from Contra Thmuis to the north.[478] Since neither of these places has been identified on the ground,[479] Contra Ombos remains in geographical limbo. This has not prevented attempts to localise it. Sicard's map[480], by far the earliest (1722) record but not usefully compatible with modern topography, placed Contra Ombos on an island in the river. Since, as noted above, Sicard did not go this far south on his travels, his sources are unknown and the island location may relate merely to being 'opposite' Kom Ombo.[481]

The *Description de l'Égypte* map located Contra Ombos at the desert edge south of the village of Binban, at the terminus of a route to the western oases.[482] The text says nothing about the ruins, instead concentrating on the remains on the east bank, but since the French army based troops at Binban for a short while,[483] the soldiers may have provided information to the savants about the ancient remains in the area.

In 1896, Sayce and Wilbour discovered ruins within the cultivation, which they described as a rectangular area with a fired brick outer wall and stone remnants within.[484] This they interpreted as the remains of Contra Ombos, and the stonework as the remains of an (otherwise unknown) temple. Nearby they found a huge Roman cemetery on the desert edge (and, intriguingly, a tomb of a "much earlier period" faced with limestone). Unfortunately, it is not now possible to identify the remains of either the enclosure or the cemetery and they may now be overbuilt by recent development.

In modern times, Pleiades, a source for historical geographic information about the ancient world in digital form, places Contra Ombos in the desert to the south of the latitude of Kom Ombo, in an area where no remains are visible in Google Earth.[485] It is however approximately 35 km from Philae, which would be appropriate if Philae was interpreted as Contra Syene and thus the starting point for the distance measurement. The Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire locates Contra Ombos in the cultivated area to the east of the modern village of Binban.[486] On Google Earth the specific location appears to be some sort of small (albeit square) modern farmstead. Neither spot currently appears convincing (Fig 127).

Little more can be said about the identification of the site of Contra Ombos. One point of interest is, however, the result of a comparison of the *Description de l'Égypte* map with modern topography using Google Earth.[487] The two sources were combined using the southeastern corner of the temple enclosure and the northern and southern tips of the inundation zones of the islands shown in the *Description de l'Égypte* as landmarks occurring in both. From this, it appears that the mound described as "Contra Ombos ruinée" in the *Description de l'Égypte* is in the area of the rounded southern outcrop of the modern village of Binban. The area deserves closer investigation, and especially what appears to be a ruinous square structure a short distance to the south.[488] The ruins lie on what would originally have been the desert edge; it may well also have stood on a now-infilled river branch, since otherwise the occupants would have been far from a source of water.

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475 For this information we are indebted to Hassan el-Taher, inspector of Kom Ombo.

476 Weigall 1908, 111–112; Leitz 2002, 407 (27).

477 For this information we are indebted to Sayed el-Rekaby, inspector of Kom Ombo.

478 <https://topostext.org/work/687#160> (last access 1 February 2021).

479 For Contra Syene see Locher 1999, 90.

480 See above and fig. 110.

481 Sicard and Poncet 1845, 97.

482 Description de l'Égypte 1818, Flle 2 "Koum Ommbous". In the 19th century the area, apparently generally known as Binban, was the terminus of a route from the Sudan, Rose forthcoming.

483 Jonquière 1899, 538, 550, 556.

484 Sayce 1896, 289.

485 Keenan et al. 2012, Contra Ombos.

486 <http://imperium.ahlfeldt.se/places/30579> (last access 15 February 2021).

487 Undertaken by Astrid Hassler.

488 At the time of writing, it was not possible for the authors to go to the site.



Fig. 127 Suggested locations for Contra Ombos (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler)

Chapter 5 Magnetic Survey in Kom Ombo

Tomasz Herbich

Magnetic method in the study of settlement mud architecture in the Nile valley

The possibility of registering remains of mudbrick architecture in the Nile valley using magnetometry results from magnetic properties of the Nile silt used in the production of bricks. The high magnetic susceptibility of the silt is caused by the presence of iron oxides in the minerals transported by the river.[489] These properties were discovered in the 1960s during a geophysical survey in the fortress of Mirgissa in Nubia.[490] The work carried out at that time helped to reconstruct the plans of buildings inside the fortress, to recreate the street grid and to create the basis for an excavation programme, which had only a limited time frame due to the rescue nature of the research.[491] In the following years, the effectiveness of the method in the study of sites with mudbrick architecture was repeatedly confirmed.[492]

The necessary condition for the method to be effective is the contrast between the magnetic properties of the architectural remains and their surroundings. The clearest and most distinct images are obtained when the remains are covered with sand, which is a material with very low magnetic susceptibility. The magnetic susceptibility of Nile mud in Upper Egypt reaches 5×10^{-3}SI; that in lower Egypt ranges from 1.5×10^{-3}SI to 3×10^{-3}SI and in Nubia goes up to 8×10^{-3}SI.[493] On maps showing changes in the intensity of the Earth's magnetic field, the basic form of presentation of research results, the mudbrick walls correspond to anomalies with increased values of field intensity, which are in striking contrast to the low values of the sandy background. The magnetic image allows the identification not only of the external walls of buildings, but also the plans of individual rooms and passages between them. Examples of the results from sites located on the desert plateau, in the immediate vicinity of the Nile valley, dated from the Predynastic to Christian periods include el-Amra,[494] Abydos South,[495] Tuna el-Gebel[496] and Bawit.[497]

The magnetic method, like other geophysical methods widely used in archaeology such as electrical resistivity and ground penetrating radar, is most effective for the study of single-layer sites. In the case of multilayer sites, such as tells, usually only the layer closest to the surface can be examined. In some cases, where there is a strong contrast between the magnetic properties of structures and their surroundings and the structures in the lower layer differ in orientation from the structures located above them, it is possible to distinguish different periods within the settlement.[498]

The depth of prospection depends on the contrast between the magnetic properties of the structures and their surroundings. Mudbrick walls in sand, depending on their thickness and the height of the remaining parts, can be registered at depths from 0.5 to c. 2 m. Structures with high magnetic field intensity values such as pottery kilns, in sandy surroundings, can be registered to a depth of 4 m below the surface.[499]

Most of the settlements in the Nile valley that have been studied using magnetometry are located on the edge of the desert, thus where there is a high contrast between the magnetic properties of mudbrick walls and their surroundings. In the delta area, completely different conditions prevail as the walls are surrounded by Nile alluvium. Originally it was assumed that this would eliminate the magnetic contrast and render the method useless. This theoretical assumption, put forward by Helmut Becker in the early 1980s, meant that research on architecture in the delta began nearly two

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489 Weller and El-Baissony 2006; Fassbinder 2015, 85–88.
490 Hesse 1967.
491 Hesse 1970, 82–96.
492 E.g. Herbich 2003; Wilson 2006; Spencer 2008; Zakrzewski et al. 2016, 71–72; Abdallatif et al. 2019.
493 Measurements taken by the author.
494 Hill and Herbich 2011.
495 Herbich and Wegner 2003.
496 Fassbinder et al. 2015.
497 Herbich and Benazeth 2008; Herbich 2019, 202–221.
498 Herbich and Ryndziewicz 2019, 186, fig. 2a.
499 Herbich 2014.

decades later than that on the edges of the Nile valley and in the desert.[500] Research undertaken in the late 1990s in Qantir, Tell el-Dab'a and Buto has shown that the method is effective in the geological conditions of the delta.[501] Architectural remains became visible because the walls corresponded to anomalies with uniform values, and their surroundings to anomalies with differentiated values. The latter are caused by materials reducing the magnetic value (such as sand) or increasing it (such as ashes, slags or pottery). In such a mixed environment, the walls can be registered as anomalies of increased or reduced magnetic values in contrast to their surroundings, i.e. as positive or negative anomalies, depending on the composition of the material used for the bricks. The admixture of sand and organic debris reduces the magnetic susceptibility of bricks, while the dominance of silt over other materials, and the presence of fragments of ceramics increase susceptibility. Such a phenomenon has been observed, for example, in Buto and Tell el-Iswid.[502] The clear readability of the anomalies caused by walls, as positive anomalies, was also due to the fact that some of the sites (e.g. Tell el-Dab'a) are located on Pleistocene sand deposits,[503] reducing the magnetic value of the layers surrounding the walls.

The extensive use of magnetometry in the study of Egyptian mud architecture, underway since the end of the last decade of the 20th century, has introduced a new quality to the study of settlements. It allows the reconstruction of settlement plans and made it possible to reconstruct the chronology and functions of districts based on the analysis of characteristic features of architecture.[504] Finally, it permits the location of settlements in the paleolandscape.[505]

Magnetic research in Kom Ombo: goals and methodology

The aims of geophysical research on the Kom Ombo tell and in its direct vicinity were to trace architectural remains not visible on the surface, establish the extent of the settlement covered by the mound and survey areas at a distance from the tell in order to evaluate their potential for archaeological fieldwork.[506]

A Geoscan Research FM 256 Fluxgate Gradiometer was used for the survey. The apparatus measures the gradient of the vertical component of the intensity of the Earth's magnetic field with resolution 0.1 nT. The measurements were taken in zigzag mode, generally within 20 × 20 m grids depending on the area. The density of sampling was eight measurements per 1 m² (measurements every 0.25 m along traverses 0.5 m apart).

Geoplot 4.0 software was used for processing, including the algorithms despike, destagger and zero mean traverse. The data were then interpolated into a 0.25 × 0.25 m grid, and processed through a low pass (Gaussian) algorithm. These activities were aimed at eliminating differences in the intensity of the magnetic field caused by the methodology used in taking measurements and at exposing anomalies of anthropogenic origin on the magnetic map.

Result of the survey

The survey covered 4.54 ha. Measurements were taken within 18 areas designated A to R (Figs. 128–130). Part of the survey was carried out in difficult conditions due to the ground surface relief, the steep slopes of the tell and areas of heavy disturbance due to previous digging. As a result, the grid networks for the survey were established separately for different parts of the surveyed area, adapting to the local conditions. This speeded up the work significantly and facilitated the measuring procedures without detriment to the final results.

The survey results were presented in the form of magnetic maps separately for sectors with significant results and collectively for the whole complex; the sole exception was Area O, which was more than one kilometre from the tell. The collective map (Fig. 129) uses a uniform grey tone (measurements in the +/- 20 nT range), save for Areas H and M, where these values are not clear due to the high value amplitude of the results. The maps of these two areas were prepared in a range increased to +/- 25 nT.

The magnetic method is extremely sensitive to anything containing iron, hence the results of measurements in some areas are heavily affected by contemporary metal objects (e.g. fences) present on the site due to the groundwater lowering project.

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500 Rainer Stadelmann, personal communication.
501 Pusch 1999; Herbich 2001; Herbich 2003.
502 Hartung et al. 2003, 165–168, pl. 42; Herbich 2011, 235.
503 Said 1962.
504 Leclère et al. 2016.
505 Herbich 2012; Pusch and Becker 2017.
506 Measurements were taken by Robert Ryndziewicz. (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences).



Fig. 128 Location of areas A–O on the Google Earth satellite image (© ÖAI/ÖAW, for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

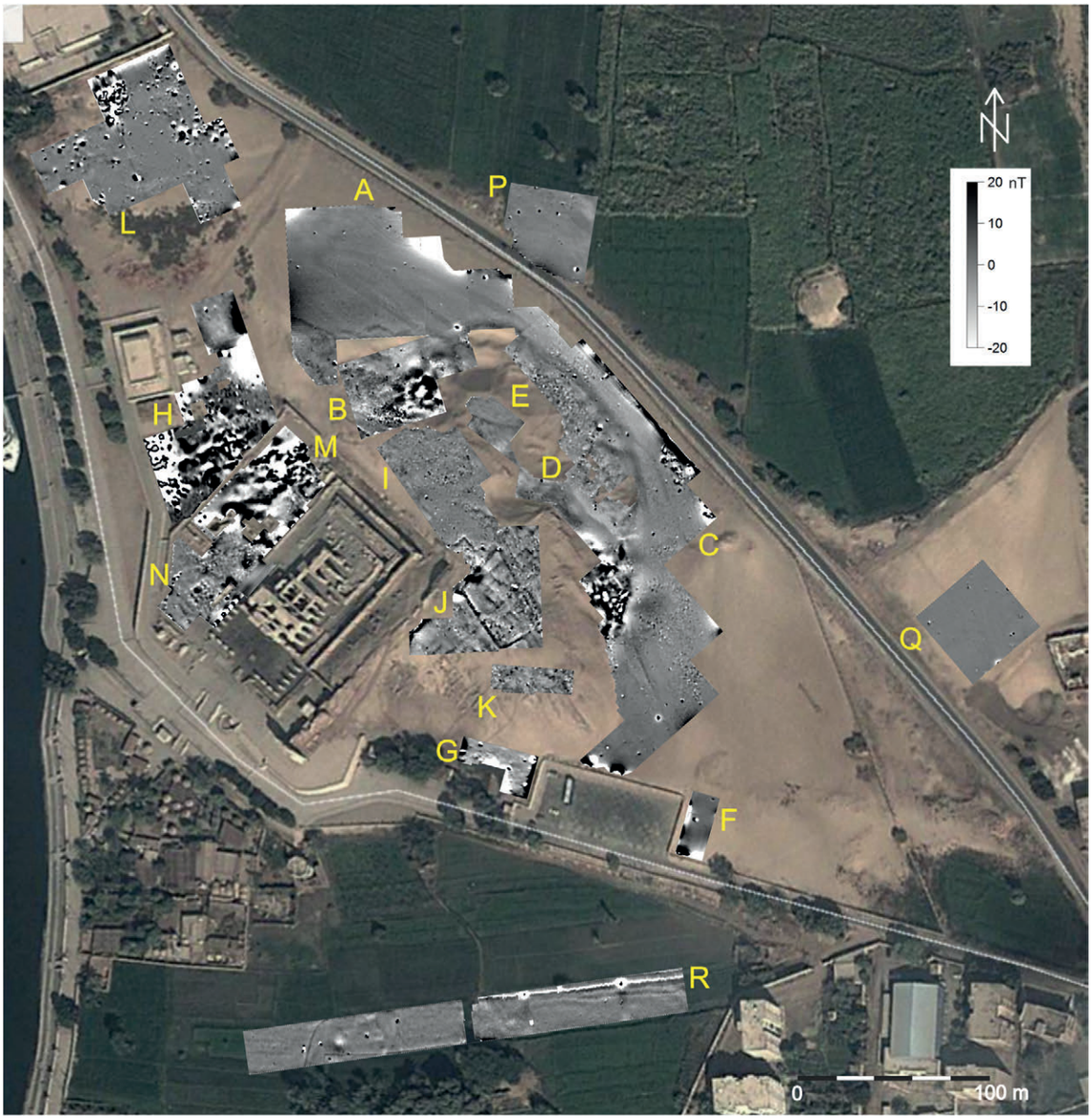


Fig. 129 Location of area A–N and P–R on the Google Earth satellite image (© ÖAI/ÖAW, for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)



Fig. 130 Location of area O on the Google Earth satellite image (© ÖAI/ÖAW, for the Google Earth image © Google Earth)

Area A

Area A is located on the northern slope of the tell (Fig. 129). Measurements covered a surface of 0.56 ha. The map mainly reflects changes in ground relief (Fig. 131). The long anomalies with only slightly elevated values, running along curving lines (seen between square B1 and squares C3, C4 and C6) reflect paths running along the slope. The disturbances seen by the southern edge of the area, again shaped as slightly curving anomalies of elevated values (in the range from 2 nT to 5 nT), correspond to the edges of the depression. The only

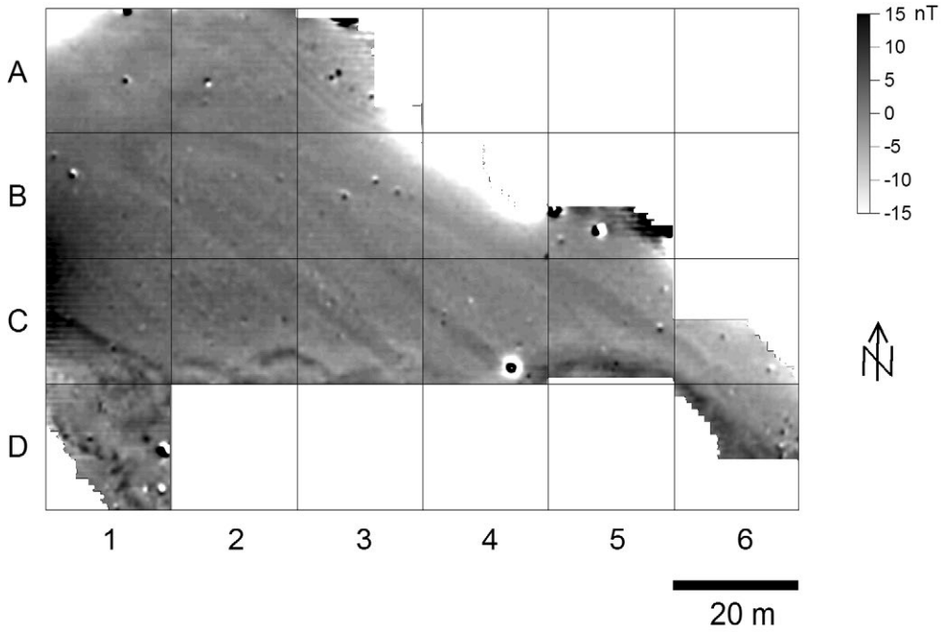


Fig. 131 Magnetic map of area A. Dynamics -15/15 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)



Fig. 132 Western part of area A seen from the south. Workers stand at the northeast and northwest corners of square D1 (fig. 131) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

anomaly that may be interpreted as an archaeological feature (a wall) is the linear anomaly with raised values (to 8 nT) seen in the southern part of square C1. However, it corresponds to a long rise of the ground in this area, which weakens this interpretation (Fig. 132). High-amplitude, positive and dipole-dipole anomalies by the northeastern edge of the area reflect the presence of an iron object of a modern date.

Area B

Area B is located in a higher part of the tell, to the south of area A and is damaged by *sebakhin* digging (Fig. 129). The ground surface is extremely uneven with numerous depressions separated by rises of the ground, partly reflected in the magnetic image. Measurements covered 0.18 ha. High amplitude anomalies, visible in the central part of the map, reflect the brick rubble heaps lying on the surface, effectively obscuring the plan of the structure from which the bricks derived (Figs. 133–134). A linear anomaly of positive values, at the junction of squares A1 and A2 and running northwest, is aligned with the line set by an anomaly recorded in square C1 of area A; it may be part of the same structure. A clear linear anomaly in the southwestern corner of square B1 corresponds to a wall that can be traced on the ground. An oval anomaly measuring about 2 m across and presenting high-amplitude values, observed by the northern corner of square A3 (and also seen in the southern part of square C4 in area A) corresponds to a metal benchmark.

Area C

Area C runs around the eastern part of the tell; its western end touches on the base of the highest part of the mound (Fig. 129). Measurements covered an area of 0.84 ha. A large, bow-shaped, low-amplitude anomaly running between squares A1 and B5 (hereafter referred to as anomaly C) reflects the surface relief: it corresponds to the tell slope reaching the base on the eastern side and a damaged area of uneven surface on the western side (Fig. 135). Small low-amplitude anomalies touching upon anomaly C from the west (seen in squares B2 and B3) are a reflection of the ground surface rather than of architectural remains. The slightly broken linear anomaly aligned northwest–southeast, through the middle of squares C4 and C5, corresponds to the northeastern edge of a flat area on the tell slope.

The complex of high-amplitude anomalies in the centre of square D6 may be interpreted as an industrial area, including kilns and heavily burnt structures. Fragments of features of this kind are visible on the surface and are characterized by a reddish colour indicating the presence of material subjected to high temperatures (Fig. 136). To the south of this area, in square D8, there is a narrow linear anomaly of raised values with no correspondence to anything observed on the ground surface. It may correspond to a feature constructed of mudbricks. High-amplitude anomalies recorded by the eastern edge of area C, seen in square A5, correspond to features invisible on the surface. The nature of the anomaly indicates that these are metal objects, probably contemporary in date. The remaining high-amplitude anomalies, seen at the eastern edge of the area, correspond to modern metal artefacts seen on the surface.

Area D

Area D is located on flat ground touching on the highest part of the mound from the northeast and is an extension of Area C (Fig. 129). Measurements covered an area of 0.024 ha. The magnetic map did not show any anomalies that can be interpreted as a reflection of archaeological structures.

Area E

Area E is located on flat ground touching on the highest part of the mound from the northeast and extended Area D toward the northeast (Fig. 129). The surveyed area was 0.05 ha. A linear anomaly of positive values finds no reflection in the ground relief and, considering the characteristics of the anomaly, it might reflect a mudbrick wall. The alignment of this anomaly matches that of anomalies recorded in Area A (square C1) and Area B (squares A1–2).

Area F

Area F is located in the southeastern part of the site (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.04 ha. The magnetic map provided no evidence for the presence of archaeological features. The high-amplitude anomalies are caused by a modern fence and reinforced concrete wall.

Area G

Area G is located to the south of the tell (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.048 ha. The magnetic map

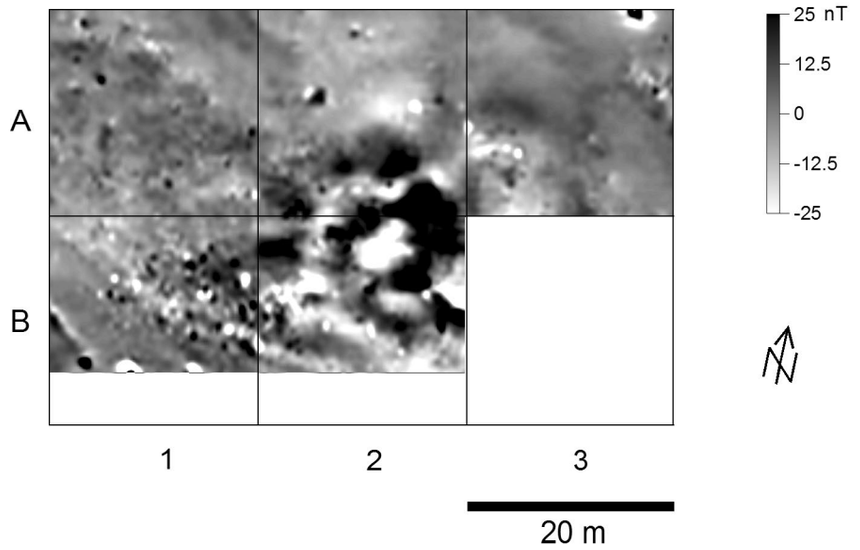


Fig. 133 Magnetic map of area B. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)



Fig. 134 Central part of area B, seen from the southwest. Workers stand at the southeast (the worker in the foreground) and northeast corners of square B1 (see fig. 133) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

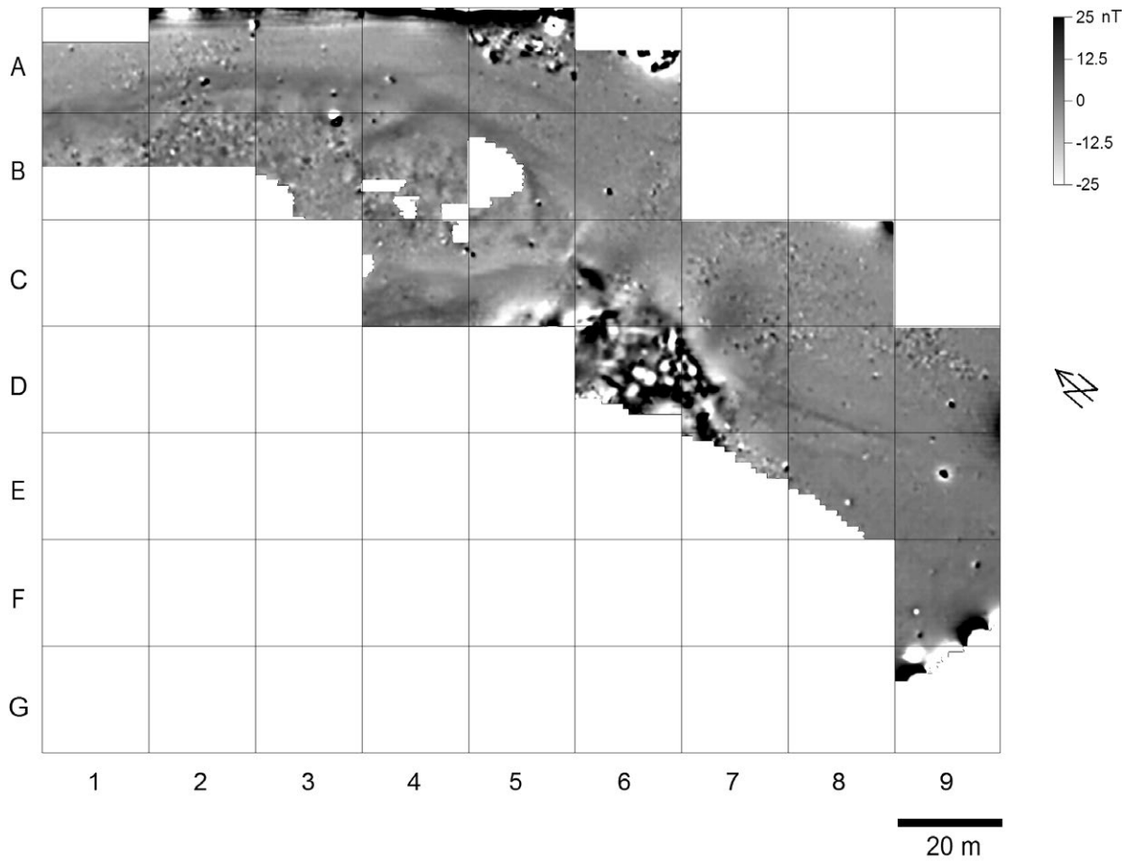


Fig. 135 Magnetic map of area C. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)



Fig. 136 Central part of area C seen from the west. Workers stand at the north and east corners of square D6 (see fig. 135). (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

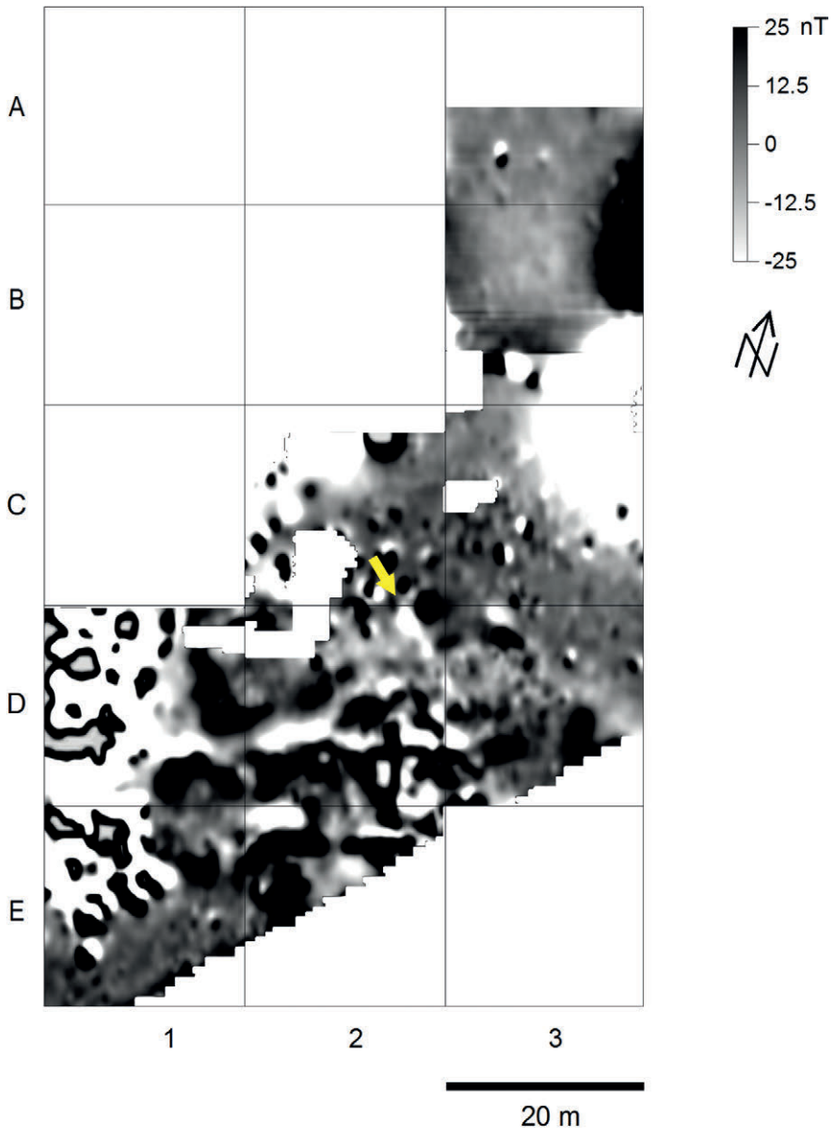


Fig. 137 Magnetic map of area H. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)

provided no evidence for the presence of archaeological features. The high-amplitude anomalies are caused by a modern fence and reinforced concrete wall.

Area H

Area H is situated between the temple and the Crocodile Museum (Fig. 129). Measurements covered an area of 0.32 ha. Located in this area was an L-shaped trench excavated by the joint ÖAI-Egyptian mission (Areas s/3 and s/6), in the southern part of square C2, northwestern corner of D2 and northeastern corner of D1, which area was not covered by measurements (Fig. 137). The southern part of the area is located on a gentle slope falling away to the northwest, marked by remains of archaeological features traced on the ground surface; the northern part of this area is flat (Fig. 138). The brick structures on the slope were excavated prior to the magnetic survey; they are found in the southeastern corner of D2 and the northeastern corner of E2. They correspond to linear anomalies of high amplitude (in the -60/+80 nT range). Analogous anomalies of similar alignment can be seen in the immediate vicinity of excavated walls of mudbrick, especially to their west. Hence it may be assumed that they also correspond to walls. The amplitude of the anomalies that correspond to these potential walls suggests that the wall tops are



Fig. 138 Area H seen from the south (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

just below the ground surface and that the bricks are partly burnt or accompanied by burnt soil. There is an identically aligned (northwest–southeast) indistinct negative anomaly in the northern part of square D2; it may correspond to a section of wall made of some non-magnetic building material such as sandstone or limestone (marked with an arrow in Fig. 137).

The map shows a clear distinction between the southern part of the area that is rich in anomalies and hence archaeological structures and the northern part that is devoid of such anomalies and hence archeologically sterile, at least in the sub-surface layers. The excavation testified that in this area archaeological layers are below a depth of 2 m, too deep to be registered by magnetometer.[507]

Strong dipole anomalies seen in Area H reflect modern installations and large iron objects. On the western side the surveyed area was strongly disturbed by the presence of underground installations and an iron and concrete fence. The northeastern part of the area is also strongly disturbed by the presence of iron rods stored nearby. Anomalies caused by electric cables and small iron artefacts lying on the surface can also be identified.

Area I

Area I is located in the higher parts of the tell northeast of the temple, on a ridge rising to the south and touching upon the highest part of the mound (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.18 ha. The anomalies recorded in this area (many small anomalies with an amplitude in the range of -10/+20 nT) point to brick rubble, and single bricks can be seen on the surface (Fig. 139). A concentration of anomalies is visible in the central part of this area in squares B1 and B2, the diameter slightly exceeding 20 m; it may correspond to remains of brick architecture. Linear anomalies across squares C1 and C2, in the southern part of the area, may also reflect architecture. An anomaly forming a line turning at a right angle, recorded in the southern corner of the area (in C1) corresponds to a wall that can be traced on the surface (Fig. 140).

[507] Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 69.

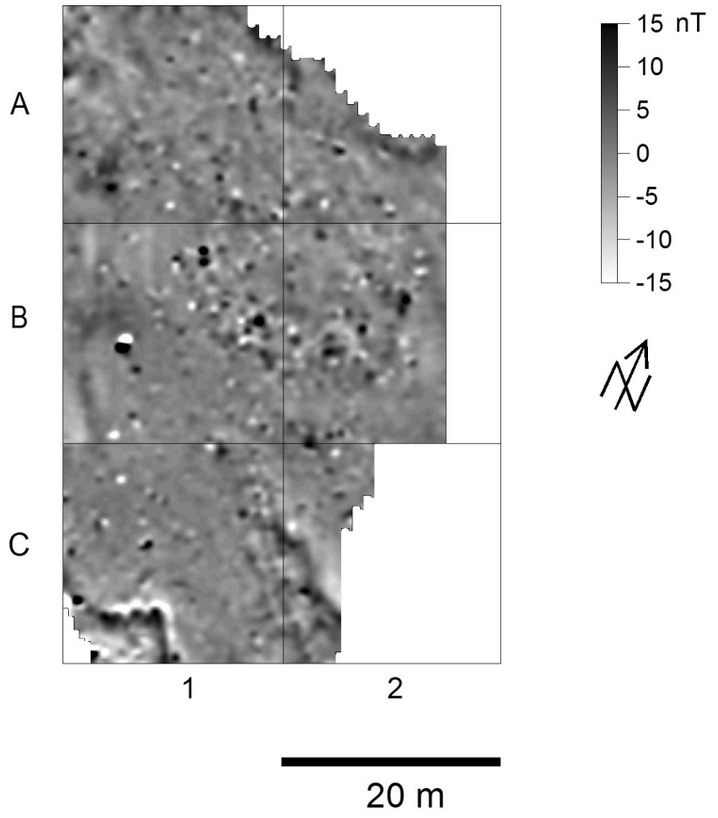


Fig. 139 Magnetic map of area I. Dynamics -15/15 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)



Fig. 140 Area I seen from the south. Worker in the foreground stands by the south corner of square C1, worker in the background at the west corner of C1 (see fig. 138) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

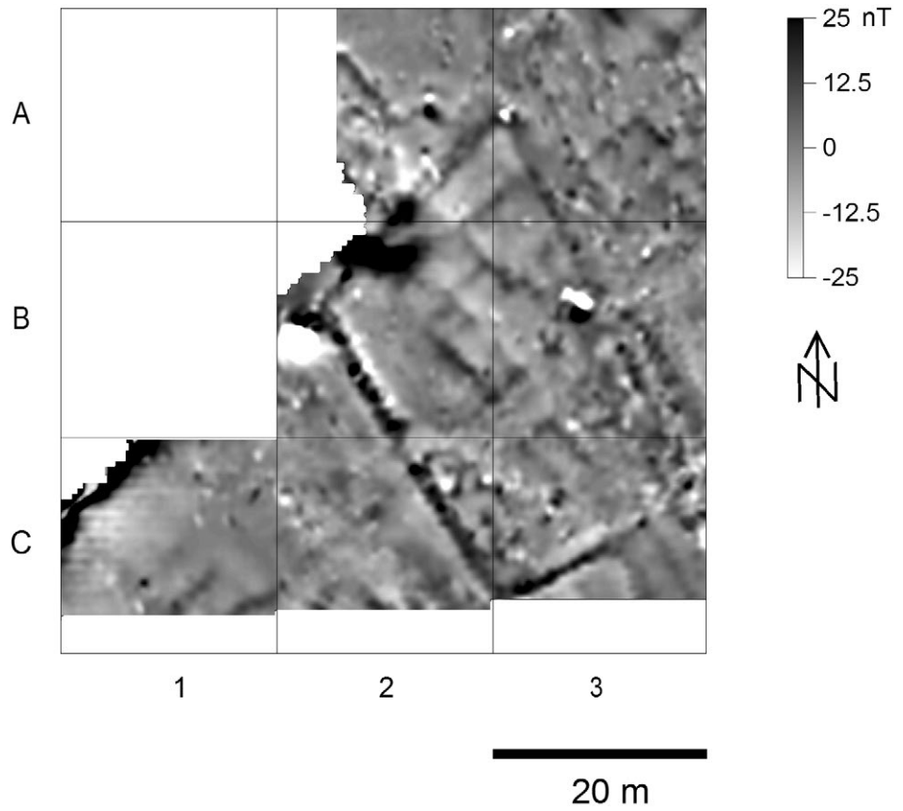


Fig. 141 Magnetic map of area J. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)

Area J

Area J is located on the highest part of the tell and includes flat ground corresponding to the extent of the Anglo-Egyptian fort (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.24 h. A trapezoidal anomaly dominates the magnetic map in this area (Fig. 141). It reflects the mudbrick walls of the fort, which are, for the most part, visible on the ground.[508] Comparing the magnetic map to the plan of the fort resulting from archaeological research, one can clearly see a great correspondence between them. The distinctiveness of the anomalies corresponding to the fort is due to the fact that the walls are, for the most part, visible on the ground and their preserved size: excavations have shown that the distance between the tops of the walls and their foundation is up to 2 m. The map reflects the rectangular casemate structure of the keep (M101–M104) and the part of the tower (M109) that was within the surveyed area. The magnetic image suggests that below the tower there is a structure (foundation?) wider than the tower wall by nearly 5 m. It is characterized by uniform values of the magnetic field strength, identical to those corresponding to the tower wall. The southwestern rooms were hardly visible on the magnetic map. This is probably due to the poorer state of preservation, as shown by the excavations. The large amplitude anomaly in the place of the latrine, of a range typical of metal objects, corresponded to a metal chute, made from oil cans.

The map also shows several linear anomalies perpendicular to one another but on another alignment to the walls of the fort. These may correspond to mudbrick architecture that covered almost the entire surveyed area, and which today cannot be seen on the surface in any form (Figs. 141–143). The clearest image appears in the area corresponding to the northern part of the fort, in squares B2 and B3. This architecture clearly extends to the northeast, all the way to the edge of the surveyed area. The mapping of architecture to the southwest of the fort is less clear, but leaves no doubt that there was

[508] Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, 76–81; Rose forthcoming.

architecture there, too. A street seems to be traceable on the magnetic map; it is oriented southwest–northeast, running between the southwestern corner of square C2 and the northeastern corner of B3. This street would have been about 5 m wide. Excavations in 2019 in the southern part of the fort revealed the tops of the earlier walls. The walls immediately underlay the deposits connected with the fort's use, and up to 1.5 m below the ground surface. They clearly continued the alignment of those identified in the magnetometry image, but were not further excavated.

Area K

Area K lies on the southern slope of the tell, just below the peak (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.048 ha. The recorded anomalies with raised magnetic intensity values correspond to scatters of mudbricks, partly noted on the surface (Fig. 144). Measurements recorded linear anomalies in the southern part of the eastern square corresponding to the walls that are traced in part on the surface. The anomaly is aligned northwest–southeast, touching upon the central section of the southern border of the eastern square.

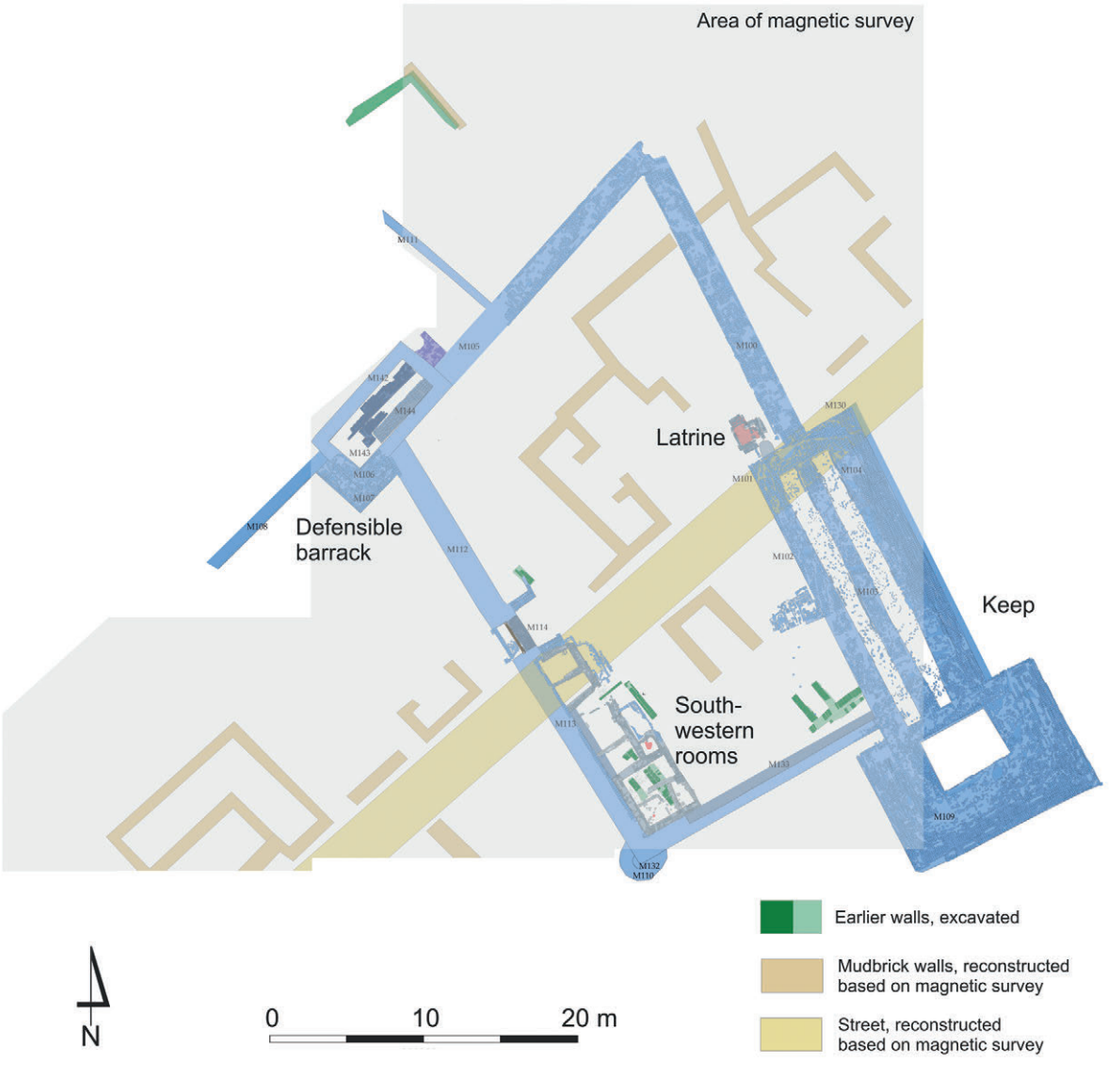


Fig. 142 Plan of the Anglo-Egyptian fort (after Forstner-Müller et al. 2019, fig. 23, p.77) with location of walls based on results of magnetic survey (© ÖAI/ÖAW, graphics by A. Hassler)



Fig. 143 Central part of Anglo-Egyptian fort seen from west. In the foreground the southwestern wall of the fort. Workers stand at the northeast and southeast corners of B2 (see fig. 141) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)



Fig. 144 Eastern part of area K seen from the west (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

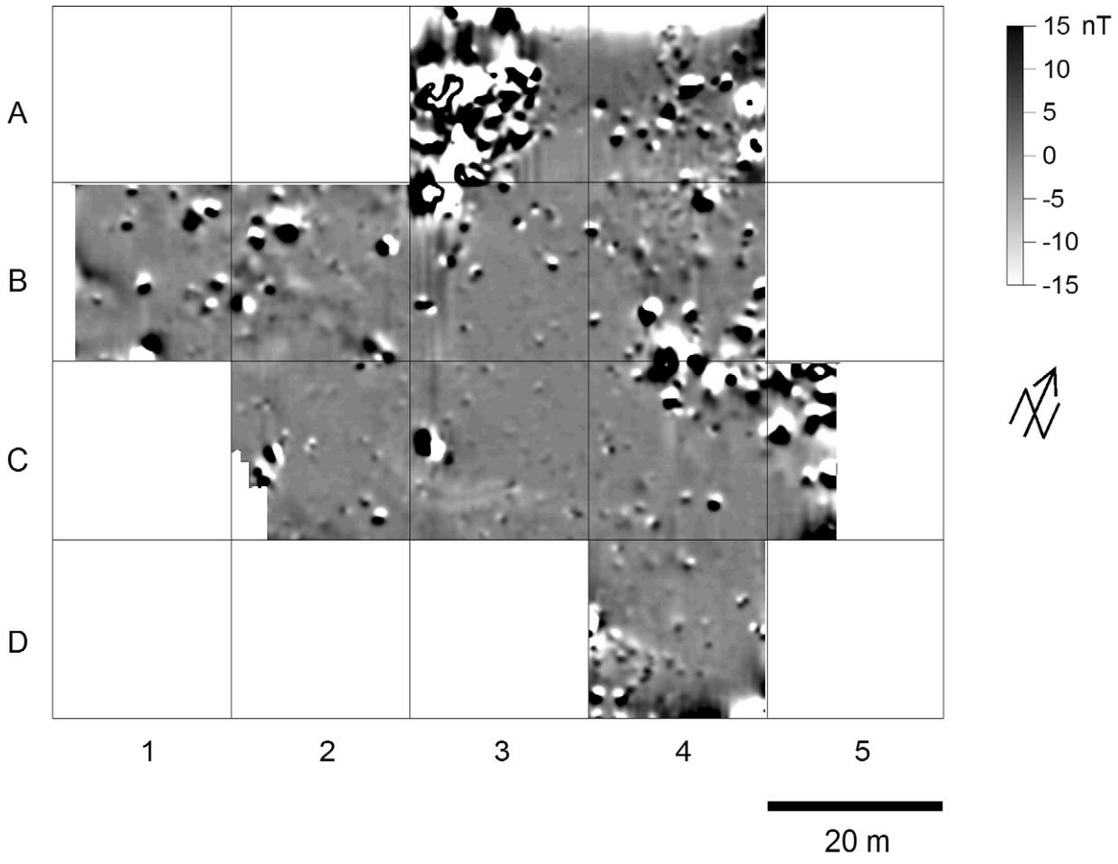


Fig. 145 Magnetic map of area L. Dynamics -15/15 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)

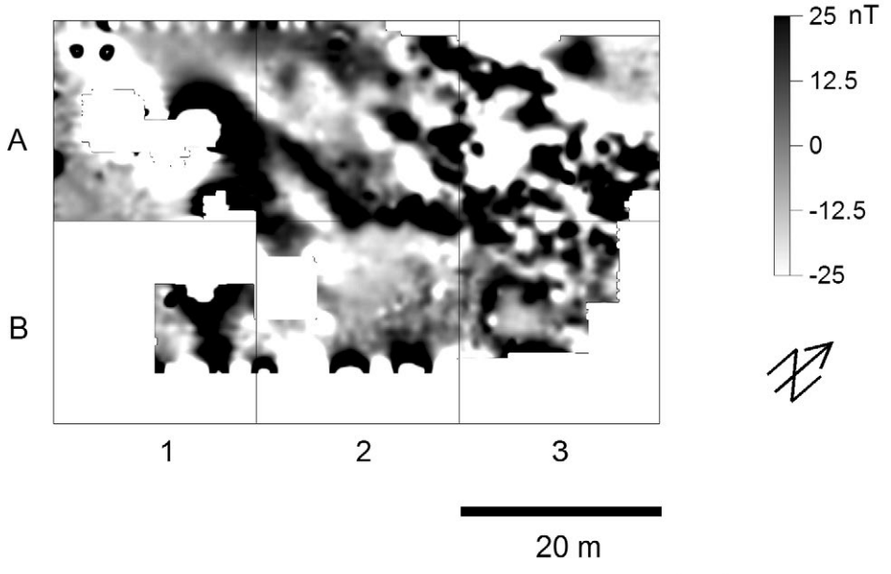


Fig. 146 Magnetic map of area M. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)

Area L

Area L lies in the northern part of the site, outside the limits of the tell. Measurements covered 0.42 ha. The ground is flat in the southeastern part and gently undulating in the northwestern area. The magnetic map shows many linear dipole anomalies of high amplitude, typical of metal objects (Fig. 145). Two groups of such anomalies are evident on the map: one in the northwestern corner of the area, in square A3, and the other by the eastern border (in C4, C5 and B4). The former corresponds to an undulating surface with fragments of reinforced concrete with iron rods in it. The other concentration lies on flat ground covered with sand, without any artefacts on the surface that may cause such an anomaly. None of the anomalies reflected on the map can be taken for underlying archaeological features.

Area M

Area M lies next to the temple to its northwest (Fig. 129). To the northwest it adjoins Area H, and is separated from it by a wall. The surface is levelled and covered with a layer of small stones to facilitate tourist traffic (Fig. 147). Measurements covered 0.18 ha. The high-amplitude linear anomalies (values in the range of -50/+70) in the northern part of the area are aligned with anomalies in Area H and may reflect archaeological features associated with burnt soil (Fig. 146). Disturbances at the southeastern edge of the map and in the western corner are affected by modern metal objects.

Area N

Area N lies next to the temple, to the southwest of Area M (Fig. 129). The surface is levelled with small stones (Fig. 149). Measurements covered an area of 0.16 ha. A roughly rectangular anomaly can be seen in the southwestern part of the area, in square B2; it measures c. 10 by 10 m and is mostly negative (Fig. 148). It may reflect a feature built of stone, especially as stone blocks can be seen on the surface and their arrangement suggests that they form part of a structure. High-amplitude disturbances by the southeastern edge of the area are a reflection of modern metal objects.

Area O

Area O lies 1.2 km to the west of the tell (Fig. 128). The northern part of this area is cultivated for agricultural purposes; the southern part is a wasteland with an uneven surface. Measurements covered 0.56 ha. A linear anomaly running northwest–southeast between squares C1 and C3 corresponds to an irrigation ditch (Fig. 150). A grid of linear anomalies intersecting at right angles



Fig. 147 Area M seen from the north. Worker in the foreground stands at the north corner of A3 (see fig. 146) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

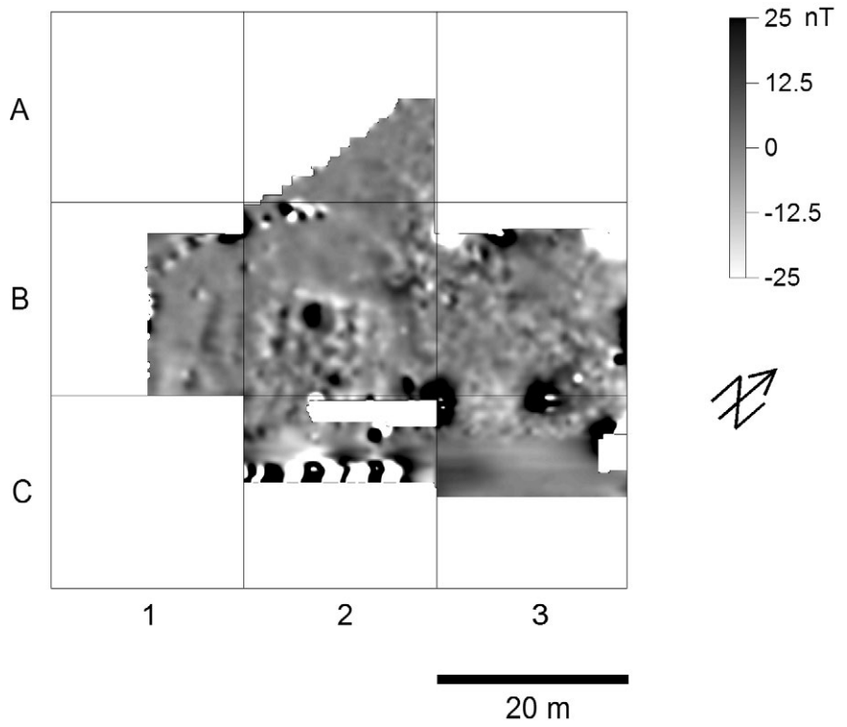


Fig. 148 Magnetic map of area N. Dynamics -25/25 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)



Fig. 149 Central part of area N seen from southwest. Workers stand along southeast edge of B2 (see fig. 148) (© ÖAI/ÖAW, photo by R. Ryndziewicz)

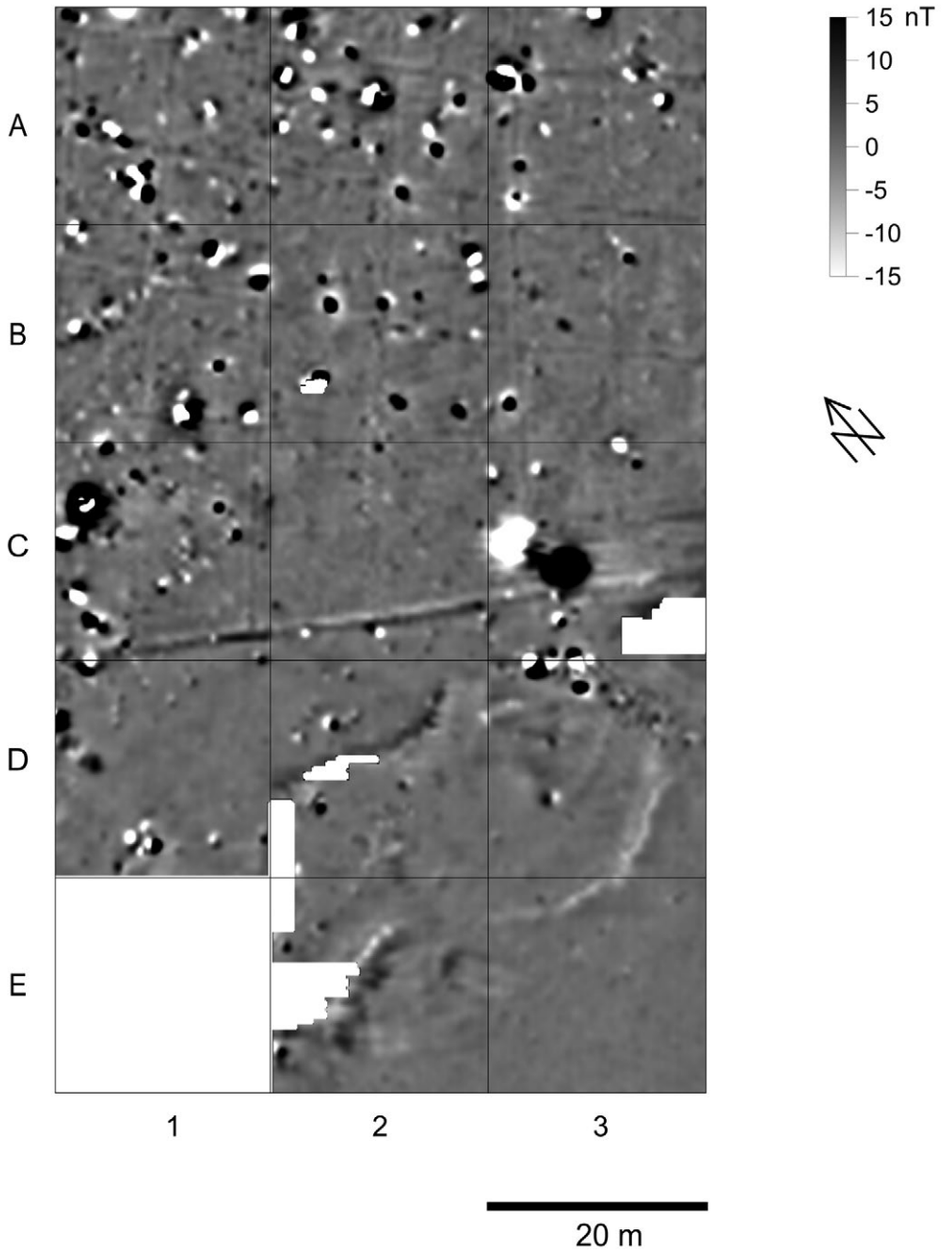


Fig. 150 Magnetic map of area O. Dynamics -15/15 nT (© ÖAI/ÖAW)

every 10 m or so, located to the north of the ditch, reflects the presence of smaller irrigation ditches distributing water to the fields. An extensive anomaly in the southern part of the area (its centre inside square D3), 20 m in diameter, reflects a depression formed by the excavation of Nile silt. Numerous dipole anomalies of high amplitude, mainly observed in the northern part of the area, correspond to metal objects. None of the anomalies on the magnetic map can be considered as representing archaeological features.

Area P

Area P is located in a cultivated field, to the northeast of the tell (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.14 ha. The magnetic map shows no anomalies that can be interpreted as archaeological features. Low amplitude measurements (-4/+5 nT) form zones aligned northwest–southeast in the northeastern part of the area; they may reflect depositional processes of water-borne material.

Area Q

Area Q is located on the eastern side of the tell, on flat ground covered with sand and surrounded by cultivated fields (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.16 ha. The magnetic map shows neither anomalies attesting to the presence of archaeological structures nor ones reflecting shallow geology such as depositional processes.

Area R

Area R is located to the south of the tell, within an old flood terrace of the Nile that is now under cultivation (Fig. 129). Measurements covered 0.4 ha. Long anomalies of varying amplitude, aligned east–west, reflect old and current field divisions. The map does not show any anomalies that may correspond to depositional processes associated with periodic Nile flooding. The anomalies with irregular outlines and small amplitude values are undoubtedly a reflection of changes in soil structure; the limited size of the surveyed area precludes any interpretation of their nature.

Recapitulation

The survey did not significantly broaden our knowledge of occupation in the immediate vicinity of the Kom Ombo temple but resulted in a number of important observations that should be verified in the course of future work at the site.

Measurements identified traces of architecture in the highest parts of the tell. The arrangement of the anomalies with regard to those corresponding to the Anglo-Egyptian fort (Area J) suggest that they represent structures preceding the building of the fort, which has been confirmed by archaeological observations. The alignment of this earlier architecture follows that of late antique architecture traced on the surface on the southeastern slope of the tell.

The nature of the anomalies in Area P on the northeastern slope of the tell suggests a process of sedimentation of water-borne deposits, whereas the linear arrangement parallel to the base shows the direction of flow of this river or branch washing the northeastern side of the tell. This observation should be verified in future work using other geophysical methods: a caesium magnetometer measuring the total intensity of the Earth's magnetic field and a series of electric resistivity vertical soundings (VES). Analogous anomalies should also be present in Area Q and their absence there may be due to the thick layer of sand, more than 3 m deep, covering this area; the instrument sensors are too far from the alluvial deposits to be able to record the small changes effected by sedimentation processes.

In one spot at least, by the eastern base of the tell, measurements revealed the presence of features of an industrial nature.

Measurements revealed the presence of architecture, most probably of stone, to the west and directly next to the temple front. The nature of the structure of this anomaly should be verified via a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey and electric resistivity profiling.

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كوم أمبو I: مقدمة

إيريني فورستنر – موللر، و باميلا روز

تقع كوم أمبو على بعد حوالي 45 كم شمال أسوان على الضفة الشرقية لنهر النيل، حيث يتسع مجرى النيل مقارنة مع القناة الواقعة جنوباً والتي تنحني تجاه الغرب. **صورة 1** . وتعد المدينة الحديثة بلدة صناعية يهيمن عليها مصانع السكر والتي وصلت لأوج عددها أوائل القرن العشرين. أما الموقع الأثري في كوم أمبو، فهو يقع على ضفة نهر النيل على بعد حوالي 3 كم من البلدة الحديثة. ويعد الموقع منطقة محمية تضم المعبد البطلمي الشهير الموجود ضمن الأجندة السياحية كمقصد أساسي للزيارة، كما يضم الموقع بقايا التل القديم الذي يحيط بالمعبد من ثلاثة جهات.

ولدى المعهد النمساوي للآثار - فرع القاهرة إهتماماً بحثياً طويل الأمد في دراسة المستوطنات البشرية الأثرية، وقد بدأ المعهد مشروعه الجديد في كوم أمبو (بالتعاون مع وزارة السياحة والآثار المصرية MoTA) عام 2017 بهدف استكشاف المدينة القديمة والمنطقة المحيطة بها.

ومن المثير للدهشة أن هذا الجانب من كوم أمبو لم يكن محط إهتمام لإجراء أعمال أثرية إلا حديثاً، وهو ما سيتم إيضاحه خلال الفصول التالية. وأبرز هذه الأعمال الحديثة هو مشروع تخفيض منسوب المياه الجوفية للمنطقة حول المعبد والتل الأثري (GWLP) الممول من الهيئة الأمريكية للتنمية الدولية USAID والذي ساهم بشكل واضح لمشروع كوم أمبو الأثري. وتم تنفيذ هذا المشروع من خلال شركة أمريكية تدعى CDM Smith بالتعاون مع وزارة السياحة والآثار ما بين أعوام 2015 و 2019. وقد أتاحت المجسات والحفر اللازم لتركيب المضخات والأنابيب الفرصة لإجراء حفائر إنقاذ بعدة أماكن متفرقة داخل الموقع. وقد تداخل مشروع GWLP زمنياً بشكل جزئي مع قيامنا بالحفائر، ونحن ممتنون للتعاون المثمر وتبادل المعرفة ما بين الفريقين.

تم تمويل مشروع كوم أمبو من خلال صندوق تمويل العلوم النمساوي (مشروع مستقل P3179: مدينة كوم أمبو خلال الألفية الثالثة قبل الميلاد).

يقدم هذا الجزء صورة عامة عن موقع كوم أمبو، وتاريخها قبل بداية إجراء الحفائر من خلال البعثة المصرية \ النمساوية. وتعطي الفصول التالية صورة عامة عن تاريخ الاستيطان البشري بالموقع، وتاريخ البحث الأثري، وكوم أمبو في عيون الفنون البصرية، ومدى تغيّر البيئة الطبيعية لكوم أمبو عبر الزمن، وأخيراً المسح المغناطيسي الذي تم إجرائه عام 2018.

ويعد هذا الكتاب أولى الأجزاء ضمن سلسلة تتناول البحث العلمي للمشروع. أما الجزء القادم، فسيتناول تقرير عن الحصن الإنجليزي – المصري الذي يؤرخ للقرن التاسع عشر.

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VERÖFFENTLICHUNGEN DER ÄGYPTISCHEN KOMMISSION

Begründet von Fritz Schachermeyr † Herausgegeben von Manfred Bietak

Band 1 Günther Hölbl, Ägyptisches *Kulturgut auf den Inseln Malta und Gozo in phönikischer und punischer Zeit.* Wien 1989, ÖAW, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 538.

Band 2 Ulrich Luft, *Die chronologische Fixierung des Mittleren Reiches nach dem Tempelarchiv von Illahun*. Wien 1992, ÖAW, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 598.

Band 3 Peter Jánosi, *Österreich vor den Pyramiden*. Die Grabungen Hermann Junkers im Auftrag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien bei der großen Pyramide in *Giza*. Wien 1997, ÖAW, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 648.