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The Survey of Memphis, IX: Kom Rabi'a: The Objects from the Late Middle Kingdom Installations (Levels VI–VIII). By LISA GIDDY, EES Excavation Memoir 115, Pp. 295, London, Egypt Exploration Society, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-85698-228-6. Price £70.

The book under review comprises the publication of the Middle Kingdom (MK) and Second Intermediate Period (SIP) objects recovered from the Egypt Exploration Society excavations in ancient Memphis. Together with the site report¹ and the pottery volume² three major studies relating to the MK levels at Kom Rabia are thus available to the scientific community. Reports on the faunal remains³ and the archaeobotany⁴ are hopefully still to come to afford a truly comprehensive picture of the domestic life in ancient Memphis from the late MK to the Third Intermediate Period, the time period encountered in a test trench. Such archaeological sequences are rare and precious, as settlement archaeology is still severely underrepresented in Egyptian Archaeology.

The beauty of this work is a long archaeological sequence with all accompanying finds. These volumes appeared over the years in the *SoM* (*Survey of Memphis*) series.⁵ This project made clear that settlement excavations demand much more time and effort to accommodate execution, analysis and publication, because they represent mementoes and minute details of many lives lived together, often in crowded environments and with frequent drastic remodelling changing the character of (and even destroying) earlier remnants. All of this makes 'reading' the stratigraphy more complicated and more 'messy' than to engage with self-contained tombs, which usually provide smaller units to deal with. The nature of the finds, often broken and discarded household items, is on average also less spectacular than that of other types of sites. However, as Lisa Giddy states on p.11: 'The real value of the rather motley collection of objects ... is the simple fact that they constitute a reliable sample of settlement material originating from well-stratified and firmly sealed contexts' (p. 11).

Whilst the intention and plan of the Survey of Memphis excavations is indeed laudable and innovative, the sheer volume of finds in a relatively small area – at first 25 by 20 m in the New Kingdom (hereafter NK) and post-NK levels, later in the pre-NK levels the area reduced to c.10 by 9 m rectangular area and a strip on the northern edge of the former trench of c.16 by 5 m – exceeded all expectations and made coping with this wealth of objects very difficult. However, the results of the excavation represent a rare window into the domestic history of ancient Memphis *inbw Hd*. While the sequence is of high value, the context and settlement history of the neighbourhood is, without a single complete house ground plan in the pre-NK levels, difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, the stratified sequence of the materials found there was carefully excavated and documented and makes this body of material – a wide variety of objects, pottery, ancient fauna and flora – a rare primary source, especially as such finds usually remain unpublished due to their mundane nature (cf. the scarcity of published parallels in both contemporary and non-contemporary settlements for some object types throughout the volume e.g. pp. 8, 110, 113, 115).

¹ L. Giddy, *The Survey of Memphis, VI: Kom Rabi'a: The Late Middle Kingdom Settlement (Levels VI–VIII)* (EES EM 94; London, 2012), hereafter *SoM* VI.

² J. D. Bourriau and C. Gallorini, *The Survey of Memphis, VIII: Kom Rabi'a: the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period Pottery* (EES EM 108; London, 2016), hereafter *SoM* VIII.

³ B. Ghaleb, 'Choice Cuts: Butchery Practices at New Kingdom Memphis', *Egyptian Archaeology* 7 (1995), 23–5.

⁴ M. A. Murray, 'Rich Refuse from Memphis', *Egyptian Archaeology* 4 (1994), 34–5.

⁵ As found under Survey of Memphis in the search option of the online OEB.

However, there is a sad lesson to be learnt from the fate of the archaeological finds from this site, namely the complete destruction of the workroom and magazine (pp. 7, 10, 79, 89 and more) with the subsequent total loss of the finds, so that they are no longer available for further study with advanced technologies in recording and analysis. With this in mind, awareness needs to be raised that the initial processing of the finds might be the only chance for recording the material, and special attention should thus be paid to this aspect of archaeological excavation.

The major drawback of this publication is the total lack of photographs, which severely hampers the usefulness of the volume, although there are many line drawings of selected objects. It is hoped that the promise to make available all the photos on to the EES website will be kept. It is a milestone that the volume did appear. However, it is still a major *desideratum* to be achieved in order to fully appreciate the painstaking work undertaken and to have visual and verbal description at our disposal. This small window to ancient Memphis is currently the only one open to us,⁶ so it seems vital to make as much

⁶ The field school work of the AERA project in the vicinity of RAT has so far only been published to a very limited extent and in preliminary reports. E.g. H. Mahmoud Mohamed, 'One of the Earliest Discovered Houses at Memphis', in G. Rosati and M. C. Guidotti (eds), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists, Florence, Italy 23–30 August 2015* (Oxford 2017), 722–3.

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information available to the scientific community as possible in a durable form.

The book under review can only be fully appreciated together with the excavation report *SoM* VI, which contains all the contextual information,⁷ and the volume on the NK objects (*SoM* II)⁸ because the MK/SIP object volume is organised in exactly the same way, with some discussions only fully fleshed out in the earlier book (with references). The MK book is arranged in the following manner: I Free-standing figurines; II Personal adornment; III Household items; IV Tools and instruments; V Non-ceramic vessels; VI Inscribed materials (incl. seal impressions and architectural elements); VII Models, gamers (sic) and miscellaneous objects. These larger object categories also have numerous sub-classes (see below for remarks on some of them).

Each object class is organised in the same way: An overview of the object class in the MK/SIP and a comparison with the NK equivalent group is followed by a discussion of shapes and classifications, materials, methods of manufacture (where traces of manufacture can be discerned), provenance and dating with short presentations of the contexts,⁹ in which the objects were found as well as levels and sectors. The discussion is rounded off by a treatise of parallels, if available, and the general significance and interpretation of the object types. Subsequently the catalogue follows suit with minute descriptions of the rarer objects (in absence of photos), and the three-dimensional position across the site, if they were found during the excavations. If the objects came from the pottery baskets or flotation the context number was given as the provenience. For object classes with numerous finds, a list is given with details of context number, measurements and shape description (e.g. for beads and copper alloy fragments, chipped stone tools). Many objects, especially the rarer types, are published in line drawings. Due to the bad state of preservation of several objects (e.g. copper pendants) it is sometimes difficult to follow the author's discussion of identification without a photo. Unless one is already familiar with similar objects, assessments of objects can be challenging.

Small, free-standing figurines (pp. 15–21) were scarce compared to the NK/post-NK levels, and Giddy believes the lack of the later attested cobra statuettes to be highly indicative of a social change of some kind. While this difference may have its reason in a different function of the settlement, or a change in magic rituals, or some other socio-cultural development, there is no obvious reason why no change should have occurred in daily life during a time span of about 250 years. Moreover, settlements are simply not well enough researched in order to know how people lived in various periods and why such differences in predilection occurred over time. For the spatial distribution, the reference to fig. 2 in the current volume unfortunately does not contain the six sectors of the site frequently referred to throughout the volume.¹⁰ Without stating it in so many words, Giddy indicates that these figurines belong to the religious sphere of household cults.

Section II, personal adornment (pp. 23–61), includes scarabs, scaraboids, earrings, bracelets, bezels, inlays, appliqués and the comparatively large group of beads. The definitions of the object groups with many fragmentary elements were chosen very carefully. Although only five scarabs and scaraboids were found, they are important for comparison of workmanship, sequence and distribution with other sites (pp. 23–31).¹¹ It has to be kept in mind that scarabs do not date the level but only serve as *termini post quem*. On p. 26 Giddy ascertains 'Egyptian' workmanship for all scarabs found without getting into the implications of such a label. The catalogue is given in numerical order. EES 2627 is a scaraboid in the form of a hedgehog with the *rdj R^c*

⁷ The object volume does not contain references with page numbers to the excavation volume, but it is possible to get to the contextual information by referring to the sectors and searching through the text.

⁸ L. Giddy, *The Survey of Memphis, II: Kom Rabi'a: The New Kingdom and Post-New Kingdom Objects* (EES EM 64; London, 1999), hereafter *SoM* II.

⁹ For details one needs to consult the excavation volume to find the respective plan of where the context was situated. Cf. Giddy, *SoM* VI. References would have made this task much quicker.

¹⁰ See instead fig. 1 in Giddy, *SoM* VI. Also on pp. 32, 37, 67, 74, 90 and 115 the references to figures should be adapted.

¹¹ I would like to thank Daphna Ben-Tor for letting me have the benefit of her opinion on these scarabs and for letting me consult some of her unpublished papers.

formula on the base. In addition to those given by Giddy, it finds a very good parallel at Tell el-Dab'a¹² from a Phase E/1 tomb, which is equivalent to the mid-SIP or, from a regional point of view, the beginning of the Fifteenth Dynasty in the Delta. The original date of this seemingly secondarily deposited scaraboid is 'late 12th to 13th Dynasty' to which period most of the parallels given belong.¹³ The *rdj R^c* inscription does not quite look the same as in the Tell el-Dab'a example, with the latter being much more delicately fitted into the oval than the Memphis one. In the latter the inscription fills the oval almost completely. EES 3306, the base design of which is depicted on the cover of the book as a colour photo, is remarkable and probably a local product according to Giddy. One parallel for the base design cited by Giddy in addition to those in Ben-Tor¹⁴ is equivalent to Mlinar's¹⁵ cat. no 107 = Tell el-Dab'a reg.no 4740 from a tomb of Phase (G)-F in a secondary position. This secondary position means that a synchronisation of Phase G-F with Memphis level VII-VI can only be tentative at best, although this is a remarkable co-incidence, as this fits

¹² C. Mlinar, *Die Skarabäen von Tell el-Dab'a: Eine chronologische und typologische Untersuchung der Skarabäen von Tell el-Dab'a aus der 13.–15. Dynastie* (PhD thesis, University of Vienna; Vienna, 2001), vol. II, Katalog, TD cat.no. 517 (reg.no. 2087), 311.

¹³ Mlinar, *Die Skarabäen*, II, 189–90.

¹⁴ D. Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period* (OBO Series Archaeologica 27; Fribourg, 2007).

¹⁵ Mlinar, *Die Skarabäen*.

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the results from the pottery comparison rather well.¹⁶ One inherent problem in Giddy's terminology is her use of dynasties. Her 'second half of 13th Dynasty' is not present at Tell el-Dab'a, where the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty is succeeded by the Fifteenth Dynasty. As already argued some time ago,¹⁷ it is very dangerous to assume that the duration of the Thirteenth Dynasty in absolute years was the same at every site throughout the country. Giddy gives a chart of the terminology herself (p. 13), where Phase G/3–1 is assigned as late MK and first half of the Thirteenth Dynasty, while Phases F–E/3 are given as mid-Thirteenth Dynasty and transition period of late MK to early SIP. This does not fit the description given for the dating of the scarab. It all hinges on the definition of the length of the Thirteenth Dynasty at any given site. In the current case, it seems that Giddy works on the hypothesis that the Thirteenth Dynasty lasted until the beginning of the NK. Accordingly the second half of the Thirteenth Dynasty means a different number of years at Memphis and at Tell el-Dab'a, because there the Thirteenth Dynasty was cut short by the Fifteenth with the duration of at least 108 years.¹⁸ Additional parallels from the late MK/early Thirteenth Dynasty for parts of the design of scarab EES 3306 are provided by D. Ben-Tor and L. Bell¹⁹ on the seal impressions from Ashkelon, namely cat.no. 2, where the top half of the imprint is the same while the bottom half shows different sign combinations. The same holds true for cat. nos 27 and 35. These impressions were found in Phase 14 (MBIIA) and equivalent to the late MK in Egypt, and in Phase 12, which is to be dated to the transition of MBIIA–B equivalent to the early SIP in Egypt. Thus, this kind of seal shows quite a longevity, although details of post-depositional processes cannot be fully understood. EES 3335 from Level VIc is perhaps a variation of Mlinar's group 'Balken mit Doppel und Dreifachbögen',²⁰ which occurs frequently in Tell el-Dab'a Phase E/1, but there is none with exactly the same design. The large scarab blank of carnelian is remarkable. Similar finished scarabs have been found for example in Mostagedda (made from red and green jasper, now kept in the British museum EA63343, EA63342). The scarcity of earrings and bracelets (p. 36) can be paralleled in the settlement of the late MK at Tell el-Dab'a in Area A/II (Phases G/3–1), where again almost no such material was found. Equally scarce are such objects in the settlement layers of the late MK and the SIP of Area F/I.²¹ In contrast, quite a few such items were found in the contemporary graves – this may mean that the personal adornments were taken to the graves by their owners minus those that were lost or broken during life. Objects identified as bezels, inlays and appliques (p. 36–42) were found in a bad state of preservation, which suggests they were discarded for this reason. It would have been interesting to analyse whether there were differences in the quantity of such material in dumping contexts and so-called 'living contexts'. The reader can work it out, but it is laborious. The group of beads (pp. 42–61) constitutes the single largest group of objects. They were divided by shape and material. The terminology used (p. 44) includes 'lozenge' beads and other less common terms, such as tube beads instead of the more usual cylinder beads (p. 47), but any perceived benefit of this different terminology is not made clear. The thorough identification of materials and manufacturing technology (pp. 47–9) is discussed in depth, although identification could only be done by macroscopic means, and is very useful for further reference. In this instance, the inclusion of the sectors in the frequency table (p. 50) would have enabled the reader to discern if there were any bead clusters across the sectors and the levels of the site.

¹⁶ B. Bader, *Tell el-Dab'a XIX: Auaris und Memphis im Mittleren Reich und in der Hyksoszeit. Vergleichsanalyse der materiellen Kultur* (Vienna, 2009), 680–707.

¹⁷ B. Bader, *Tell el-Dab'a XIII: Typologie und Chronologie der Mergel C-Ton Keramik. Materialien zum Binnenhandel des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit* (Vienna, 2001), 43.

¹⁸ According to current knowledge, but see T. Schneider, 'Khyan's Place in History: A New Look at the Chronographic Tradition', in I. Forstner-Müller and N. Moeller (eds), *The Hyksos Ruler Khyan and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt: Problems and Priorities of Current Research* (Vienna, 2018), 277–85. See also Ben-Tor's discussion in D. Ben-Tor, 'Some Observations on Egyptian-Levantine Relations in the Middle Kingdom', in *BES*, forthcoming. I would like to thank her for providing me with a manuscript of this paper.

¹⁹ D. Ben-Tor and L. Bell, 'Clay Sealings from the Moat Deposit', in L. E. Stager, J. D. Schloen, and R. J. Voss (eds), *Ashkelon 6: The Middle Bronze Age Ramparts and Gates of the North Slope and Later Fortifications* (Winona Lake, 2018), 337–81. I would like to thank D. Ben-Tor very much for providing me with a pre-print of this chapter and additional information.

²⁰ Mlinar, *Die Skarabäen*, II, 346, fig. K201.

²¹ M. Müller, *Das Stadtviertel F/I in Tell el-Dab'a/Auaris Multikulturelles Leben in einer Stadt des späten Mittleren Reichs und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit* (PhD thesis, University of Vienna; Vienna, 2012).

Chapter III, household items (pp. 63–71), includes inlays of various kinds, tiles, fittings and ornaments for the domestic use, furniture (e.g. boxes) and architectural elements in the widest sense. They were rare and very hard to identify and interpret due to their fragmentary state and a lack of published parallels. This class of object is entirely missing at Tell el-Dab'a Area A/II in the late MK.²²

Chapter IV, tools and instruments (pp. 73–7), includes cosmetic implements, which were discussed at great length due to their scarcity. Within this group fall the decorative pins and the 'toggle pins'. EES 2949 is described as a toggle pin with a 'large head and raised circular motifs on the pin head'. EES 3572 is identified as the shaft of a toggle pin, but both are not well preserved and very corroded. The use of the term 'toggle pin' here creates problems, because between the lines an influence from the Syro-Palestinian Middle Bronze Age culture is suggested, in which 'toggle pins' are a widely used item. Such pins are certainly not represented by any fragment found at Kom Rabi'a as a comparison with pins from Mesopotamia and the Levant showed.²³ In Egyptological terminology, 'tog-

²² B. Bader, *Tell el-Dab'a XXIV: The Late Middle Kingdom Settlement of Area A/II. A Holistic Study of Non-elite Inhabitants of Tell el-Dab'a, I. The Archaeological Report, the Excavations from 1966 to 1969* (in press).

²³ E. Henschel-Simon, "The 'Toggle Pins' in the Palestine Archaeological Museum", *QDAP* 6 (1937), 169–209; H. Klein, *Untersuchung zur Typologie bronzzeitlicher Nadeln in Mesopotamien und Syrien* (Saarbrücken, 1992).

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gle pin' has not been used and would preferably not applied unless for the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) item, because a presence of non-Egyptians might be read into the use of that terminology. These two objects termed 'toggle pins' are entirely corroded and bear no resemblance to pins found in the Delta or in the Levant or Mesopotamia in the MBA. The eye of the needle is not in the middle (or not preserved) as is vital for the identification of such an object; moreover, both objects in question do not have the eye preserved! As Graham Philip states, there are no toggle pins that carry that label rightfully, found in the Nile Valley.²⁴ *SoM* II, 168 uses the same misleading terminology for pins and it seems as if the object pl. 36.125 was used to reconstruct EES 2949, one of the bones of contention. However, there is no comparable pin in Klein's book. Emphatically, the Memphite items are not toggle pins like those we know from Tell el-Dab'a²⁵ and the Levant. Small metal tools and implements (pp. 77–89) are all very fragmented, and a list of unidentifiable metal objects follows the description and discussion of the material. Tools comprise blades, borers, chisels, hooks, nails and needles. It is interesting that Giddy suspects a small-scale copper recycling venture close to the site (pp. 79, 83) due to the sheer number of small fragments found. Smelting installations, on the other hand, were not present in the excavated sectors. Pages 87–9 list all fragments found at the site. The inclusion of the sector in that chart would have made possible clusters, in as far as they existed, more obvious. A striking difference can be cited to Tell el-Dab'a, where not even copper alloy fragments were found in the late MK.²⁶ Weights and counter weights (pp. 89–94) are discussed next, which unfortunately could not be weighed before they were lost. Querns (pp. 95–9) occur quite frequently and are differentiated into types by shape, such as slab, saddle, boat and flat querns. They do not occur in all sectors in all levels, and seem to cluster in sector NC 2 in levels VIe and VI d and in sector NW in level VIa. It would have been interesting to interpret such clustering with a view to the site report. The difficult decision of how to divide grinders (pp. 99–102), pounders (pp. 102–5) and polishing stones (pp. 101–11) was solved pragmatically by the division of the coarseness of the raw materials and the nature of the use traces. Again, the tools were divided into classes by shape: brick, disc, cone, loaf and sphere. Interesting is the observation that the tools were selected rather than manufactured and that holds true for all the shape groups. While mostly hardstone types were used, identification was often difficult. The publication of this material is laudable because beside museum databases such mundane material, hard to identify, is often thought not worthy of publication as the reviewer previously found out in her own research. Very little material was found *in situ* and most of the finds were derived from dumps, where they were discarded (p. 104). A further point of interest (p. 102) is that more such tools were found in the later levels as if the material was always kept and handed down until the pieces really were no longer useful or needed. The same pattern was observed with querns, pounders and pestles (p. 105). As these tools are utilitarian, they tend not to change and therefore could have been used continuously. For this reason, these objects would only have been discarded because they were really broken or the activity was no longer conducted in this place and the objects were not worth being taken away. On p. 107 Giddy observes '... given the variety and quantity of stone tools ... at Kom Rabia it is certain that they [the stone tools] constituted essential and ubiquitous components of daily life in the settlement'. Finally, pp. 114–18 discuss miscellaneous tools and instruments such as borers, piercers, cutters, palettes, plumb bobs and plummets. Interestingly, only one item, EES 3677, constitutes a fine-grained stone of greyish-green colour – identified preliminarily as greywacke in Level VII in the NE sector. In contrast, the late MK settlement at Tell el-Dab'a yielded several objects (weights, dishes, palettes, etc.) of a similar

²⁴ G. Philip, *Tell el-Dab'a XV: Metalwork and Metalworking Evidence for the Late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period* (Vienna, 2006), passim.

²⁵ See also D. A. Aston, 'A Possible Twenty-square Game (?) and Other Varia from L81', in H. Franzmeier, T. Rehren, and R. Schulz (eds), *Mit archäologischen Schichten Geschichte schreiben: Festschrift für Edgar B. Pusch zum 70. Geburtstag* (FoRa 10; Hildesheim, 2016), 38–40.

²⁶ But in both areas A/II and F/I evidence for copper working was found, even if on small scale. Cf. Müller, *Das Stadtviertel F/I*; Bader, *Tell el-Dab'a XXIV*.

stone type, probably siltstone.²⁷ A little tenuous seems the identification of a recut sherd of fabric E1 (= Marl C, cf. *SoM* VIII) as a scoop, as it is very small and does not have a very pronounced depression (p. 117, EES 3229). More convincing is p. 118, EES 3231 (3.9 by 7.3 cm), although the hollow is not central. The large chapter on retouched flint tools (pp. 118–45) provides a summary overview as a specialist report is in preparation by C. Werschkun. However, it is extremely useful to know which types of tools are present at Memphis. 583 such tools and blades were found in levels VII and VI. While in the MK, the 583 pieces constitute 46% of all finds, 558 tools in the NK make up 25% of all finds. This is an interesting shift in tool frequency and may be related to the actual provision of the inhabitants with tools and technological trends. Normal-sized tools as well as micro-tools were found, and the types include awls of various kinds, blades, axes and adzes, scrapers, knives, chisel blades, projectile heads, scrapers and sickle blades with silica sheen. While both finished tools and blanks were found (p. 120), it remains unclear if these are remains of actually producing the tools, debitage, which would show whether the chipped stone tools were made or finished in the settlement of RAT, or if they were obtained from without. For the bifacially worked knife blade with retouch on both sides EES 3437 (NE VIIa, RAT 1481), A. Tillmann provides rough dating criteria for the

²⁷ B. Bader, 'Stone Objects from the Late Middle Kingdom Settlement at Tell el-Dab'a', in W. Grajetzki and G. Miniaci (eds), *The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1500 BC): Contribution on Archaeology, Art, Religion and Written Sources* (London, 2015), 25–41.

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typological development from the Ppre-dynastic onwards.²⁸

Chapter V, non-ceramic vessels (pp. 147–62), includes a few stone vessels, mainly of calcite, and one each of faience and frit, as well as lids and stoppers. It is remarkable that only one large limestone vessel was found, which might have been used as a bowl or mortar. A dearth of such items was also observed in the late MK settlement at Tell el-Dab'a Area A/II, roughly contemporary to Level VII, as well as in the longer lived settlement in F/I.²⁹ The same holds true for faience vessels, which may have been affected by the wet soil conditions. On p. 161, a lid made from a 'dense green stone' is mentioned with a tentative identification as serpentine. It is possible that this object belongs to the 'green stone' category identified as siltstone, but cannot be verified without photographs. Giddy cites B. G. Aston for the change in terminology of stone types, namely the renaming of 'Egyptian Alabaster' to travertine, first suggested by J. Harrel,³⁰ 'Misuse of the Term "Alabaster"' in *Egyptology*, GM 119 (1990), 37–42.

Note in this respect the often overlooked general criticism of D. and R. Klemm on the use of this terminology in 'Calcit-Alabaster oder Travertin?'³¹ *Bemerkungen zu Sinn und Unsinn petrographischer Bezeichnungen in der Ägyptologie*, GM 122 (1991), 57–70. Architectural elements, inscriptional and sculptural pieces (pp. 163–98) are discussed in Chapter VI. In this section, sealings and seal impressions are discussed as well as inscriptions on stone vessels, architectural elements and statue fragments. With a view to the recent upsurge in the recovery of seals and sealings even in wet environments at sites such as Tell el-Dab'a³² and Edfu,³³ this chapter is particularly interesting, as it holds potential information on socio-economic mechanisms, administrative and organisational issues and, not the least, dating that might help to link the levels to other sites as well as information on which commodities were sealed and in use at Memphis/RAT. While the lack of inscribed materials was remarked upon (p. 163), it is not a surprising state of affairs, which is paralleled at Tell el-Dab'a due to similar soil conditions. Thirty-two clay sealings were found in Memphis in total, of these, 26 were inscribed. Interestingly, this is the only object group to exceed the number of items found in the NK and post-NK, which gives some insight into the falling out of use of the practice or a differential way to deal with commodities (p. 163). Comments on the small number has to be seen within the context of sites with wet soil conditions, which require much more circumspect excavation methods (drying of the spoil e.g.) in order to find these objects. Those collected at Memphis/RAT were fired or burnt, whether intentionally or not. Sealings are recognisable due to their fineness and almost total lack of inclusions in the clay (p. 164). The descriptions of the objects are very detailed and illustrative. Items sealed at Memphis include fabric or papyrus, wood (knobs of boxes, doors?), cords, and pottery vessels (pp. 164–5). The impressions were made either by scarabs or cylinder seals and often the impressed seal is only partly preserved, but several are easily recognisable (pls 30–3). All items are shown as line drawings. A thorough description of the contexts and the distribution of the seals is given (pp. 166–72), including a distribution chart of levels with sectors (p. 171). Note in the chart that especially in the later levels residual pieces date as far back as the Fifth Dynasty, which just shows how long post-depositional history of such objects might last, unless old seals were used. A distinct disadvantage is the lack of photos (compare the publication of the seal impressions from the moat deposit at Ashkelon,³⁴ which sets a new standard in publishing such material).³⁵ Pages 186–7 give a minute description

²⁸ A. Tillmann, *Neolithikum in der Späten Bronzezeit: Steingeräte des 2. Jahrtausends aus Auaris-Piramesse* (FoRa 4; Hildesheim, 2007), 134–5.

²⁹ Müller, *Das Stadtviertel F/I*, 183–9.

³⁰ J. Harrel, 'Misuse of the Term "Alabaster"' in *Egyptology*, GM 119 (1990), 37–42.

³¹ D. Klemm and R. Klemm, 'Calcit-Alabaster oder Travertin?' *Bemerkungen zu Sinn und Unsinn petrographischer Bezeichnungen in der Ägyptologie*, GM 122 (1991), 57–70.

³² E.g. C. Real, 'The Seal Impressions from Ezbet Rushdi, Area R/III of Tell el-Dab'a: Preliminary Report', *J&L* 22/23 (2012/13), 67–73. Unfortunately for the late MK settlement in Area A/II there is no evidence, as in the 1960s and 1970s the preservation of unfired seals in wet soil had been considered impossible.

³³ N. Moeller and G. Marouard with a contribution by N. Ayers, 'Discussion of Late Middle Kingdom and Early Second Intermediate Period History and Chronology with Relation to the Khayan Sealing from Tell Edfu', *J&L* XXI (2011), 87–122.

³⁴ Ben-Tor and Bell, in Stager, Schloen, and Voss (eds), *Ashkelon* 6.

³⁵ I acknowledge of course the unfortunate loss of the archaeological finds from Memphis, see above.

of EES 3634 a so-called *anra* scarab,³⁶ from Level VIe, which came from flotation. Very likely a tripartite arrangement of inscriptional columns is depicted.³⁷ Because this formulaic inscription has taken an important part in the interpretation of archaeology of the SIP, ample space was devoted to the two occurrences of this formula. Fiona Richards first studied these impressions and compared all existing parallels. She already remarked upon the fact that those two are quite unique and should be dated with great circumspection.³⁸ Noteworthy seems the design of the hieroglyphic sign for water on EES 3634, which does not look similar to others on later SIP *anra* scarabs,³⁹ as far as it can be discerned from the line drawing published. It is a proper zigzag water line, with several zigzags, not just a line with vertical short lines crossing it or very short zigzags of only two.⁴⁰ The *anra* scarabs and imprints shown in the catalogues of the comprehensive works on scarab typology such

³⁶ F. Richards, *The Anra Scarab: An Archaeological and Historical Approach* (BAR International Series 919; Oxford, 2001).

³⁷ Ben-Tor, *Scarabs* (OBO Series Archaeologica 27; Fribourg, 2007), pl. 36, design type 3E1. Giddy somewhat misrepresents Richards' description of the impression, who thought it possible that a cartouche might be depicted (marked with a question mark). Giddy citation suggests that Richards undoubtedly identified the cartouche, which she did not.

³⁸ Richards, *The Anra Scarab*, 303. Only one uncontexted scarab from Tell el-Dab'a includes a similar feature, Richards, *The Anra Scarab*, 302, her cat.no. TD 8.

³⁹ Ben-Tor's late Palestinian group.

⁴⁰ Richards, *The Anra Scarab*, fig. 4.11–12 for a horizontal line with short vertical lines joining it; 302, cat.no. TED 5, reg.no. 1044, without context. See also Ben-Tor, *Scarabs*, pl. 57–8.

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as Mlinar⁴¹ (e.g. figs 9.1, 2, 5, 6), Ben-Tor⁴² and Richards⁴³ show the signs for ‘water’ simplified as a horizontal line perpendicularly crossed by short vertical lines. Richards’ cautious approach for that reason (in my opinion justified) is entirely dismissed by Giddy (p. 172): ‘If the two *anra* sealings (EES 3634 and EES 3734) in the Kom Rabi’a mini-series are dated to the Second Intermediate Period, as stated by Ben-Tor ... then from Level VIe upwards in the Kom Rabi’a site sequence we are looking at elements of a Second Intermediate Period infiltration at Memphis.’ This statement insinuates two things, one of which is derived from an inaccurate citation of Ben-Tor,⁴⁴ who contends specifically that the Memphis imprints may belong to the ‘final phase of late MK and the early SIP’.⁴⁵ However, Giddy dropped the specification and just took over the ‘SIP’. Secondly, it remains unclear what a ‘SIP infiltration’ at Memphis might include, and presumably Giddy meant the taking over of the Memphis-Fayoum region by the Hyksos (i.e. the kings of the Fifteenth Dynasty) in one way or the other. This vagueness opens the door for severe misunderstandings. But even if the sealing represents a commodity sealed with a ‘foreign’ sealing as obliquely suggested, its discovery in a settlement does not indicate any presence of an individual but only contact with someone, who uses such a sealing or even only a middle man.⁴⁶ However, a synchronisation of ‘early’ SIP and Level VIe would fit well with the comparison of Tell el-Dab’a and Kom Rabia (cf. Giddy’s own chart on p. 13).⁴⁷ In a similar vein, the interpretation of stylistic closeness to Canaanite motifs and traditions that she sees in seal impression EES 3732 has to be taken with a pinch of salt (p. 191), because the ‘branch’ that is supposed to reinforce this impression looks, in detail, different to those known from other sites (shown in Ben-Tor⁴⁸ and Mlinar,⁴⁹ e.g. figs 4. 5, 11.a.6).

Only two inscribed stone vessels (pp. 193–5) were grouped with inscribed material rather than with stone vessels. Interestingly, one of them is perhaps made from schist or siltstone, which is described as grey here.⁵⁰ Both fragments were dated to the Old Kingdom and are thus residual. The inscriptions were either too fragmentary or too unclear to be read. Although fragmentary, orientation and stance could perhaps have been obtained by taking various diameters, at least tentatively. Architectural elements (pp. 195–8) were equally rare, with three small implements, a door socket, and two stone blocks not found *in situ*. Interestingly, the only door socket from the late MK settlement Tell el-Dab’a in Area A/II is rectangular.⁵¹ Two statue fragments (pp. 197–8) from dense dark grey basalt were found.

Chapter VII comprises models, ‘gamers’ and miscellaneous objects (pp. 199–218). Giddy (p. 199) appreciates the difficulty to distinguish between cultic and recreational objects (votive versus toys). A few small, broken pieces of birds and quadrupeds were distributed over the stratigraphy of RAT, in close resemblance to the settlement layers of the late MK in Area A/II at Tell el-Dab’a. Ten gamers (i.e. gaming pieces) (pp. 202–7) of generally small size are classed by shape: flat based conical ones, spool shaped ones, discs and spherical. They were crudely handmade or just collected and used (chert nodules, for example). Recut potsherds, pp. 207–11, are frequent finds in the settlement layers of Memphis/RAT. Whilst several were only roughly shaped and unfinished, others have well-smoothed edges. Mostly, they are round or oval, and their uses are varied: lids, gamers or counting devices, reels, scoops (the latter seeming somewhat unlikely as the examples shown do not include a large enough dip or dimple to hold some powder or liquid in a sensible way), weights, parts of spindle

⁴¹ Mlinar, *Die Skarabäen*; C. Mlinar, ‘The Scarab Workshop of Tell el-Dab’a’, in M. Bietak and E. Czerny (eds), *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC from Egypt, Nubia, Crete and the Levant: Chronological and Historical Implications* (Vienna, 2004), 107–40.

⁴² Ben-Tor, *Scarabs*.

⁴³ Richards, *The Anra Scarab*.

⁴⁴ Ben-Tor, *Scarabs*, 45–6.

⁴⁵ Ben-Tor is still very strongly of the opinion that the impression is derived from a Canaanite scarab of the early Palestinian series. I would like to thank her for discussing this interesting impression with me and providing examples and unpublished papers.

⁴⁶ For similar suggestions of presence of Asiatics in Nubia by seal imprints see A.-L. Mourad, ‘Asiatics and Levantine(-influenced) Products in Nubia: Evidence from the Middle Kingdom to the Early Second Intermediate Period’, *Ä&L* 27 (2017), 281–302.

⁴⁷ Cf. Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, 680–707.

⁴⁸ Ben-Tor, *Scarabs*.

⁴⁹ Mlinar, in Bietak and Czerny (eds), *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC*.

⁵⁰ Bader, *Stone Objects*, passim.

⁵¹ Those in Area F/I are not described in detail; Müller, *Das Stadtviertel F/I*, figs 1, 11, 25, 45, 70.

whorls, or scrapers. While reels were already proposed by Bernice Cartland in 1918,⁵² based on an x-ray photograph of balls of thread, this understudied object class still has information to offer, probably situated in the economic sphere of daily life. A large scale weighing trial has not been undertaken in order to see if there are clusters in weight and/or size that might tie in with our knowledge of the weighing system of balance weights. The use of sherd discs represents a widespread phenomenon that has, as yet, received little attention although they have been discussed before.⁵³ Only a selection of them is shown in line drawing. While 84 pieces in the MK/SIP levels were registered, this is not the total number. Those from the last season in 1990 were not registered and were lost after the destruction of the site storage facility. This is why Level VII and its sublevels are not as well represented in the distribution list on p. 208 as expected. Giddy estimated over 100 in the MK/SIP levels, as compared to 231 from the NK and post NK. Interestingly, the majority of the recorded recut potsherds consists of Marl C

⁵² B. M. Cartland, 'Balls of Thread Wound on Pieces of Pottery', *JEA* 5/2 (1918), 139.

⁵³ Bader, *Tell el-Dab 'a XIII*, 218–19 with older bibliography. A. Masson, 'Domestic and Cultic Vessels from the Priests' Quarter in Karnak: The Fine Line between the Profane and the Sacred', in B. Bader and M. F. Ownby (eds), *Functional Aspects of Egyptian Ceramic in Their Archaeological Context* (OLA 217; Leuven, 2013), 141–64, fig. 4.e *in situ*. J. T. Peña, *Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record* (Cambridge, 2007), 72, 153–7, 158–9, 205–6. D. Aston, in Franzmeier, Rehren, and Schulz (eds), *FS Pusch*, 31–4.

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(fabric code E1), which, of course, could be chance as those from 1990 are missing from the frequency distribution, but it deserves some comment. Eighty-four are given in the table, pp. 210–11; of these, 51 are made from Marl C (=E1 fabric code),⁵⁴ which amounts to about 61%, 26 were made of Nile clay (D fabric code)⁵⁵ (33%), and two were possibly of Levantine fabrics derived from transport amphorae. The others remained undetermined. The description of the objects found in Memphis/RAT closes with unidentified objects, pp. 211–18, which represent those finds hard to identify due to their insufficient preservation and fragmentary state. Sixteen objects consisting of bone, clay, faience, pottery, flint/chert and stone (limestone, sandstone and turquoise) are presented. The presence of faience with white surface glaze is interesting as this is a rather rare occurrence (EES 3515).

All the volumes (*SoM* II, VI and XI) together enable us to reconstruct the contexts with the pottery volume (*SoM* VIII) and these can be viewed in sequence by means of the matrix published with the excavation report. Without references this is a laborious job for very determined readers. The volume was written as if the author did not expect it to be read from page 1 to the end. A numerical list of the objects helps to find the way through the volume (pp. 225–55).

It has not been sufficiently reflected in this particular volume that the stratigraphy of the trench is extremely complicated with the excavation going to a different depth in the various sectors with an exorbitant amount of dumping in some areas but not in others. This is why the stratigraphy in the single sectors should best be kept separate.⁵⁶

It is particularly interesting to be able to estimate the ‘life span’ of objects in a settlement situation, where we saw that even OK stone vessels and OK pottery, which often came out of the mud bricks, can be found many centuries later.⁵⁷ Seal impressions, on the other hand, may survive if fired, or may have been made with old seals. Thus, it has become very clear that in a continuously inhabited settlement a certain degree of residuality across all object classes has to be expected.

A few criticisms concern the layout of the volume, which is not overly user-friendly. The scales of the illustrated objects are not always unified on one and the same page, and, moreover, they appear to be somewhat arbitrary, which necessitates taking measurements for an accurate understanding. In some instances a 2:1 scale would have been advantageous, e.g. for the seal impressions. Differential scales in one object class are also misleading, e.g. for the querns, so that the eye is quite deceived in judging the size relation of these objects (pls 11–14). Selected spatial distribution plans for the more frequent object types would have made it easier to visualise clusters of objects or object groups of related nature. All drawings, and black-and-white photos, are said to be in the EES archive and for this reason only representative types have been illustrated ‘to prevent repetition’ (p. 10). Page references to the pottery volume and the excavation volume are given only occasionally.

Giddy keeps referring to the period covered in the volume as ‘the MK and its immediate aftermath’ (pp. 6, 11 and elsewhere), suggesting between the lines that the SIP is not covered, which, on the other hand, seems to be implied by the chart given on p. 13, where there is no indication of a hiatus or gap anywhere in the sequence. Such vagueness leads to uncertainty about the results of the excavation and should either be addressed openly or not voiced at all. The same impression is conveyed by the comment on p. 11 that the settlement did not last for centuries in the ‘MK and its immediate aftermath’, although roughly 200 years would be covered from the late MK to the beginning of the NK. Thus, it is possible that Giddy hints at a hiatus in the sequence, but it is not clearly stated. Of course, it is notoriously difficult, if not impossible, to assess the length of time equivalent to a stratigraphic level in a settlement.

⁵⁴ Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, 602. Bourriau and Gallorini, *SoM* VIII, 22.

⁵⁵ Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, 602. Bourriau and Gallorini, *SoM* VIII, 22.

⁵⁶ Bourriau and Gallorini, *SoM* VIII, 1–2. My own comparative work in *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, will have to be revisited under this view point. Trials on vital sequences of typological series so far have not dramatically changed the overall picture yet (Marl C storage jars, beer jars, hemispherical cups), but some adjustments might be called for.

⁵⁷ Cf. Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, 662. Bourriau and Gallorini, *SoM* VIII, 4, 39, 77–8, 102, 117–18, 160, 197, 211, 246 from the Old Kingdom.

The speculation that in the MK/SIP layers two larger estates might have existed in contrast to the smaller housing units in the NK and post-NK seems to lack substance when one considers the size of the explored area and the remains recovered ('two well-planned complexes', p. 11). There is not a single complete property excavated at late MK/RAT. They could have been large, but they could also have been smaller (p. 11) as one can see from the published plans in *SoM* VI. A trench of that size imposes restrictions on the possibilities of interpretation about urban planning.

Giddy summarises the overall character of the settlement sequence on p. 13 and writes that by level VIc–d (equivalent to Tell el-Dab'a Phase E/2–1 according to my analysis) the emergence of 'full Hyksos' had taken place, but in another part of the country. Such statements are bound to create misunderstandings because the comparison between material culture of Memphis and Tell el-Dab'a shows very clearly that the material culture in the two areas developed independently of each other, with extremely few elements known from Tell el-Dab'a ('Hyksos elements', according to Giddy) also present in Memphis. No matter why the material cultures of the areas differ from each other, for socio-cultural or economic reasons, the expression of 'Hyksos culture' reflects a simplistic identification between material culture and ethnic identity, which is no longer tenable. Material culture cannot be considered a one-to-one equivalent of ethnic identity.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and the Present* (London, 1997); B. Bader, 'Cultural Mixing in Egyptian Archaeology: The "Hyksos" as a Case Study', *The Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 28:1 (2013), 257–86.

Another bit of caution needs to be extended to the habit to assign a dynastic date to material culture, especially if there is no indication which kings were actually ruling at the time in that specific location. Among the few scarabs and sealings found in Memphis there was no indication of a dynastic affiliation of the inhabitants from Memphis. The usual historical reconstruction, which Giddy also follows in her chart, contends that the Thirteenth Dynasty ruled over Memphis all through the SIP until the southern invasion by Ahmose took place and defeated the Hyksos rulers, who had exerted political rule, with or without their physical presence, in Memphis, without any influence on the material culture there. There are a few inscribed finds,⁵⁹ which may actually support such a proposition. Any possible consequences on the daily life of the people living there, can, so far, only be gleaned from the RAT trench. As for independent dating criteria besides the pottery, five stratified scarab amulets and a small number of inscribed mud seal impressions are available, mainly in the Level VI sub-phases, which are probably to be dated to the SIP. Giddy stresses the two sealings with the hieroglyphic *anra*-group. In this context, Giddy speaks quite suddenly of newcomers, but that the local tradition is kept at RAT, which is ‘essentially “Egyptian” in defiance of the newcomers’ and ‘the character remains MK’ (p. 13). Here it seems that Giddy assumes a political change (after Manetho and the historiographic tradition with an influx of undefined ‘newcomers’ not discussed further), which is obviously not reflected in the material culture. From what we can glean of the overall population at Memphis, the material culture followed its own regional course, which was firmly based on manufacturing traditions of the MK in the area. It is not the place here to discuss whether this should be called ‘residential style’ due to the role of Memphis/Itjtawy or something else.

A further point of criticism is the statement that ‘the seal impressions [are] indicative of the “here and now”’ (p. 13). This is, in fact, not the case, because the seal impressions are indicative of opening materials and nothing more. How old these materials were at the time of opening remains absolutely unknown, and several finds suggest that either a lengthy period could have passed between sealing materials and opening or a prolonged use of old seals.⁶⁰ This is a question that cannot be solved currently and is again and again subject of heated debates. The problem derives from the insufficient knowledge of how sealings were disposed of. The fact that accidentally fired sealings of the OK were found in the layers of RAT stresses that point.

Giddy attempts no overall interpretation of activities undertaken at RAT – throughout the text there are some snippets of what daily life at Memphis might have been like, but there is no organised section (e.g. p. 83). Giddy, for example, considers the modalities of access to copper tools and refuse from it, used probably for domestic purposes and food gathering and perhaps minor artisan activities. The lack of weapons is probably due to the lack of graves. She sees mostly domestic local food production (p. 12).

Giddy compares all object types found in the late MK and SIP to those from the NK and post-NK in quality and quantity (pp. 11, 32) presumably to show quantitative and qualitative trends from the MK to the NK, and states that the 1200 finds from the MK/SIP layers are relatively few compared to the 2000 of the later levels. Considering that the size of the excavated area is almost 500 m² and the earlier roughly 190 m² and in the earliest levels even less (*ca.* 100 m²), the absolute number seems not that much smaller, even if the depth of the stratigraphy is larger. Another aspect of the difference is the method of cleaning/refuse collection within the settlement in antiquity, about which there is no evidence. It could have varied. The number of copper alloy finds is at least remarkable throughout the levels and sub-levels of the late MK, proper (p. 12). The contemporary 3000 m² settlement of Tell el-Dab’a Area A/II,⁶¹ for example, did not yield more than five copper alloy finds altogether. Clearly there are differences between settlements, but as long as we do not have a good idea of a ‘normal settlement’ and its contents, we will be stumbling in the dark and speculate on insufficient evidence. Also faience objects were scarce and the same holds true at Tell el-Dab’a, Area A/II, Phase G/3–1.

⁵⁹ See Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XIX*, 40–2 with references.

⁶⁰ M. Bietak, ‘Seal Impressions from the Middle till the New Kingdom – A Problem for Chronological Research’, in Bietak and Czerny (eds), *Scarabs of the Second Millennium BC*, 43–55.

⁶¹ The first volume of this settlement is currently in press. Cf. Bader, *Tell el-Dab’a XXIV*.

Giddy (pp. 13–14) presents her book as a case study for the way how different elements in the material culture respond to political change or not and may help to measure the change from the Late MK to the SIP in the Memphis region. She also stresses that the book contains a catalogue but not an in depth study of all the object types presented. As such the book is of the greatest value and the author can only be congratulated for the years of painstaking work invested into it. It is a most welcome addition to the still small field of settlement archaeology in Egypt.

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