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A look through his window: the sanctuary of the divine Apis Bull at Memphis

Nenad Marković¹

The creator-king-god Ptah² and the living Apis bull which was his visible earthly manifestation enjoyed supreme religious and socio-political importance at Memphis, one of Egypt's oldest political, economic, administrative, and sacral capitals. The large temple enclosure of Ptah once stood as the focal point within the central part of the settlement and dominated the landscape, everyday life, and the elite culture of Memphis for centuries.³ Social networks and power groups active in Memphis were mostly concentrated around the Ptah precinct. This is particularly well documented between the New Kingdom (c. 1,539-1,077 B.C.) and the end of the Ptolemaic period (30 B.C.), although never fully explored in modern scholarship.⁴

I argue here that the south-western corner of the temple enclosure was the area where successive Apis divine bulls spent their lifetimes in a sanctuary, venerated as a living herald, and later even the *ba*, of the god Ptah.⁵ As a rule there could only be one Apis bull at a time, born around the same time as the death of his predecessor and identified by a set of previously-defined bodily markings. According to a long-standing tradition the main cultic episodes in the life of Apis included birth, coronation/installation, death, and burial.⁶ Apis could appear anywhere in Egypt.⁷ Once found, the animal was taken, along with its mother, to the House of the Inundation of the Nile (Nilopolis of Diodorus Siculus), a sanctuary most probably located on the east bank of the Nile towards Old

1 Czech Institute of Egyptology, Charles University in Prague.

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3 Temple is described in Hdt. 2.153; Diod. 1.84,6; Strabo 17.1.31. For the most recent analysis of the material on site, see Leclère (2008), pp. 39-91.

4 For the Ptolemaic era, see Gorre (2009), pp. 216-344, Thompson (2012), and Panov (2015). It is important to note here that such an unfortunate situation for earlier periods in the history of Memphis is going to be gradually changed after publication of the currently on-going project ('Memphis in der Dritten Zwischenzeit' of Dr Claus Jurman, Wien Universität), several completed PhD dissertations ('Studies in the Saqqara New Kingdom Necropolis. From the Mid-19th Century Exploration of the Site to New Insights into the Life and Death of Memphite Officials, Their Tombs and the Use of Sacred Space' of Dr Nico Staring, Macquarie University, Sydney, 2016; 'La statuaire privée memphite de la XXV^e dynastie au début de la XXVII^e dynastie' of Dr Melanie Cressent, Université Lille 3, 2013; 'Recherches sur la cour royale égyptienne à l'époque saïte (664-525 av. J.-C.)' of Sepideh Qahéri-Paquette, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2014; 'Turmoil and Power: A Thematic and Chronological Study of Dynastic Transition in Late Period Egypt' of Dr Jared Krebsbach, University of Memphis, 2013; 'The Archaeology of Achaemenid Rule in Egypt' of Dr Henry Colburn, University of Michigan, 2014), and two future PhD dissertations ('Prosopographia Memphitica. Individuelle Identitäten und kollektive Biographien einer Residenzstadt des Neuen Reiches' of Anne Herzberg-Beiersdorf, Freie Universität Berlin; 'Between Dynastic Changes, Political Power, Prestige, Social Status, and Court Hierarchies: A Prosopographical Study of the Memphite Elite Families in the late Saite and at the beginning of Persian Era (570-486 BCE)' of the present author).

5 Cf. Otto (1938), pp. 25-27.

6 Jurman (2010), pp. 230-235 with earlier literature.

7 For the home towns of the Ptolemaic Apis bulls, see Devauchelle (1994), pp. 83-85; Farid (1997), pp. 51-57.

Cairo,⁸ where the newly-found Apis calf and his mother allegedly spent forty days before being transferred across the Nile on the night of the full moon to Memphis for the installation within the temple of Ptah.⁹ Upon its natural death, the bull was assimilated with the god-king of the underworld, Osiris, as Apis-Osiris and Osiris-Apis respectively, initially following the Ancient Egyptian tradition that every justified being is identified with Osiris after death, and it later grew to be the unique Memphite form of Osiris himself.¹⁰ Accordingly, when represented as a psychopomp deity, the scenes of the Apis bull carrying the mummy of the deceased on its back appear on the foot ends of cartonnage and coffins under Sheshonq I (c. 943-922 B.C.) and are attested regularly across Egypt up to the Roman era.¹¹



Fig. 1. Painted limestone statue of the sacred Apis bull, Louvre N 390 (photo courtesy of Alain Guilleux).

⁸ For the location of the sanctuary in the area of Athār an-Nabī, see Burton (1972), p. 246; Bresciani (1983); Vos (1993), p. 164.

⁹ Diod. 1.85,2. For the full moon, see Ael. NA 10.10. Cf. Krauss (2007), pp. 339-348.

¹⁰ Cf. Devauchelle (1998), pp. 593-594; Aly (2006), pp. 47-50; Devauchelle (2010), pp. 49-62.

¹¹ Cf. Jurman (2010), pp. 228-230.

During the Early Dynastic period, as well as the Old Kingdom era, the Apis bull was perhaps predominantly used as a processional animal, symbolizing the fertility of crops and fields and agricultural rejuvenation, and associated with the periodic celebrations of royal public festivals at Memphis, like the Sed-festival or the king's coronation.¹² The organized cult of the divine Apis bulls appears in surviving sources only from the mid-second millennium B.C. onwards, perhaps already in the early 18th Dynasty (c. 1539-1390 B.C.), when the aforementioned rituals were apparently incorporated into the temple-based performances. Although the Apis bulls were known from the 1st Dynasty onward,¹³ evidence that the bulls were individually buried extends almost continuously from the middle of Amenhotep III's reign (c. 1390-1353 B.C.) until the second half of the second century A.D. and possibly somewhat later. The focus of the elaborate burial ceremonies was a carefully embalmed mummy of a bull, carried in a long funerary procession from the Ptah precinct in Memphis to North Saqqara, where it was placed originally in a coffin, replaced later by a large stone sarcophagus under Amasis (570-526 B.C.). These were placed within the separate underground vault of the Serapeum on every attested occasion until the very end of the Ptolemaic era at latest; although it is plausible that the Serapeum was abandoned as the burial place of the Apis bulls during the early years of the Roman era¹⁴ as the burials of the Roman bulls have not yet been discovered. While the last known Apis burial is from c. 170 A.D., the bull's divine protection was still sought in private prayers in the early third century A.D. and the last bull was reportedly found in 362 A.D. on the personal order of the Emperor Julian the Apostate.¹⁵ The funerary aspect seems to have become the most prominent within the personal religious practice of the mixed Memphite population during the Third Intermediate and Late Periods (c. 943-332 B.C.) and extended even beyond the Nile Valley, especially during Hellenistic and Roman times, when the bull was considered a subordinate aspect of the joint cult of Osiris/Sarapis and his sister-wife Isis all over the Mediterranean world.¹⁶

The Place of Apis

The Place of Apis (*t3 s.t Hp*) is a Demotic term used for the building or more likely complex of buildings where the Apis bulls were kept, lived, died, and were prepared for burial. In the hieroglyphic text of the Memphis Decree (the Rosetta stone; 197 B.C.), the Place of Installation of the living Apis (*hwt-shn n.t Hp ʿnh*) is used as a synonym for the Place of Apis.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Place of Apis is mentioned several times in The Apis Embalming Ritual, a detailed manual describing the embalming process of the divine bull. This text is preserved on the late Ptolemaic papyrus P. Wien KHM ÄS 3873, written in Hieratic and Demotic (rt. I-VI; vs. I-III),¹⁸ and its recently-published first column P. Zagreb 597-2, written mainly in Hieratic with many passages in Demotic (rt. 0). The former is a Ptolemaic copy making references to events of 351/350 B.C.¹⁹ The sanctuary is referred to four times on P. Zagreb 597-2 (rt. 0, 11, 12, 17),²⁰ and only once in P. Wien

12 Kessler (1989), pp. 70-71. Wilkinson (1999), p. 243, argues that Apis was in fact a separate deity during the Early Dynastic times.

13 Simpson (1957), pp. 139-142.

14 Dodson (2005), p. 89.

15 For the most complete list of known Apis bulls during the Pharaonic and Ptolemaic times, see Dodson (2005), pp. 90-91, with additional comments in Meyrat (2014b), pp. 307-309. For the Apis bulls during the Roman era, slightly outdated, but still useful is Hermann (1960). The present author is preparing several studies regarding the Apis bulls under the Roman rule.

16 Cf. Devauchelle (2012), pp. 213-225.

17 See Quirke and Andrews (1988), pp. 13, 15, 19.

18 For the date of the papyrus, see Vos (1993), p. 7.

19 Cf. Meyrat (2014b), p. 315.

20 Meyrat (2014b), pp. 266-267, 268-269.

KHM ÄS 3873 (rt. IV 10),²¹ which can aid further identification of the precinct's other parts. Nevertheless, its exact location and layout are yet to be identified on the site since large parts of the Ptah temple enclosure now lie hidden under the modern settlement of Mit Rahina. Despite the lack of hard evidence, the Place of Apis must have been the same as the one mentioned by Strabo: 'the bull Apis is kept in a kind of sanctuary, being regarded, as I have said, as god'.²² Unfortunately, no living quarters for most of the numerous attested sacred animals across Egypt (for example, a ram

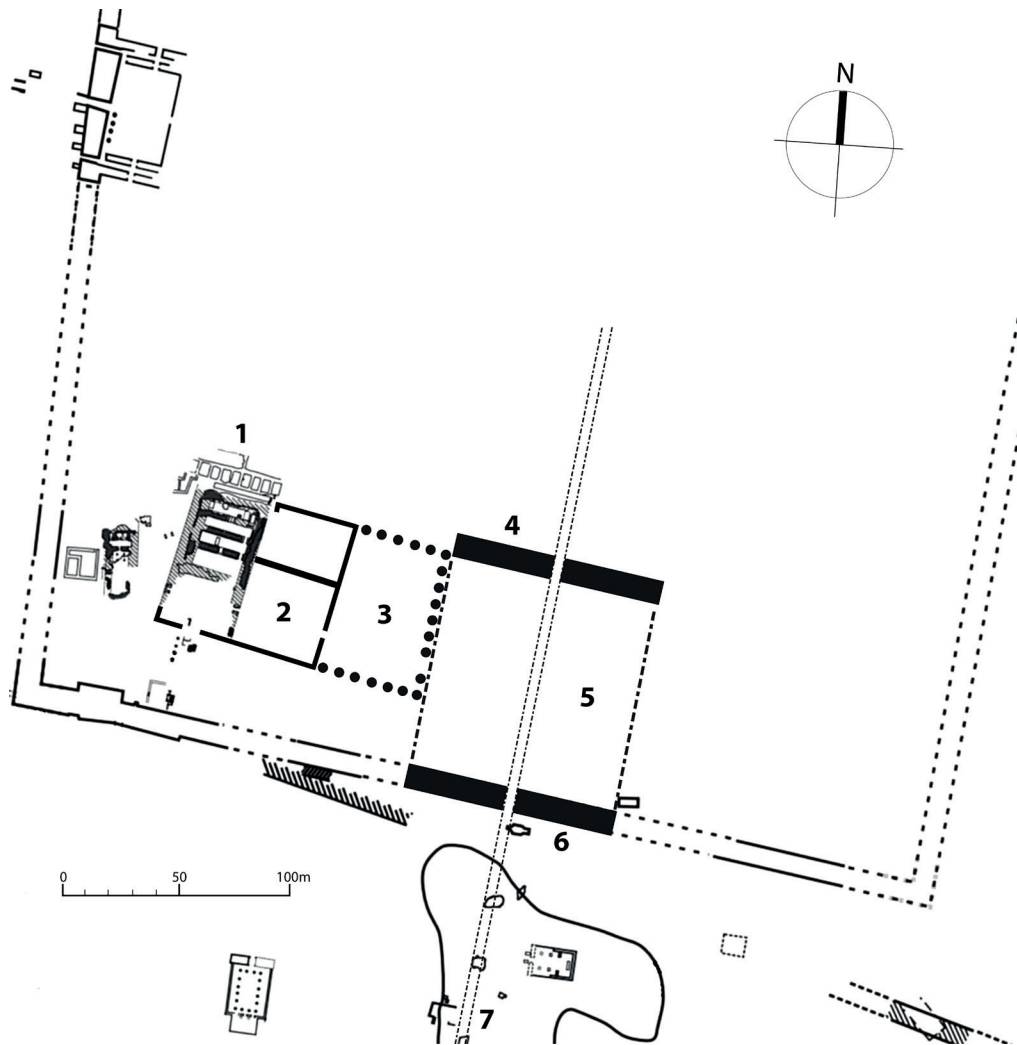


Fig. 2. Presumed map of the southwestern part of the precinct of Ptah, compiled from maps in Jeffreys (1985), Jones and Milward Jones (1988), p. 106, fig. 1 and Jurman (2010), p. 240, fig. 3:1. The Place of Embalment; 2. The stall; 3. The Pavilion of Appearances; 4. The gateway of Psammetichus I; 5. The southern courtyard; 6. The southern entrance gateway, the Colossus of Ramses II and the open-air museum; 7. The Sacred Way.

²¹ Vos (1993), pp. 51, 249.

²² Strabo 17.1.31.

of Mendes,²³ or an ibis and a baboon of Hermopolis),²⁴ has ever been identified archaeologically, but it is usually suggested that they resided within the corresponding temple proper. Indeed, the recent excavations at Elephantine by the German Archaeological Institute and the Swiss Institute (from autumn 2013 to spring 2014) discovered a building complex south of the Khnum temple composed of an isolated chamber (about 3.6 m wide and 4.3 m deep) and a courtyard (10 m wide and 15 m long) in front of it. In addition, ‘a short, slightly curved passage at the north-eastern corner of the court gave direct access to the side entrance of the temple of Khnum’.²⁵ This area is therefore identified as a house of the sacred ram of Khnum, whose burial ground was found, on the opposite, northern side of the temple,²⁶ in a relative position similar to that of the two excavated ram cemeteries at Mendes.²⁷

Alan B. Lloyd argues that the sanctuary of Apis possibly stood outside the temenos walls of the Ptah precinct.²⁸ This seems unlikely considering the close theological ties of the sacred bull and the god Ptah, and also keeping in mind the recent discovery described above at Elephantine. Indeed, a stela dated to the second year of Nectanebo II (Cairo JE 40002 l. 3-4; 358 B.C.) records the rebuilding of the Place of Apis ‘at the temple of his father Ptah’ (*r hwt-ntr n.t it=f Pth*).²⁹ Furthermore, in Ptolemaic times the two temples are even regarded as one.³⁰ Thus, its location has to be inside the Ptah temple temenos walls, certainly within the southwestern sector of the temple enclosure where the Place of Embalment (*w^cb.t*) has already been identified (see below).³¹ In the most recent reconstruction, Pierre Meyrat placed the bull’s living quarters to the south of the Place of Embalment, towards the north face of the Ptah temple enclosure wall which had been rebuilt, probably on a line with the former Ramesside wall, by the Ptolemaic era at the latest.³² On the other hand, it seems unlikely that the living quarters of the Apis bulls stood in such a limited space, bearing in mind the location of the small chapel of Seti I (c. 1290-1279 B.C.) and Ramses II (c. 1279-1212 B.C.) directly across the wabet. These were still in use during the reigns of the Nubian kings Shabaka (c. 716-702 B.C.) and Taharqa (690-664 B.C.), and perhaps much later, since blocks bearing Shabaka’s and Taharqa’s names were found reused in the later construction.³³ The Nubian kings also bestowed the precinct of Apis with rich gifts.³⁴ Moreover, it is now certain that the Place of Embalment formed only a part of the Place of Apis itself. On the west side of the alabaster basin of the lion libation bed no. 4, found at the easternmost end of Room A, a short hieroglyphic inscription reads ‘the wabet [of] the temple of Apis’ (*w^cb.t [n.t] hwt-ntr n.t Hp*).³⁵ The remains on the site strongly indicate a building phase from the reign of Ramses II to Darius I and reconstruction works undertaken by the 25th and the 26th Dynasty rulers; however, the sanctuary was then completely rebuilt under Nectanebo II.³⁶

23 Redford and Redford (2005), pp. 169-170.

24 Kessler and Nur el-Din (2005), pp. 127-130.

25 Arnold *et al.* (2014), pp. 13-14.

26 Delange and Jaritz (2013).

27 Redford and Redford (2005), pp. 170-184.

28 Lloyd (1988), p. 135.

29 Quibell (1909), p. 90.

30 BGU VI 1216, 52-53 and 190-191 (110 B.C.?); cf. Hoogendijk (2012), p. 151.

31 Jones (1990), pp. 141-145.

32 See Meyrat (2014a), p. 259. For the course of the enclosure wall and its date, see Jeffreys (1985), pp. 23, 65, fig. 15.

33 Cf. Leclant (1951), p. 346; Habachi (1979), p. 50; Leclant (1981), pp. 289-290, Taf. 44a-b; Jeffreys (1985), pp. 73-74.

34 See Vercoutter (1960), pp. 62-76. For activities of the Nubian kings in the Memphite area, see Pope (2014), pp. 262-264.

35 Jones (1990), p. 146.

36 Jones (1990), p. 147.

Layout of the sanctuary

The Place of Embalmmnt

The Place of Embalmmnt (*w^cb.t*) is the only part of the sanctuary still visible within the south-western corner of the Ptah temples enclosure at Memphis. It is located on the north side of the main road from Bedrashein to Saqqara. The interior of the building consists of four long, narrow, parallel transverse rooms (A, B, C, D), connected by a passage starting at the extreme east end of the building.³⁷ South of Room D, called the South Area (today badly ruined),³⁸ are several preserved architectural features which indicate that this sector might have been the location of the central hall of the Place of Embalmmnt (*wsh.t ʕ3.t t3 w^cb.t*), mentioned in both P. Wien KHM ÄS 3873 (rt. IV, 20),³⁹ and the donation stela of Nectanebo II.⁴⁰ Two groups of massive limestone blocks appear to have been foundations of doorways lying on an east-west axis,⁴¹ leading to the rest of the sanctuary situated to the east (see below), and the remains of a colonnade comprising four columns in a line, found by Petrie,⁴² perhaps represented ‘the fir-tree ceiling’ (*p3 kp ʕš*), i.e. the southern entrance of the Place of Embalmmnt.⁴³ The monolithic calcite Table 4 (1.20m x 3.07m x 5.40m) is the finest and least damaged among several others found within the building either whole, below the pavement of Room A (Table 3),⁴⁴ or split into four (Table 1),⁴⁵ or into two pieces (Table 2); Table 2 is dedicated by King Amasis (570-526 B.C.).⁴⁶ It lies at the east end of Room A and was very likely used during the embalming ritual; its spouts and drainage channels were designed to carry off either bodily fluids or libations.⁴⁷ Table 4 apparently belongs to a later building phase,⁴⁸ and is possibly contemporary with a large mudbrick platform built of casemate walls with a loose fill between them to the north of the Place of Embalmmnt.⁴⁹ A hoard of silver coins, found within loose mudbrick debris of the platform, indicate that it was constructed around the mid-fourth century B.C.,⁵⁰ which coincides with the rebuilding of the sanctuary by Nectanebo II.⁵¹

The Stall

In a passage of P. Wien KHM ÄS 3873, while describing the construction of a temporary tent outside the southern door of the Place of Embalmmnt, the scribe also mentions that this tent ‘is open [to] the stall (*p3 ihj*) [and] the south wall of the Place of Apis (*t3 d3i.t rsy(.t) t3 s.t Hp*)’ (rt. IV 10).⁵² Therefore, it is possible that the stall formed a part of the Place of Apis in addition to the Place of Embalmmnt. According to the passage, the stall had east and west doors (rt. IV 10-12): ‘They [the priests] open the door which is in the east wall of the stall; they come

37 Jones and Milward Jones (1982), pp. 52-53; Jones and Milward Jones (1983), pp. 33-36; Jones and Milward Jones (1985), pp.21-28; Jones and Milward Jones (1987), pp. 37-44; Jones and Milward Jones (1988), pp. 111-116.

38 Jones and Milward Jones (1983), p. 36.

39 Vos (1993), pp. 53, 164.

40 Quibell (1909), p. 91.

41 Jones and Milward Jones (1983), p. 36.

42 Petrie (1908), p. 10 (29), pl. XXX; Jeffreys (1985), fig. 25.

43 Meyrat (2014a), p. 249.

44 Jones and Milward Jones (1982), p. 52.

45 Jones and Milward Jones (1982), p. 53.

46 Jones and Milward Jones (1982), p. 53.

47 Jones and Milward Jones (1982), pp. 52-54.

48 Jones and Milward Jones (1983), p. 39.

49 Jones and Milward Jones (1983), p. 38.

50 Jones and Milward Jones (1988), p. 116.

51 Jones (1990), p. 147.

52 Vos (1993), pp. 51, 249.



Fig. 3. Alabaster embalming table 4, looking south-east, at the Place of Embalmmnt (photo courtesy of Alain Guilleux).



Fig. 4. Detail of the alabaster embalming table 4, looking north-west, at the Place of Embalmmnt (photo courtesy of Alain Guilleux).

out from it after they found him [Apis] in the 23th Year of Pharaoh Amasis (548 B.C.), may he live, be prosperous and healthy, whereas it is from the door which is built in the west wall of the stall that they came out in the 12th Year of Pharaoh Apries (578 B.C.), may he live, be prosperous and healthy'.⁵³ The west door was apparently opened when a bull died (the official royal stela Louvre, IM 132, confirms the burial in 578 B.C.),⁵⁴ and the east door was most probably used when a new bull was found or more likely enthroned,⁵⁵ and very likely stood on the same axis. The general direction of the burial ritual itself must, therefore, have been formulated primarily due to practical reasons, in order to fit within the physical arrangement of the existing buildings. Since the deceased bull was rapidly removed from the stall to the central hall of the Place of Embalmmnt (rt. IV, 20: *wsh.t ʕ3.t t3 wʕb.t*),⁵⁶ those two places most certainly shared the same wall and must have been part of the same building complex. Mourning lamentations were made throughout the central hall of the Place of Apis (rt. 0, 12: *wsh.t ʕ3.t t3 s.t Hp*),⁵⁷ when a bull had died, before the embalming process began. As the lamentations are mentioned following the removal of the bull's corpse through the door in the west wall of the stall, these two rooms certainly could not be the same.⁵⁸ Furthermore, foundations of a doorway, found in the eastern wall of the Place of Embalmmnt,⁵⁹ perhaps served this purpose, strongly indicating that the rest of the sanctuary of Apis was located further to the east.

The general direction of burial processions corroborates such a possibility. When the mummy of a bull was ready it was brought out of the Place of Embalmmnt to the stall, where the naos of the sacred barge was waiting. Then the bull's mummy was placed on a wheeled wagon. At the same time, the doorway in the east wall of the stall was opened for the funerary wagon to pass through, most probably in the direction of the southern pylon tower of the Ptah temple enclosure which once stood some 160 m southeast of the Place of Embalmmnt, behind the now fallen colossus of Ramses II. This moment is perhaps recorded on a stela of Nectanebo II (Cairo JE 40002 l. 18): 'After his divinity [the dead bull] came opposite the great double-door, he [Apis] found his Majesty [king] standing among his [the bull's] followers...' (*jr m-htj jntr=f m-ʕk3 rw.tj-wr.tj gm.n=f hm=f ʕh(w) m šmsw=f*).⁶⁰ Just beyond the southern gateway ran the sacred way to the south, which remained in use until Ptolemaic times.⁶¹ The area along the southeastern line of the enclosure wall was an important sacred space in the Late Period and most probably contained the smaller superstructures, perhaps chapels. A fragment of the statue of Udjahorresnet, an important state official who lived between the reigns of Amasis and Darius I, was found reused in a brick building possibly in the late Ptolemaic/early Roman times, but it is plausible that it once stood in one of the smaller sanctuaries subsidiaries to the enclosure of Ptah.⁶²

The wheeled funerary wagon left the Place of Embalmmnt via the west door of the stall (that is, the east door of the Place of Embalmmnt), and passed through the east door towards the south-

53 Vos (1993), pp. 51, 154-156, 249, 280; for additional comments, see Quack (1994), pp. 188-189; reading 'the year 23 of Pharaoh Amasis' is according to Devauchelle (2011), pp. 144-145.

54 Chassinat (1900), p. 167 xc.

55 See Devauchelle (2011), p. 144, n. 34. A bull found in 548 B.C. is not known from other sources. Indeed, the official royal stela records the biography of the Apis bull, which died in the same year. If a new bull was found shortly afterwards, it was probably short-lived, since the next bull was born or enthroned in 544 B.C. and buried under the Persian king Cambyses II in 525 B.C.

56 Vos (1993), pp. 53, 164.

57 Meyrat (2014b), pp. 266, 268.

58 See map in Meyrat (2014a), p. 259.

59 Jones and Milward Jones (1983), p. 36.

60 Quibell (1909), p. 91.

61 Jeffreys (1985), p. 75.

62 Anthes (1965), p. 34; Bareš (1999), p. 42.

ern pylon. A vague passage in P. Wien KMH ÄS 3873 indicates that one of these doors was known as the Portal of the Horizon (rt. IV, 20: *sbh.t 3h.t*), closely associated with the great hall of the Place of Embalment.⁶³ Vos argues that this door has to be located at the place where the sun arises to symbolize the god's cosmic resurrection.⁶⁴ Thus, the Portal of the Horizon cannot be placed at the southern entrance of the Place of Embalment as previously believed. Also, the presence of the priests of the House of the Inundation of the Nile (*Pr-H^cppj*) beyond this door, who apparently threw the brick (*tb.t*) in front of the wagon to prevent it from advancing,⁶⁵ further indicates the possibility that this door was the same as the west door of the stall/east door of the Place of Embalment. Another possibility is that the Portal of the Horizon is the very entrance of the stall. Their care for a newly-found sacred bull justifies their participation in resurrection ceremonies of a deceased bull. Beside the eastern door of the stall apparently stood the Pavilion of Appearances (rt. IV, 14-15), where the wheeled funerary wagon was drawn in by the wab priests on its way out of the sanctuary, while gathered mourners raised a great lamentation.⁶⁶

The Pavilion of Appearances

Another notable architectural feature of the Place of Apis should be mentioned here: an outer courtyard with a colonnade. When Herodotus (c. 484 - c. 424 B.C.) visited the precinct of Apis in the fifth century B.C., he said that Psammetichus I built a southern gateway to the temple of Ptah and a courtyard for Apis in front of it, surrounded by a colonnade, which rested upon colossal statues, twelve cubits (c. 5.30 m) in height, instead of columns.⁶⁷ At the beginning of the Roman era, Strabo (c. 64B.C. – after 21A.D) positioned a courtyard in front of the sanctuary of Apis, together with a sanctuary for its mother cow.⁶⁸ Since there is no precisely dated surviving evidence of Psammetichus I's building activities within the city,⁶⁹ very likely due to circumstances of preservation of known monuments there, it is usually considered that this gateway was set in the south temenos wall which once stood behind the fallen colossus of Ramses II.⁷⁰ This would be the same probably mentioned on a stela of Nectanebo II as an exit point for the burial procession. However, it is possible that Psammetichus I's gateway was located further to the north, forming the southern entrance of the main temple complex of Ptah instead of the enclosure. If so, it is logical that the sanctuary of Apis could have been attached to the presumed southern courtyard between two pylons of the temple complex. The existence of such a courtyard is supported by the discovery of several private statues dated to the reign of Psammetichus I and later times in the area of the colossus of Ramses II,⁷¹ which indicate that this area was indeed publicly accessible, at least as a depository for private dedications of the Memphite elite. Its position is also suitable as a location where ordinary Egyptians and non-Egyptian visitors like Herodotus or later Strabo would have

63 Vos (1993), p. 53.

64 Vos (1993), pp. 41, 168. Early Roman papyri (P. Rhind 1, II d 8, IV d 10, P. Rhind 2, III d 7) suggest that *sbh.t 3h.t* is rather a synonym for *pr-nfr*, another term for the embalming place (Wb I, p. 517; Erichsen (1954), p. 133; see also Donohue (1978), pp. 143-148; references are courtesy of Pierre Meyrat). But see in Jurman (2010), p. 253, who states that in the Apis Embalming ritual and on the Serapeum stela, except in one attestation from the Nineteenth Dynasty, the term *pr-nfr* does not occur at all. The Place of Embalment is always rendered as *wabet*. Accordingly, there is a possibility that *sbh.t 3h.t* in sense of the Apis Embalming Ritual indeed refers to a specific architectural feature. For *sbh.t*, see also Spencer (1984), p. 161.

65 This act symbolizes the resurrection of Apis. Cf. Vos (1993), p. 41.

66 Vos (1993), p. 52.

67 Hdt. 2.153.

68 Strabo 17.1.31.

69 See Málek (1986), p. 111, n. 89.

70 Lloyd (1988), p. 136.

71 Three statues are mentioned in Málek (1986), p. 109. For other examples of statues from the 26th Dynasty found in the same area, see PM III², pp. 838-839.

entered the Ptah temple precinct to see the Apis bull within his courtyard. This would only have happened on certain days since the daily cultic performances within the temple temenos walls were of a restricted nature and usually not accessible to the wider populace.⁷²



Fig. 5. Limestone relief most likely from the sanctuary of Apis at Memphis, present-day location unknown
(© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford).

The question of column types can be helpful as well. Since Herodotus described columns like caryatids, Lloyd argues that his description could only refer to Osirian pillars,⁷³ but no traces of such pillars were ever found within the temple of Ptah. One possible reason no Osirian pillars have been found is that they may have been made of wood, but another is that they may have been a different type of column.⁷⁴ In the area to the east of the Place of Embalment towards the colossus of Ramses II a column with a Hathor capital was found, but unfortunately without clear archaeological context and certainly not *in situ*.⁷⁵ There is evidence that a small Ramesside Hathor temple, apparently disused after the end of the New Kingdom and located south-west of the southern gateway of the Ptah temple enclosure, had been quarried for building material in the Late Period: at some point its eastern pylon and eastern courtyard had been removed and later replaced by a brick building (perhaps a workshop of some kind).⁷⁶ Material from this site could have been reused in building a courtyard for the Apis bull. The association with the goddess Hathor came probably through the Mother of Apis cows, which were mentioned by their distinctive names for the first known time in the inscriptions under Amasis.⁷⁷ Initially, the Mothers of Apis cows lived, died and

⁷² See Spalinger (1998), pp. 241-260.

⁷³ Lloyd (1988), p. 136; see also Meyrat (2014a), p. 258. For the Osirian pillars and their usage in the context of the royal mortuary temples, see Leblanc (1980), pp. 69-89.

⁷⁴ Meyrat (2014a), p. 258.

⁷⁵ Jeffreys (1985), p. 98, n. 205.

⁷⁶ Jeffreys (1985), pp. 25-26.

⁷⁷ The earliest known inscription of the Mother of Apis (71/2-5 [5273]; cf. Smith, Andrews and Davies (2011), pp. 15-25) refers to a series of events occurring to several Mothers of Apis cows between 534 B.C. and 463 B.C. at the latest. The inscription

were buried within the precinct of Hathor, the Lady of the Sycomore (*Pr-nb.t-nhy.t*), which was most probably located somewhere south of Memphis,⁷⁸ before their stall and sanctuary were moved to a courtyard in front of the sanctuary of their offspring, and their burial place to North Saqqara at the remote vicinity of the Serapeum. This change certainly occurred in the later part of the First Persian Period.⁷⁹ The close theological connection of the Mother of Apis cows with Hathor had been replaced by the 29th Dynasty (399-381 B.C.), when Isis appears in surviving inscriptions as the Mother of Apis and has remained so ever since.⁸⁰

Identification of a courtyard in front of the sanctuary of Apis with the Pavilion of Appearance of the papyri is indeed possible. According to Quack, the usage of the word *šst* indicates the place where the sacred animals had spent their lifetimes and died.⁸¹ Also, according to the Book of the Temple, a manual for the architecture of the ideal Egyptian temple and the duties of its priests and other employees, the sacred animal was happy if it could see the sun.⁸² Thus, the Pavilion of Appearances has to be an edifice open to the sky. In the case of the Apis bull, the Pavilion of Appearances was located beyond the entrance to the sanctuary of Apis as was stated in P. Wien KHM ÄS 3783. In addition, important news like the death of the Apis bulls was announced outdoors to gathered people. Strabo also mentioned the window on the sanctuary. Through this window the bull could be seen.⁸³ Strabo adds that visitors prefer to see the Apis bull outside thus indicating the distance between their standpoint and the sanctuary itself. Since the word *šst* is a late writing of *sšd* 'window, the window of appearances',⁸⁴ it seems plausible that Strabo's window represents an opening on the sanctuary and it is reasonable to conclude that this window overlooked a courtyard in front of it.

Conclusion

The Place of Apis or the Place of Installation of the living Apis was located inside the walls of the temple enclosure of Ptah at Memphis. The sanctuary was apparently composed of three architectural features: (1) the Pavilion of Appearances or an open courtyard with a colonnade, described by Herodotus and later Strabo, where initiated Egyptians and non-Egyptian visitors could see the Apis bull; (2) the stall, where the Apis bulls spent their lifetimes and died; and (3) the Place of Embalment, where the dead bulls were wrapped into linen and prepared for the funerary procession. The sanctuary was built along an east-west axis, the Pavilion of Appearances being its

indicates that the Mothers of Apis cows were indeed known even before the reign of Amasis. The inscription must have been compiled from some older written sources as late as the end of the reign of the Persian king Artaxerxes I (424/423 B.C.), possibly to commemorate the decision to move their resting place from Memphis to North Saqqara afterwards. Such a decision was probably made due to some serious disturbances in Memphis during the later part of the First Persian Period.

78 Smith (1988), pp. 188-191.

79 The place for their initial burials in the later part of the First Persian Period was probably located in the cliff behind the sanctuary of Isis (Sanctuary A) of the Main Temple Complex of the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara, known as the Vault complexes A, B and D. The inscriptions concerning burials made within the Mother of Apis Catacombs, located in the North Enclosure of the Main Temple Complex (Sector 2), began continuously with the preparations for the interment of Taamon (I) in 392/391 B.C. and ended with apparent abandonment of the vaults sometime after 41 B.C. (Cf. Davies (1998), p. 49, Davies (2006), p. 48; Smith, Andrews and Davies (2011), pp. 3-11, 269-278).

80 The association of Isis and Apis could have been of an earlier date: the middle or lower register of a group of the Carian stelae from Saqqara dated to the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. usually shows the Apis bull standing on a pedestal being flanked by either Isis and Thoth or the dedicator. For the Carian stelae, see Vittmann (2003), pp. 170-174.

81 Quack (1997/1998), p. 51, n. 32; Quack (2000), p. 5; Quack (2003a), pp. 113, 118-123; Quack (2003b), p. 14; Quack (2004), pp. 15-25. See also Meyrat (2014b), pp. 274-275.

82 Quack (2000), p. 5; Quack (2003b), p. 14.

83 Strabo 17.1.31.

84 Wb IV, pp. 301-302.

eastern-most, and the Place of Embalment its western-most end. Between these two features lay the stall, where the Apis bulls spent their lifetimes venerated as living heralds of the god Ptah. Finally, the Pavilion of Appearances was attached to the presumed southern open courtyard which very likely lay between two pylon-gates of the Ptah temple enclosure, therefore making the sanctuary of Apis publicly accessible.

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