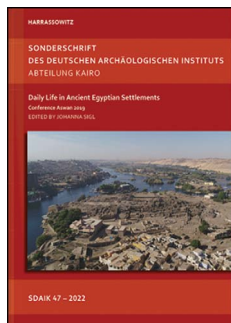


demonstrate that cultural evolution is only a part of the story. Judging by the investment of the Neolithic groups, symbolic thinking was considered as crucial by the ENT protagonists, so we should look for more holistic interpretations beyond the functionalist interpretation of religion. Integrating the symbolic dimension into the socioeconomic evolutionary and historical process is, most probably, the new frontier of the ENT investigation. To end, I would like to congratulate Trevor Watkins for this piece of research and synthesis that is highly recommended for those who want to know more about the Neolithic, the pivot of human history.

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ANTIQUITY 2024 Vol. 98 (402): 1731–1733
<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.169>

JOHANNA SIGL (ed.). 2022. *Daily life in ancient Egyptian settlements: conference Aswan 2019* (Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, vol. 47). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz; 978-3-447-11834-7 hardback €89.



The volume under review comprises 10 chapters, most of which focus on the Middle Kingdom (c. 2040–1750 BC). The content is based on papers presented at a conference organised by the German Archaeological Institute (Cairo) at the International Museum of Nubia (Aswan) to mark the 50th anniversary in March 2019 of the Elephantine project. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some papers presented at the conference were not submitted for publication. Therefore, the editor Johanna Sigl states in the Introduction that the volume “can be understood neither as an Elephantine anniversary nor a conference volume per se, but it represents a small collection of papers addressing various aspects of daily life in Ancient Egypt through time” (p.4). Following the Introduction, the contributions are organised into three thematic sections: ‘Households and productive activities’; ‘Settlement development and hinterland’; and ‘Space and sensory experience’.

Clara Jeuthe’s chapter, ‘Insights into the routines of daily life in Ayn Asil during the Middle Kingdom’, discusses the early Middle Kingdom changes and developments of the so-called Governor’s Palace of Ayn Asil (Balat in the Dakhla Oasis) and opens the first thematic section. Based on rich *in situ* assemblages issues of daily life and work routines are addressed, as well as the functional and spatial analysis of the discovered structures.

‘Daily life in an Egyptian Red Sea harbor: Ayn Soukhna during the Old and Middle Kingdoms’ by Claire Somaglino provides an overview of the ongoing analysis of various aspects of the daily life of Egyptian mining crews during these periods at the northern end of the Gulf of Suez. The research is based on architectural remains, material culture (such as pottery and tools)

as well as botanical and animal remains. 'Living and working at the Early Middle Kingdom Amethyst mining settlement Site 5, Wadi el-Hudi', a contribution by Meredith Brand, Kate Liszka and Bryan Kraemer, analyses survey material from the settlement in the Wadi el-Hudi mining area. The authors argue that different parts of the site were used for various activities, using access, artefacts and architectural layout to support their proposed functional analysis.

Johanna Sigl and Peter Kopp's contribution, 'Made on Elephantine Island: interdisciplinary research on productive activities in Middle Kingdom House 169', presents some preliminary results from the investigation of House 169, focusing on the daily activities of its inhabitants by applying both standard archaeological and archaeometric methods. In 'Household or workshop production: socio-economic strategies at Avaris', Miriam Müller examines private household production and institutionalised workshop manufacture based on data from a single neighbourhood in the centre of Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a in the eastern Nile Delta). The author's results identify a self-sufficient community capable of producing surplus through land management and trade.

The first chapter in the second section, 'The past, singular events and change: shaping settlement at Sais' by Penelope Wilson, focuses on the temporal interactions between the settlement layers and on the consequences of destructive events for (re)building phases in ancient Egyptian towns. In 'Experiencing Elephantine from the hinterland at the end of the Middle Kingdom/Early Second Intermediate Period', Maria Carmela Gatto and Carla Gallorini discuss the evidence for the presence of the Pan-Grave people (ancient Nubian nomads) and argue that their communities were partly sustained through interactions with the settlers of Elephantine and Syene. Basem Gehad, Mona Mostafa, Gert Baetens and Mohamed Hussein take the reader in 'Understanding daily life through the afterlife: a case study from ancient Philadelphia's necropolis' to the Ptolemaic period (305–30 BC) and explore assemblages of funerary data. Based on material from two Ptolemaic tombs (G4 and Vt4), preliminary conclusions about social life in ancient Philadelphia (Fayyum) are presented.

Mark Lehner's contribution, 'Sensory experience and social space at Heit el-Ghurab, the Giza pyramid builders' settlement', opens the final section of the book. The author examines the everyday life of the settlement's inhabitants, focusing on community size, the status of settlers and sensory experiences (such as light, smells and sound) within the housing blocks. The correlation between the labour organisation of the Gallery Complex (the author further elaborates on the hypothesis that the facilities discovered at Heit el-Ghurab, southeast of the Giza Plateau, were used by workers), the system of working gangs, and phylae—as attested in the Wadi el-Jarf Papyri and builders' graffiti from the Menkaure Pyramid Temple—is aptly highlighted. The concluding chapter 'Communal space at Elephantine', by Felix Arnold, identifies three locations that presumably served as public gathering spots in the town of Elephantine: the 'drinking place' of the Middle Kingdom; the 'festival courtyard' of the New Kingdom; and the temple courtyard of the Roman Period. Not surprisingly, all these were linked to the town's religious life and associated with festivals. Arnold rightly points out that these areas also had political, social and recreational functions, similar to those in ancient Greek cities. Thus, the identified communal spaces were closely connected to various aspects of the daily routines of the town's inhabitants.

The book is lavishly illustrated with high-quality images, charts and graphs, which help the reader follow the argumentation. Each chapter concludes with bibliographic references, reflecting the state of the research at the time of manuscript submission. However, the book

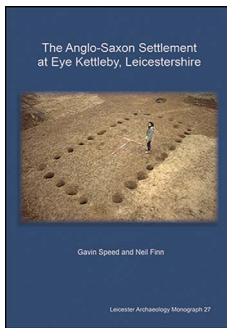
does not have a general index or cross-referencing between the chapters, which would have been helpful.

The volume is a significant contribution to the field of settlement archaeology of Ancient Egypt. It will be very useful for specialists and Egyptologists interested in social history. As most chapters present preliminary findings, future research will further demonstrate their potential relevance.

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ANTIQUITY 2024 Vol. 98 (402): 1733–1734
<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.170>

GAVIN SPEED & NEIL FINN. 2024. *The Anglo-Saxon settlement at Eye Kettleby, Leicestershire*. Leicester: University of Leicester Archaeological Services; 978-0-9574792-8-9 hardback £25.



The strikingly homogeneous settlement and material culture ‘package’ of early Anglo-Saxon eastern England is now well-known to specialists (Blair 2018). The site described here conforms to that norm in almost every possible way, though its location on the western fringe of the zone of visible settlement raises further issues. Eye Kettleby was found and excavated in the 1990s, at a time when extremely few early medieval sites were known from Leicestershire. One benefit of the quarter-century delay in producing the final report is that it can take advantage of the great increase in understanding of the period and its culture that has been achieved since then. This exemplary and very user-friendly report is clearly presented and well illustrated.

Occupation spanned the late fifth to mid-seventh centuries AD, perhaps continuing somewhat later. On a pattern familiar from Vicky Crewe’s work (Crewe 2012), parts of the settlement were fitted into an inherited landscape of Bronze Age enclosures and, to a limited extent, structured around them. As usual the settlement combined post-built ground-level buildings with sunken-featured ones, individual structures were replaced in an evolutionary fashion in a series of overlapping phases. There were two distinct nuclei, with hints of a possible move from west to east: in the eastern zone the sunken-featured buildings tended to be larger and more regular shapes, and two wall-trench buildings hint at the advent of more complex construction. However, the report fails to notice one significant aspect: on the extreme western edge, three post-built structures (1, 7 & 15), plus an associated fence-line, are laid out using the short-perch grid system now recognised as widely used in the seventh- and eighth-century settlements of eastern England (Blair *et al.* 2020). These probably belonged to a post-650 planned phase extending westwards outside the excavated area: if that had been excavated, it might have thrown more light on the last phases of the settlement.

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