

AN EGYPTIAN OCCULUS: EXAMINING THE MIDDLE
KINGDOM THROUGH THE WEDJAT EYE

by

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One of the fundamental purposes of archaeology is identifying and understanding periods of socio-cultural change in past societies, especially those that lack a historical record. The Egyptian Middle (2050-1650BCE) Kingdom is, for the most part, one of these periods. The Middle Kingdom emerged from 100 years of political fallout after the collapse of a highly centralized Old Kingdom (2649-2150BCE) in a flourish of culture, social leveling, and stable political control. With the first examples of Egyptian historical documentation appearing late in the period, archaeology is left to decipher these developments from the material evidence - primarily from mortuary assemblages.

This thesis will examine the lives of Middle Kingdom Egyptians, mostly from a non-royal context, in an effort to broaden the understanding of Egyptian personal identity and social structure. Building from basic mortuary theory, it will focus on data collected from three separate excavations within the Abydos North cemetery, all dated to the Middle Kingdom and its peripheries: Janet Richards' 1988 excavation near the cemetery center, John Garstang's 1901 excavation in the northern segment (designated Cemetery E), and T. Eric Peet's series of excavations in the greater North Cemetery area

(both the designated Cemetery S and general North Cemetery, from 1911-12). Though the widespread use of scaraboid amulets during the Middle Kingdom has been established as one symbol intrinsic of the so-called "democratization" of Egyptian social and cultural belief, this thesis proposes that a different symbol, the *wedjat* eye, presents itself as an equally strong symbol of these cultural and social processes. It will prove that this amulet, from its system of production to its mortuary manifestation, serves as the perfect oculus through which Egyptologists can view the intricate, transitional social patterns of Middle Kingdom Egypt.

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Introduction

The rich and colorful history of ancient Egypt is one recognized the world over. Its beautifully decorated temples, lavish burials, and awesome stone monoliths serve as enduring testaments to one of humanity's earliest and longest-lasting states. Consequently, a society which manages to survive for the better part of three millennia does not do so without encountering its periods of cultural re-definition and transformation (Wegner 2010: 119). Egyptologists - archaeologists who specialize in the study of ancient Egypt - have come to see the Egyptian record as one of continually changing cultural, social, and political forces that defined and reshaped the civilization (Wegner 2010). In examining the changes that took place throughout the Egyptian timeline, from the civilization's predynastic roots in local hegemonies to its farthest-reaching empire under the pharaohs of the New Kingdom, we can reflect on the progress that the region and, ultimately, the entire human race has achieved.

Archaeology has always been a study of change over time, but what is taken away from such study is much more existential. How did we get to where we are today? When did we start behaving and believing like our modern selves? These are questions that drive archaeological study, if not all historical research, in the grander sense. Ancient Egypt itself is naturally fascinating, but not just because of its visual splendor. Rather, *how* the case of ancient Egypt lends itself to these grand questions is what draws us to it; in particular, Egypt's vibrant material culture illustrates well the development of human identity and individuality.

In order to show this, I have chosen to examine Egyptian amulets during an important transitional phase in the state's history, known as the Middle Kingdom (c.

2050-1650 BCE). Utilizing archaeological mortuary theory, I will examine how one amulet type in particular, the *wedjat* eye, can serve as an oculus through which we can view and understand (1) the changing Middle Kingdom perception of individuality and identity in a non-royal context, (2) what these amulets, as material objects, tell us about Egyptian socio-cultural relationships in general during the Middle Kingdom, and (3) how such an analysis fits into the greater picture of human socio-cultural development.

Mapping the Middle Kingdom: A Background of Current Literature

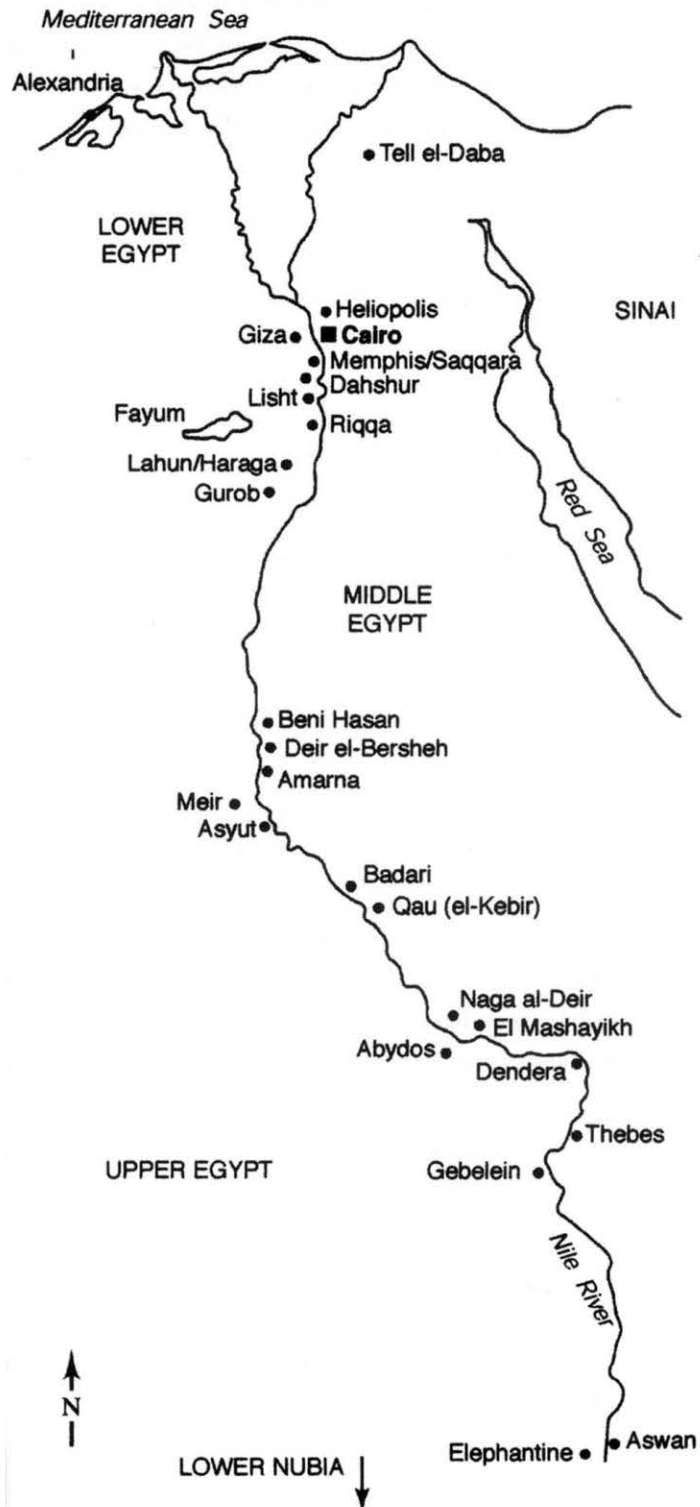


Figure 1: Map of Egypt with Key Sites. K. Clahassey, after Grajetzki 2003

Cultural Setting of the Middle Kingdom

By the end of the Old Kingdom (c. 2575-2150 BCE) - Egypt's first, true period of centralized rule - the authority of the king had all but disappeared, with power instead being divided among numerous individual local leaders. What followed was a period of fragmented political control under regional governors called nomarchs, later known as the 1st Intermediate Period. After roughly a century two factions managed to consolidate power: the coalition of rulers from the northern delta of Lower Egypt and the Upper Egyptian family of power situated in the southern city of Thebes (Wegner 2010). Defeating the Upper Egyptians at the city of Herakleopolis in 2050 BCE, Mentuhotep II re-united Egypt as the first king of 11th Dynasty, ushering in the start of the Middle Kingdom. The act of unification was not only political - the bringing together of Upper and Lower Egypt once more harkened back to the kingdom's creation through the conquests of Egypt's first king, Narmer, with deep symbolic resonance. Indeed many of the Middle Kingdom rulers saw binding the new with the old as a tool for both legitimization and, eventually, cultural transformation.

The Middle Kingdom is often referred to as an Egyptian “cultural renaissance, mediated in self-awareness” where Egyptians sought to redefine themselves after the chaotic 1st Intermediate Period (Wegner 2010:119-20). The rest of Mentuhotep’s 11th Dynasty focused on solidifying the renewed unity of the Egyptians, and it wasn’t really until the first king of the 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat I rose to power that the kingdom showed signs of a cultural re-definition. Amenemhat I first moved the capital back to the Old Kingdom center of Memphis before founding a new capital entirely, calling it Itj-tawy (lit. *Amenemhat Itj-tawy*: Amenemhat [is] the seizer of the Two Lands) or

simply *The Residence* (Bourriau 1991). His successor, Senusret I, extended trade into the far reaches of Nubia, Lybia, and Lebanon while funding a multitude of construction projects at home. Senusret I also moved away from the Old Kingdom prioritization of the sun god Ra by both building up several major cult sites to circumvent priestly power and by shifting focus to Osiris, the god of death and regeneration and the king of the Egyptian afterlife (Shaw 2000). This began with Senusret's expansion and remodel of the deity's temple at Abydos, but the growing popularity of both Osiris and his cult center would continue throughout the 12th Dynasty - Senusret II's pyramid at the royal cemetery of Lahun makes extensive reference to Osiris, and his successor Senusret III actually chose to be buried in his Abydos complex rather than his own pyramid (Shaw 2000). Osiris was also used as a legitimization mechanism, especially for 12th Dynasty kings (Shaw 2000). Before becoming king of the afterlife, Osiris had ruled the living as king of all Egypt as Ra, the preeminent deity of the Old Kingdom rulers, had before him. Kings of the 12th and 13th Dynasties were the living Osiris, transformed into the dead god once they passed from this world to the next.

From the 12th Dynasty until the kingdom's end in 1650 BCE the archaeological record begins to show increasing diversity in many forms of personal representation, especially regarding burial practices. From coffins to amulets to iconography, Egyptians began taking on personalized belief systems represented by various symbols of spiritual value. The rise of Osiris during the Middle Kingdom ties in directly with what Egyptologists often call the "democratization of the afterlife:" a wider range of access to the divine for those outside the elite levels of Egyptian society (Richards 2005:8). One of the best examples of this comes from Abydos itself, where excavations of non-

royal burials revealed several *stele* - commemoration stones - detailing the rites of Osiris worship once reserved for only the highest class. Spiritual texts that once were reserved for the tombs of kings transformed into coffin adornment for royals and non-royals alike. Soon Egyptians of all kinds began to emulate the burial practices of these highly ranked individuals, and the "royal style" of burials, rites, and art began to circulate throughout the kingdom (Shaw 2000).

Abydos – the Heart of Egyptian Identity

Located on the northern border of the region of Upper Egypt, Abydos is one of the most important sites in all of Egyptian antiquity (O'Connor 2009), having been occupied by the first regional leaders of pre-dynastic times (3100-2686 BCE) all the way to the end of Egyptian rule under the Greeks and Romans (ca. 332 BCE). As a city, Abydos served as the center of worship for one of the civilization's oldest and popular gods: Osiris. Osiris' resurgence during the Middle Kingdom manifested as many Egyptians sought to re-connect with one of their oldest deities by having themselves interred forever in his sacred city of Abydos (O'Connor 2009:15), not to mention the many aspiring projects based there by numerous Middle Kingdom kings. This is likely one of the reasons for the appearance of the *wedjat* eye - a symbol already strongly linked with Osiris and afterlife resurrection during the Old Kingdom - among Egyptian burials of all classes. For the first time in the state's history the deep-rooted practice of personal adornment once co-opted by royals was becoming accessible to new groups of individuals.

Abydos became a sort of primordial center of Egyptian identity, both as the burial place for both the kingdom's oldest regents and gods (Osiris' mythological 'tomb' was also located within the Abydos complex) and as one of the early townships under King Narmer, the leader that first unified Egypt at the end of the pre-dynastic period (~2686 BCE). These factors resulted in Abydos's frequent use throughout all of the Egyptian sequence, ultimately creating one of the most diverse cemeteries in the kingdom's history. As a place of burial, Abydos grew into perhaps the largest provincial cemetery known during the Middle Kingdom (Richards 2005:125). People of all classes sought to be buried alongside their oldest kings and god, even with the development of newer 11th and 12th Dynasty cemeteries such as Haraga and Lisht. These tombs display intriguing accounts of personal achievements – very different from the state-centered descriptions found in many Old Kingdom tombs (Richards 2005). Abydos became a symbol of the birth of the Egyptian state itself, and as such many aspired to harness the power of that connection upon their death.

The Wedjat Eye, Osiris, and Egyptian Religious Thought

The cultural flourish and religious "leveling" of the Middle Kingdom produced an increase in the use of several symbols, but two in particular stand out in their personal use by Egyptians. The first is the scarab: an incarnation of the sun god Ra, who was believed to take the form of a beetle and physically roll the sun across the sky. The burials of royals and non-royals alike contain various manifestations of the symbol, especially in the form of small title stones or seals to be buried with the dead. During the Middle Kingdom, these became a frequent tool for personal identification, with

names and titles inscribed on the backs of small, carved icons for use in both life and death. (Peet 1914, Engelbach 1915, Richards 2005). Despite the extensive literature on this amulet, its singular treatment overshadows the rise of another, prominent Egyptian symbol: the *wedjat* eye. Beginning as an royally-restricted icon during the Old Kingdom, the eye appeared in almost every medium during the Middle Kingdom including coffins, stele, mortuary temple inscriptions, and items of personal adornment. In Egyptian iconography, the eye was almost always depicted as one much more stylized than the standard human organ of sight. Carol Andrews provides an excellent physical description of the general shape of the *Wedjat* in her book *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*:

“At its most basic the *wedjat* is a human eye with brow above and markings below; the latter take the form of a drop shape at the front and an uncurling spiral at the back, said to imitate the markings on the head of the lanner falcon. Curiously enough, both right and left eye can be represented...” (Andrews 1994)

This description of the typical *Wedjat* illustrates more than just its standard visual properties. For one, Andrews points out that the *Wedjat* represents both the left and right eye. This can further be evidenced by the presence of both eyes on a multitude of coffins from throughout the Middle Kingdom (Hoffmeier 1991). For the purpose of this thesis, the term *Wedjat* shall refer to any non-literary representation of eye symbology.

It is no surprise that in the symbol-heavy culture of the ancient Egyptians, where nearly everything represented some form of conceptualized thought, that the eye takes on a broad symbolic nature. The *Wedjat* eye is no exception – literally meaning “the sound one,” the eye represented several gods in the Egyptian pantheon but none

more so than the falcon-headed god Horus. Horus was believed to be the “living king” opposite of his murdered-then-resurrected father Osiris, the “risen king.” Horus' place as the Egyptian patron deity, as well as his ties to the royal line - a king's "Horus Name" - extending back to the Early Dynastic Period (Quirke 1992). Thus, the mortal king during the Middle Kingdom was likened to Horus in life and Osiris in death.

Before delving into the mythology of the symbol itself, it is important to understand the Egyptian perception of death itself. Arnold van Gennep, in his work detailing the *rites de passage*, indicated that along with the common duality of life and death there are several stages of transition where an individual passes from one socially recognized state to another. These include events such as childbirth, initiation, and especially death, and are commonly referred to as stages of *liminality* (Parker Pearson 1999: 22). Many cultures are known to practice rites that aid or allow an individual to engage in these transitions, and ancient Egyptians serve as a prime example. The Middle Kingdom in particular exhibited a series of these practices for both the journey into death *and* the journey into life.

Excavations in 1994 - conducted in Abydos, no less - unearthed an Egyptian *meskhenet*, or more commonly, "birthing brick." This artifact was covered in magico-religious imagery depicting various zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures engaging in the act of childbirth. Upon closer examination, however, the brick depicts a transformation: the mother shown giving birth is given the sky-blue hair and golden throne of divinity, and is flanked by the goddess of fertility, Hathor. Further textual invocations on the brick indicate that an Egyptian woman's birthing position replicates the birth of the creator sun god (Wegner 2010). Whether it is the transformation of birth

depicted in the birthing brick, or the transition from death to after-life through ceremonies like the "opening of the mouth" or the use of powerful symbols like the *wedjat* a tradition dating to the Old Kingdom that allowed the deceased's soul to eat and drink its offerings, the ancient Egyptians put large amounts of time, effort, and wealth into assuring that these liminal states were traversed successfully.

The full mythology behind the eye is extensive, but there is a connection between this myth and the Middle Kingdom amulets. One major point of the myth is that Horus, after ascending to the throne of Egypt, presented his left eye – *The wedjat* – to Osiris in order to fully resurrect his father, the first mummy. Thus, the *wedjat* was also likened to resurrection in the afterlife, becoming a symbol of Osiris as well as Horus (Andrews 1994; Lurker 1980). The *wedjat*, in depiction, then becomes a connection between the deceased and Osiris, an ideology once reserved only for Old Kingdom kings. The *wedjat* becomes a symbol of aspiration and Osiris becomes available to any who employ the use of the *wedjat* in death - they are endeavoring to tap into the liminal power once reserved for the highest echelons Egyptian society. Furthermore, this provides ideal criteria in which I examine the *wedjat*: burial context. With such a heavy mortuary context, the ideal method for measuring the *wedjat*'s use – and the implications of that use – must rely on examining mortuary excavations of all levels in Egyptian class structure. (As such, its variation in use among the classes of the Middle Kingdom would point to the *wedjat* being a more indicative symbol than previously thought).

From Past Culture to Present Analysis - A Road Map

With a thorough background of Egyptian Middle Kingdom political, ritual, and social setting explained, I now turn the analysis and research conducted. Ultimately I intend to show how *wedjat* amulets exemplify both the changing attitudes of Egyptian society during this period and the over-arching theme of human social development. To do so, I have developed an analysis of three established excavations at the North Cemetery of Abydos - a site chosen for its aforementioned diversity and socio-historical significance to ancient Egyptians. Amulets in particular are naturally symbolic and diverse in function, and therefore objects of intent. As such it is my belief that their frequency within this Middle Kingdom burial context will provide the most informative data for analysis.

The first step in this process requires a methodological explanation - in this case, that involves a brief summary of mortuary analysis and how such a study is conducted. After raw data collection and statistical analysis of the Abydos North data (with Middle Kingdom tombs isolated) I will argue Abydos' position as a strong source of Middle Kingdom Egyptian socio-cultural activity before delving into the particular case study of those tombs containing amulets. This section hinges on what I will call the "life cycle" of an artifact, and as I will indicate the creation, use, and deposition of *wedjat* amulets from Abydos can all be inferred from my data and, furthermore, indicate key aspects of transitioning Egyptian society. The final synthesis of this thesis will be a reflection on the Abydos *wedjats'* place in the course of both Egyptian and human history, ultimately serving as a source of supplementary work for the much less-documented Middle Kingdom, and as an inspiration for additional avenues of research.

Methodology - Mortuary Theory and Analysis

The special treatment of the dead is a near-universal trait of human society. As Earnest Becker puts it, "[T]he idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity - activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man" (Parker Pearson 1999). In many circumstances humans leave behind no literary record or material remains aside from themselves, and occasionally human remains are the only potential source of archaeological information. Even ethnographic analogy does not provide a direct line between the archaeologist and the subject culture. Thus, over the years, mortuary theory developed as an archaeological tool for examining the dead and placing them within a cultural context. In time, this also provided a method of analysis in which the dead would reflect upon the culture and lifestyles of the living.

John O'Shea produced four defining principles for understanding mortuary analysis. The first principle infers that "all societies employ some regular procedure, or set of procedures, for the disposal of the dead" (1984:33). This reaffirms Becker's earlier statement that death, and the human concern with it is a near-universal. However, O'Shea's principle adds that this trait should appear archaeologically, and therefore can be used to determine a particular feature of the subject culture. His second principle couples nicely with this: "A mortuary population will exhibit demographic and physiological characteristics reflecting those of the living population" (1984). This also appears to be an archaeological given, but O'Shea also points out that this principle allows archaeologists to identify differentiation among members of a population, despite the fact that some features are not completely observable. This contains

quantitative measurements such as stature and age variation, but can also extend to qualitative measurements such as status if coupled with O'Shea's third principle.

This principle states that "within a mortuary occurrence, each interment represents the systematic application of a series of prescriptive and postscriptive directives relevant to that individual" (1984). O'Shea also added two corollaries to this principle, arguing that "the nature of the society will pattern and circumscribe the practices for the disposal of the dead" and that "the specific treatment accorded an individual in death will be consistent with that individual's social position in life" (1984). The corollaries address both the specifics and generalities associated with a particular burial as according to the subject culture. Each burial, then, reflects the place of the individual within society, be it social status, profession, or otherwise, and at the same time reflects the local and/or regional patterns and beliefs regarding death and the deceased. In other words, burials are often products of intent, reflecting choices made by both the interred and those conducting the act of burial. Funerary practices, it should be noted, are also conducted by the living, not by the deceased themselves, and are often idealized representations of the individual during their lifetime (Pearson 1999:4). Essentially, this principle affects nearly every aspect of any given burial, allowing the body's positioning, grave goods, geographic location, and the like to serve as context for mapping and understanding the nature of its respective culture as well as the choices of the individual(s).

Lastly, O'Shea states that "elements combined within a burial context will/have been contemporary in the living society at the time of interment" (1984). Also called Worsaae's Law, this argues that a particular burial is a closed context, as it is often a

one-time event. Though this is not *always* true of cultures, it is common enough a practice to illicit a fundamental assumption for the purpose of archaeological analysis. Under this principle, we can expect that the particular traits of any given burial will reflect the ideals and actions of the living populace at the time of interment. In societies with a history of rich burial adornment, such as Egypt, this principle becomes even more crucial, allowing artifacts and bodily features (including position) to provide some sort of cultural trait inherent to the period.

Egyptian Mortuary Theory

Egyptian mortuary theory is hardly divergent from any other form of Egyptian archaeological analysis. As the majority of excavated sites in Egypt are located in or directly adjacent to the grand necropolises, most of the data and cultural information that has been examined by Egyptologists comes from mortuary contexts. "Living" sites like towns and work camps are quite rare Egypt; though a few uniquely preserved sites like Deir el-Medina and Akhetaten provide glimpses into the daily lives of ancient Egyptians, most urban sites have either been flooded by the rise of the Nile, broken down for materials by locals, or remain yet undiscovered (Bard 2008). The focus for understanding Egyptian society and culture therefore lies with the dead.

O'Shea's principles help clarify the Egyptian view of life, death, and mortality. In a culture where the afterlife was just as determinable as its earthly counterpart, the actions made upon a burial are done so with the expectation of a specific outcome. The *wedjat*, as a symbol of rebirth and "wholeness," would be applied to a dead person in various ways to ensure their perfect regeneration in the next life. We know this because

of the physical representation - the *wedjat* in all its observable forms (amulets, carvings, etc.) - and because of the rare information provided by funerary texts and, though late in Egypt's ancient timeline, literature. In addition to its symbolic meaning, a *wedjat* amulet is also a material product (Appadurai 1986). It is crafted, put to use in life, and eventually finds its way into a person's burial event, giving it a more diverse meaning that extends outside its symbolic purpose. Each bit of this artifact's life cycle is reflected in the final product, and by O'Shea's principles reflects the contemporary attributes of society at the time. If we examine the craft material, stylization, or overall frequency of a particular set of artifacts we might get a better picture of the lifeways of ancient societies, especially those where other, clearer representations are limited.

Examining Abydos through Mortuary Theory

The subject of death was central to Egyptian belief and, by extension, how they went about their daily lives. As such, a mortuary analysis of Middle Kingdom Egypt serves as an appropriate method of examining the relationship between the *wedjat*, Middle Kingdom individuals, and the Egyptian state itself. As many of the large, Middle Kingdom cemeteries were excavated in the early 20th century, the data presented focuses almost entirely on the burials (and therefore lives) of the highest-ranking members of Egyptian society. As the attention of Egyptology has shifted to understanding the lives of non-royal Egyptians, a modern approach to the mortuary analysis of these early excavations will shed greater light on the cultural and societal systems of the lesser-examined Middle Kingdom. Furthermore, this process will highlight the impact of any particular object within a mortuary context and exemplify

how such artifacts can detail many features of its respective culture at any given time. I have chosen to compose a mortuary analysis of my own, examining the features of all interments but looking specifically at the distribution of *wedjat* amulets and their correlation to the other features as a case study. I have chosen three previously-excavated sections of the Abydos North Cemetery as the site context for examining the *wedjat*: the westmost portion excavated by John Garstang in 1901, the central (and largest) excavation conducted by T. Eric. Peet between 1911 and 1912, and Richards' 1988 excavation just northwest of Peet's.

Data Collection: The Cemeteries of Abydos

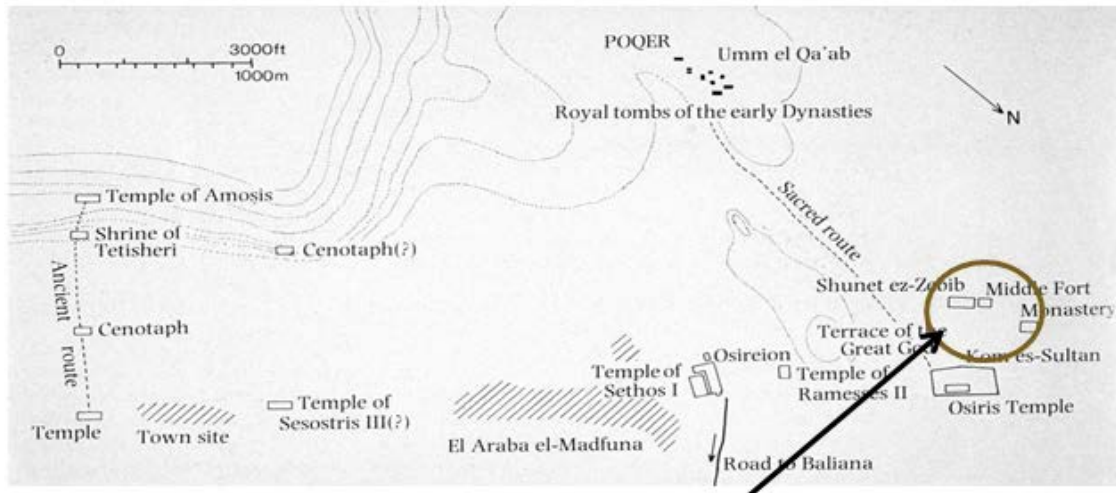


Figure 2: Abydos Archaeological Map. The North Cemetery is denoted by the circle

The data I collected comes from three separate excavations in the Abydos North Cemetery. (See Appendix I). Peet's Cemetery S is the largest collection of burials and contains the widest variability in wealth (wealth measurement will be explained in greater detail later). Garstang's Cemetery E is the housed the wealthiest individuals, while Richards' 1988 excavation unearthed the lowest-wealth burials. For each cemetery I coded each burial separately, and if there are multiple individuals interred within each burial, I made certain to separate the contents and individuals. Because I condensed each interment into one single burial, my data set appears smaller than the ones from which the data was taken. For each burial, I recorded the tomb style (surface burial, shaft tomb, mastaba, etc), whether or not there were individuals interred, and whether or not the tomb was recorded as disturbed prior to excavation. In the case that there were individuals, I recorded the age, sex, and position if they were given. For the artifacts, I listed the full description given in each of the excavation reports and, if

available, the dates or dynasty that the original excavators prescribed them. If any amulets were present, especially *wedjats*, I made note of each individual tomb and described the form and position of the specific symbol, comprising a separate list (see Table 2 on page 42) for later analysis. What follows is a description of each of the cemeteries used for data collection, concluding with a statistical analysis of the entire set of data.

Garstang Cemetery E (1901)

The southmost section of the North Cemetery was excavated by J. Garstang in 1899 (and again between 1906 and 1909) on behalf of the British School of Archaeology. The cemetery lies between the southern edge of the royal wadi and the large structure of Khasekhemwy. Overall, Garstang's reports list more than 350 graves excavated, though not all are listed in his reports or included in the site maps. Garstang's publications also lack a description of the age and sex of many of the individuals, and he makes little mention of any surface architecture related to individual tombs (Garstang 1901). Garstang also describes the burials as "pit-tombs" - this likely refers to the common Middle Kingdom style of shaft tombs listed in other sources (Richards 2005, Garstang 1901).

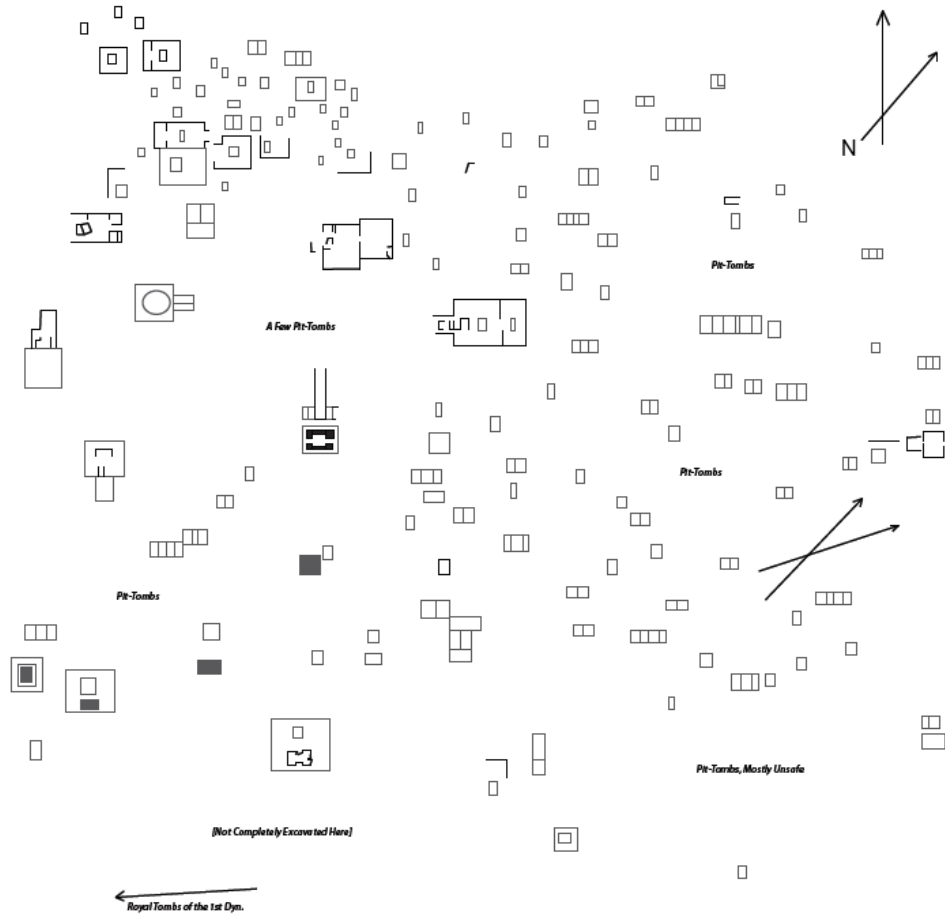


Figure 3: Garstang Cemetery E. Redrawn from J. Garstang, *El Arabeih*, 1901:pl. II.

After examining Garstang's work, I located 23 burials within Cemetery E that were dated to the Middle Kingdom, which he determined on the basis of grave goods. Of this set, ten graves belonged to the XIIth dynasty, while eight were of the XIIIth dynasty and the remainder listed as "Middle Kingdom" graves only. Though it is possible that these belonged to the earlier XIth dynasty, I find this unlikely as Garstang makes no mention of this dynasty anywhere in his records of Cemetery E. All of the burials are described as pit-tombs, and there is no mention of any surface graves in the cemetery. Perhaps Cemetery E was devoid of surface burials, but it is also possible that

Garstang saw little interest in excavating or recording these seemingly less wealthy burials.

Of all the burials, E. 3, E. 45, and E. 108 appear to be the wealthiest. The first two were found undisturbed, and E. 3 and E. 108 were associated with the XIIIth dynasty while E. 45 was given no particular dynastic connection. These graves in particular contained objects made from high-quality materials such as alabaster, felspar, and gold. Two of the chambers in E. 3 also contained highly-decorated artifacts: a glazed staff head with a painted lotus pattern, and a plaster mask. Burials E. 11, E. 181, E. 238, and E. 295 each contained at least one limestone stele, but Garstang described little or nothing else contained within. Still, these were likely individuals of wealth or importance that wanted to distinguish themselves from the other members of the cemetery. For this same reason it is probably safe to assume that these tombs had been heavily looted by the time Garstang excavated them.

As for the remaining burials, faience, kohl, and serpentine are the most common materials, and they appear more frequently in XIIth dynasty contexts than XIIIth. Beads and vessels are the most common form of mortuary artifacts, and there are four specific burials containing some sort of amulet(s) (E. 108, E. 30, E. 303, E. 3). Some of these consisted animalistic or inanimate designs, as well as scarabs. There were no *wedjats* listed from Garstang's excavation.

Peet Cemetery S and the North Cemetery (1911-1912)

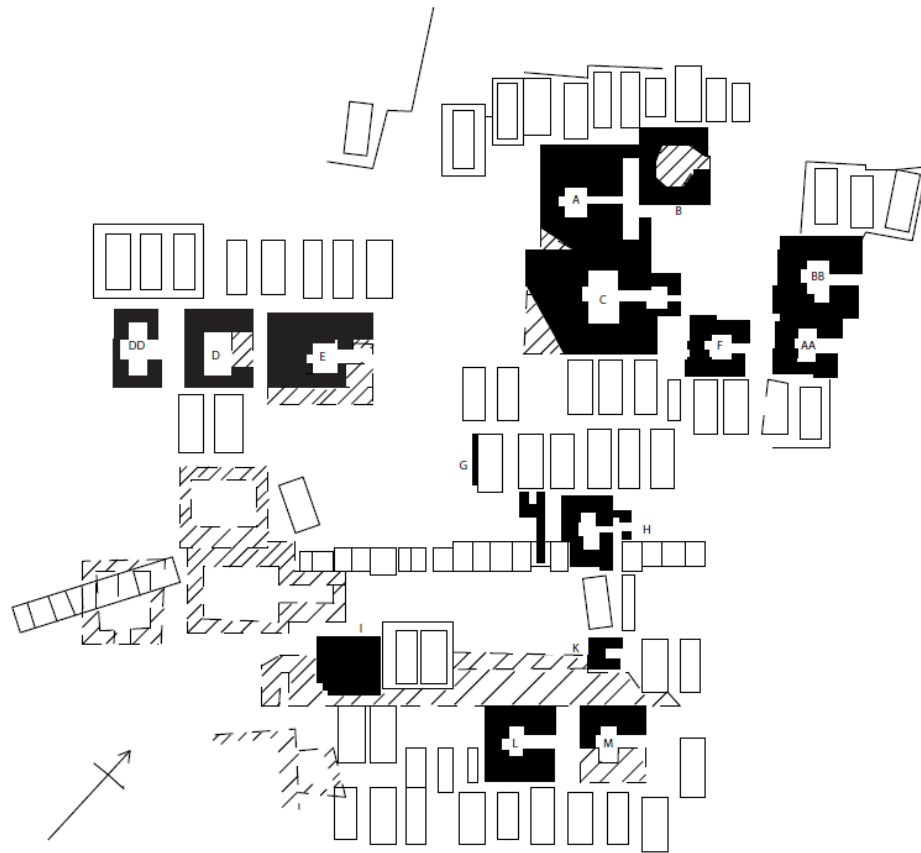


Figure 4: Mapped portion of Cemetery S. Redrawn from T. Eric Peet, *Cemeteries of Abydos II*, 1914.; arrow points North. Open rectangles indicate Peet's excavated burials, but he left no notes on which tomb style they were. Darkened portions indicate mastabas

During the seasons between 1911 and 1914 T. Eric Peet and the British School of Archaeology conducted a number of excavations in the North Cemetery, focusing his efforts on Cemeteries S and D. Cemetery S is located roughly in the middle of the space between the Khasakemwy enclosure and modern occupation, and appears to have been

constructed over the remnants of some Ist dynasty construction (Peet 1914:18). Peet's excavations at Cemetery S are one of the largest and best documented of the early 20th century. The surface architecture is well-preserved, and unlike Garstang, Peet listed the related architecture and tombs together in his excavation reports. Still, his mapping lacked both any plotted surface burials and the complete southern portion of the cemetery, citing their sporadic excavation as the reason (Peet 1914).

In Cemetery S there are sixty-seven listings - I say listings instead of burials here because several of them were described as being unfinished, completely empty, or collapsed, but Peet preferred to include them in the greater data set. Though practically devoid of artifactual evidence, these incomplete entries still add to the social diversity of the cemetery and Abydos North in general, as the size and style of burial (and therefore wealth and prestige) are still observable. In particular a few of these unfinished or empty shafts belong to what Peet called *miniature mastabas* (Peet 1914:40). Though not as grand as the royal mastabas of Egypt's early dynastic history, these rectangular structures, typically made from mud-brick, serve the same purpose as a visible sign of the occupant's ability to provide for his(or her)self in the afterlife, particularly in comparison to smaller or nonexistent forms of surface architecture. Of the sixty-seven entries, there are sixteen of these mastabas, each with related burial shafts. In my data set, Peet also lists 10 surface burials, while the remaining tombs are all stand-alone burial shafts or similar.

Despite the grand surface architecture, many of the mastaba shafts contained the poorest burial contents, often only a wooden coffin and perhaps some faience. Peet suggests that this is due to the fact that the occupants likely spent the majority of their

funding on the elaborate tomb style, with little left over for actual grave goods.

However, it is also possible that the mastabas, being easily accessed, were highly prone to tomb robbery on multiple occasions (Richards 2005 *sec* Peet 1914:46). On the other end of the spectrum, three of the surface burials contained some of the richest burial goods (including s44 and s51), featuring alabaster vessels, semiprecious stones, and a myriad of amulets. A few mastaba shafts (36a, N39) also included high-value materials like alabaster, amethyst and gold. These too contained several amulets including scarabs, *wedjat* eyes, and one shaped like the crown of Lower Egypt,

In addition to the tombs listed in Peet's chapter on Cemetery S, I located eight other tombs that he categorized as belonging to the "North Cemetery." These were either listed in separate sections of his excavation report or given no entry at all but displayed among the plates in the appendix of *The Cemeteries of Abydos pt. II*. The first four tombs are all isolated shaft burials, with all but one being dated to the Middle Kingdom. Though none of the entries described bodies of any sort, the artifacts listed among Peet's report make the graves some of the richest of his excavations. The artifacts include a golden pendant, amethyst, carnelian, alabaster vessels, and myriad amulets that include both *wedjats* and a winged scarab. Burial Z2(a) also contained a well-decorated wooden coffin connecting its owner with an undetermined Amenemhat.

The second set of burials were only listed among the plates of the appendix, categorized in the same plates that Peet claimed belonged to Cemetery S or the Middle Kingdom. I could not find any other notes on these tombs in Peet's chapters, and I have come to assume that this is because the images are of semiprecious materials at best - a fact that may have caused Peet to consider a full description of the tombs to be

unnecessary. That being said, these amulets appear to be some of the highest quality personal artifacts in terms of craftsmanship.

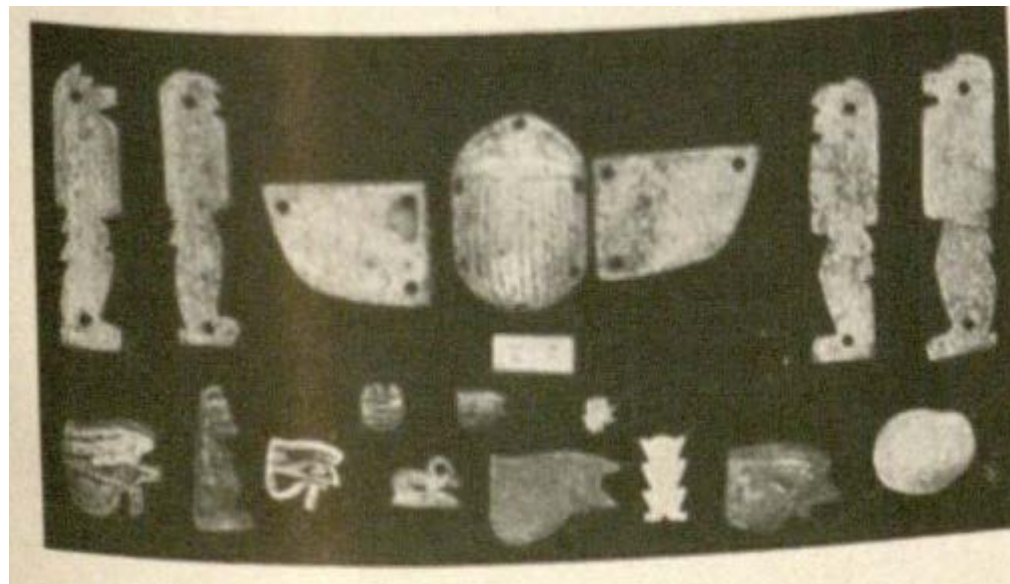
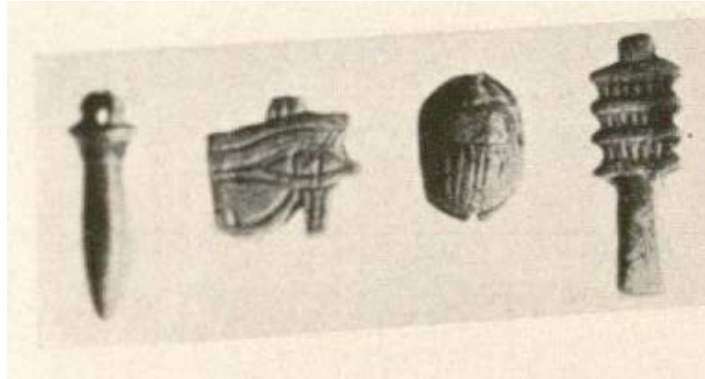


Figure 5: Amulets from Abydos North. (Top) Four amulets from burial S201. (Bottom) Series of amulets from burial Z2(a),(sc. 3/16). T. Eric Peet. *The Cemeteries of Abydos* pt II. 1914

Two of these "undocumented" burials (S201 and S253) are placed alongside other assemblages from Cemetery S, and since they are listed in the plates with an "S" before their number (like other tombs from that cemetery) it is likely that they share

similar qualities to the main bulk of tombs Peet had documented. Though it is also likely that these two burials are also shaft tombs, there is also the possibility that they are among the potential surface graves that Peet chose not to list for reasons discussed earlier.

The other two tombs, Z3 and T71, are even less telling. Peet listed both among the plates depicting tombs belonging to the North Cemetery. In his section on tombs of the North Cemetery, Peet describes denoting several Middle Kingdom tombs with the letter "Z," but he only describes Z2. Z3 is likely one of these other tombs, but perhaps it did not contain enough for Peet to give it its own entry. The other burial, T71, only shows a series of amulets that appear similar to others of the Middle Kingdom, specifically concerning the *wedjats*. There are several other Middle Kingdom burials that Peet designated "T," and this likely falls into that same category. The primary reason these burials were included in my data set was because they provide excellent depictions of Middle Kingdom amulets. despite the much more detailed listings from Cemetery S, Peet provides almost no plates depicting the amulets found within these tombs. Therefore I am left with these few plates to compare the amulet variation at Middle Kingdom Abydos.

Richards' 1988 Excavations

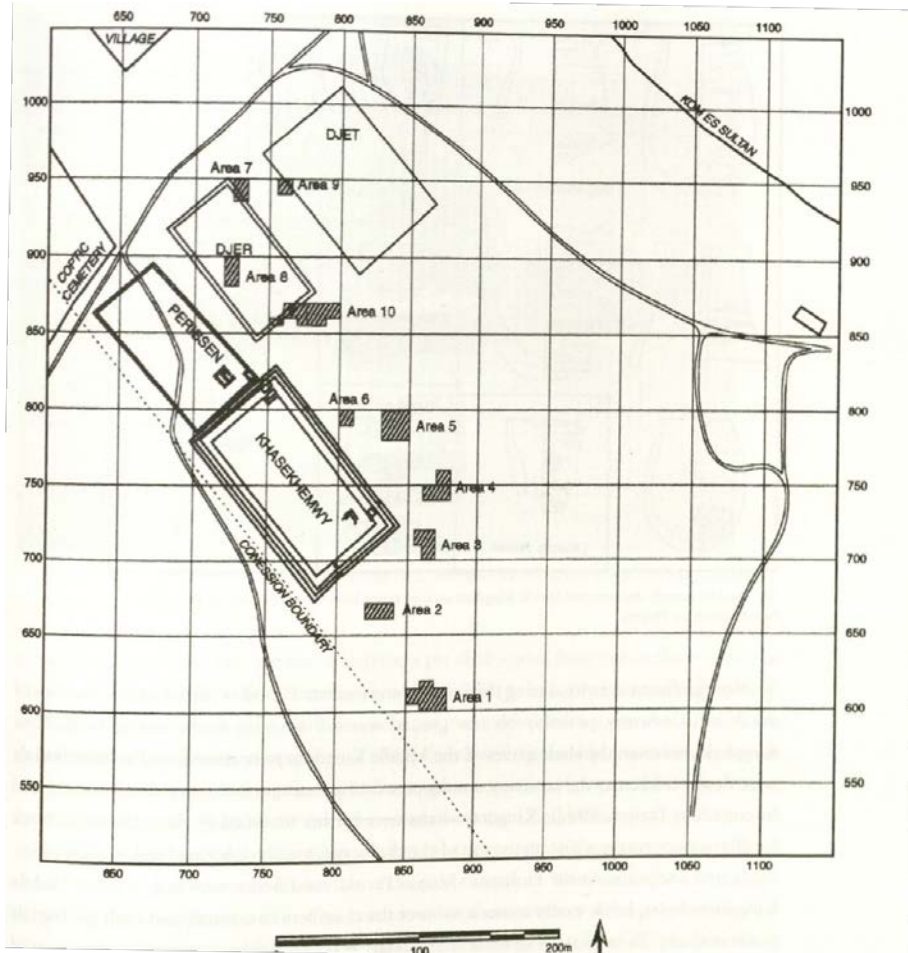


Figure 6: Map of Richards' 1988 excavations at Abydos. Janet Richards. *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt*. 2005

In the 1988 season Janet Richards traveled to Abydos to excavate a small section of the North Cemetery in order to examine the mortuary behaviors of the Middle Kingdom in an effort to examine the changing definitions of Egyptian society and status during the period. The excavations were located in between the Khasekhemwy, Djer, and Djet complexes and Peet's Cemetery S. In her description of the excavation in *Society and Death in Ancient Egypt*, Richards states that test surveys revealed no pottery that could belong to the Old Kingdom or 1st Intermediate Period beyond a

reasonable doubt. Unfortunately, the material belonging to the Middle Kingdom was also relatively sparse, but enough was collected to produce enough information to suit Richards' study (Richards 2005:156-58)

Overall, sixty individuals were excavated but only a small group were dated to the Middle Kingdom - I listed these individuals under nine separate coordinates. Luckily, Richards' excavations provided much more detailed records than those done in the earlier 20th century. The 9-10 actual excavations within the allotted plot are given more direct coordinates on a modern grid system. Each individual is described in great detail, and sex, position, age, condition, and pathologies present are included in Richards' report. This cemetery also serves as evidence for the Egyptian trend of plot recycling, as many of the Middle Kingdom burials are disrupted by graves from later periods (2005:159-60).

The burials here are almost evenly divided between shaft tombs and surface burials. Despite this difference, there is very little variation in the burial wealth of each individual. Almost all burials contain wooden coffins, save for Surface Burial 1 at E.840/N.780 which has a more anthropoid coffin. The wealthier burials contain a handful of faience amulets, including small cats and *wedjats*. There are a few other mentions of semiprecious materials, including beads of carnelian (Burial 9 at E.830/N.780) and two amulets of an undisclosed metal (Burial 8 at E.840/N.780). Also, shaft 2 at E.725/N.940, a tomb Richards connected to a nearby small mortuary chapel, contained a limestone stela bearing a cartouche of Senwoset I and appeared to belong to one named "Dedu."

A Matter of Choice - Analyzing Abydos

Ultimately, the data from these three excavations has created a sufficient image of the Abydos North Cemetery's use during the Middle Kingdom. I have chosen to examine each burial's style, date, occupancy, and grave goods, as well as the sex and age of any individuals buried. These will provide the demographic, social, and cultural framework that I can then use to examine the distribution and relevance of *wedjat* amulets during this period in Egyptian history.

Demographics

Of the total data set (Peet, Garstang, Richards) there are 121 recorded tombs containing 135 bodies. In following the same pattern as the individual sets I chose to divide the interred into four sets – children, males, females, and other – and then each of those into subsets. There are fifteen total children (four infants, eleven juveniles), thirty total males (four young, twenty-five adult, and one elder), and thirty-one total females (two young, twenty-eight adult, and one elder). There are an additional seventeen bodies whose age and sex were not recorded, and along with the sixteen empty tombs and the thirty-six unlisted all together fill in the remaining fifty-nine tombs.

The distribution of age among the three segments of Abydos North is not surprising. Disregarding the unidentified and unlisted categories, the data shows the unsurprising majority of burials belonging to individuals between their late twenties to early forties. Only two burials aged fifty or older are recorded. There is also a larger percentage of child burials at the site, the majority of which are *not* newborns or infants but young children buried with or nearby female graves. These child burials also

coincide with some of the more well-preserved burials, a point that I will engage with further when discussing grave goods.

As for gender distribution, the data shows a relatively even split with thirty graves belonging to females and thirty-one belonging to males. The child category must be excluded here along with the unlisted/unidentified because they too were not given any gender descriptors in the original data. Most burial rites given to women were reserved for the highest of elites prior to this period - typically those related to the royal family - yet at Abydos there is a decent enough spread in female tomb variety to take note of the widening availability of these practices.

Distribution of Tomb Styles

There are 121 recorded tombs in total, whether they were used as the final resting place of the deceased or not. Of those 121 tombs there are seven recorded variations. Like before, I have decided to ascribe surface burials (with and without surface architecture) to the lower part of the spectrum, shaft burials **not** in conjunction with mastabas to the middle, and then those tombs within or in close proximity to mastabas as the upper-spectrum burials.

Within these criteria there are twenty-eight tombs that make up the lower end – one with possible surface architecture and twenty-five without. The majority of these come from the Richards 1988 excavation, helping to solidify it as a more lower-class sector of the cemetery. A small handful also belong to Peet Cemetery S as well, intermixed with the many variations of shaft tombs. There are also two “barrel vault”

tombs which I would classify as higher quality low-end tombs as they require more resources and planning than a standard filled pit.

The middle spectrum tombs make up the vast majority of the sample – nearly 50% of all tombs in Abydos North being some variation of shaft burial. There are two unbricked shafts making up the lower end of this set as they are more like deep surface burials constructed to imitate the more common plaster vaults of the cemetery. The standard, bricked or plastered single-vault shaft burials make up the bulk of the data with forty-nine tombs counted in total. In addition to these, there are multi-chamber shafts with four to six burial chambers (four tombs in total); these likely belong to family groups, especially since many contain females and children buried in conjunction. Shafts with mortuary chapels are the highest ranking in the mid-range tombs, most likely belonging to individuals or families wealthy enough to conduct a persona mortuary cult for the deceased. Many of the chapels are found in conjuncture with offering vessels of varying sizes and shapes showing astute attention to the needs of the dead, and it is worth noting that most are located in the Richards 1988 cemetery. There are a few, however, that come from Garstang Cemetery E found with instructional stele that correspond to individuals of quite notable rank.

Lastly are those tombs connected to or located under mastaba complexes. These are probably individuals or family groups with notable power, enough to afford the construction of grand monumental architecture while not necessarily being of noble or royal lineage. There are two well-constructed shafts located near mastabas that may or may not be related to the burials within. The data on these remains is too inconclusive. Those shafts within mastaba complexes make up the second largest grouping at Abydos

North with twenty-seven burials in total, almost all of which are located in Peet Cemetery D.

Thus the data shows that the majority of the interred have constructed for themselves tombs falling into the middle spectrum (60 total), the next most being of the upper spectrum (31 total) and the least amount belonging to the lower spectrum (28 total). The tomb diversity at Abydos North can be called substantial, most notably because of the near even division between upper and lower spectrum burials. While cemeteries prior or contemporary have widely separate sectors for upper-level (likely royal or of the priesthood) and lower level (non-royals), Abydos North not only shows the intermixing of these individuals but the dominance of a seemingly “middle-level” of social power. This social and political "middle" represents a newly-forming group of Egyptians who are not among the nobility, yet hold more prestige and wealth than labor or craft-based classes - a sort of "lower elite" class that would rank just below the highest social classes (royals, nobility, and priesthood) but still remained above the more "common" classes.

Measuring Material Wealth

One of the most commonly used tools for measuring social and cultural variation, especially in mortuary circumstances, is the observation of patterns in material wealth. In complex societies, and especially in the case of ancient Egypt, this extends to the control and distribution of raw materials only obtainable on the fringes of the kingdom or through long-distance trade (Richards 2005). In Richards' 2005 examination of Middle Kingdom Abydos and the potential of a "middle class" being

represented there she developed two "wealth indices" based on Barry Kemp's argument that individual wealth in Egypt was based on (1) the quantity of precious and semiprecious materials alone and (2) the lack of a constraining state-based monopoly, without which such individual wealth would not be probable (Kemp 1989). Richards' wealth indices are two different lists of grave goods that measure their inherent wealth. Each material, based on the grave goods found at Haraga and Riqqa, is given a value and charted against others of lesser or greater value. These then reflect on the general wealth of the respective burial and owner(s).

| | Effort Expenditure | | | "Egyptian" | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--|---------------------|--------------|
| | (Wealth Index 1) | | | (Wealth Index 2) | |
| | | | | | |
| <u>Material</u> | | <u>Value</u> | | <u>Material</u> | <u>Value</u> |
| Lapis | | 19.0 | | Silver | 14.0 |
| Bronze | | 18.0 | | Electrum | 13.0 |
| Obsidian | | 17.0 | | Gold | 13.0 |
| Turquoise | | 17.0 | | Lapis | 12.0 |
| Copper | | 16.0 | | Turquoise | 11.0 |
| Garnet | | 15.0 | | Ivory | 10.0 |
| Amethyst | | 15.0 | | Bronze | 9.0 |
| Grn Felspar | | 14.0 | | Copper | 8.0 |
| Quartz | | 14.0 | | Grn Felspar | 7.0 |
| Quartzite | | 13.0 | | Carnelian | 7.0 |
| Electrum | | 13.0 | | Faience | 7.0 |
| Silver | | 13.0 | | Papyrus, Insc. | 6.0 |
| Gold | | 13.0 | | Garnet | 5.0 |
| Anhydrite | | 13.0 | | Obsidian | 5.0 |
| Stone | | 13.0 | | Amethyst | 5.0 |
| Hematite | | 12.0 | | Anhydrite | 5.0 |
| Serpentine | | 12.0 | | Hematite | 5.0 |
| Faience | | 11.0 | | Quartz | 5.0 |
| Flint | | 10.0 | | Quartzite | 5.0 |
| Carnelian | | 10.0 | | Flint | 5.0 |
| Alabaster | | 9.0 | | Steatite | 5.0 |
| Ivory | | 8.0 | | Alabaster | 5.0 |
| Papyrus, Insc. | | 8.0 | | Serpentine | 5.0 |
| Steatite | | 7.0 | | Stone | 4.0 |
| Papyrus, Insc. | | 6.0 | | Fiber | 3.0 |
| Wood | | 5.0 | | Papyrus, Insc. | 3.0 |
| Pottery | | 4.0 | | Shell | 3.0 |
| Fabric | | 3.0 | | Fabric | 3.0 |
| Fiber | | 3.0 | | Wood | 2.0 |
| Bone | | 2.0 | | Bone | 2.0 |
| Shell | | 1.0 | | Clay | 1.0 |
| Clay | | 1.0 | | Pottery | 1.0 |
| Mud | | 1.0 | | Mud | 1.0 |
| Straw | | 1.0 | | Straw | 1.0 |

Table 1: Richards' Wealth Indices (Richards 1988:111)

The first index represents a measurement of how difficult or costly the material is to obtain, while the second indicates a local or Egyptian view of each material, based mostly on textual evidence (Richards 2005:110). As nearly every material from my data sets is listed in these indices I found them an appropriate template to measure the wealth of the Abydos cemeteries with. Just like Richards, I chose to score each burial by the sum of its artifacts, and counted each material only once to produce a simple variable of measurement. Unfortunately, only 70 of the burials were given descriptions including the physical composition of all artifacts found.

Within this smaller data set I found a nearly identical distribution pattern between each index - that is, that the variation in high-, middle-, and low-effort materials parallels that of high-, middle-, and low-value materials. Though there was no distinct cutoff between these categories provided, I designated the burials with total wealth ratings of 20 or less to be low, 21-40 to be middle-wealth, and those that rated 41 or higher to be very wealthy. Those burials with the highest ranking materials in both effort and culturally valued circumstances are far outnumbered by those with middle or low-ranking materials. This is reflected in both the Peet and Richards excavations, but the Garstang excavation data yielded a nearly even distribution of wealth in both contexts. The burials from Richards' excavation also contained no high-value or high-effort materials, potentially placing it as the least wealthy of the three excavated cemeteries. The most common materials included glazed clay/faience, alabaster, pottery, and carnelian; the poorest graves contained only mud or ceramic artifacts, while the richest were typically graves designed for more than one occupant with multiple artifacts of high value including silver, gold, and in some cases, electrum. These graves

also frequently contained the more commonly observed materials. The majority of the wealth seems to be located within the Peet cemetery, as the burials here ranked as the highest in both effort and cultural value; that being said, the Peet data also contained several of the lowest-ranking burials (alongside a few from the Richards excavation).

Piecing it all Together

The analysis of Abydos North has yielded both expected and intriguing results. First and foremost, Abydos North has proven to be a good example of Middle Kingdom Egypt as a whole. Opposed to cemeteries like Haraga and Riqqa, which appear to be constrained to mostly local and highest-ranked members of society (Englebach 1915, 1923), Abydos North served as the final resting place for Egyptians of a diversifying upper class, with a few cases of more low-wealth burials. In a purely demographic context, Abydos North contains a wide range of ages as well as a very close ratio of males to females (1:1.26, with 23.07% of the bodies being male and 29.05% being female), as well as a sizable portion of children (1:2.541, 20.05%). The variation in wealth also factors into the equation, confirming Abydos' movement away from a royal-restricted cemetery by at least the XIIth Dynasty (to which the vast majority - 70.94% - of graves date). This is the first example of changing social dynamics within the Middle Kingdom. Abydos - especially the North Cemetery - was once reserved for only the upper elite like Khasekhemwy or Peribsen, as evidenced by their large mortuary compounds and mastabas at the cemetery center. Furthermore, the apparent desire to be buried at the Middle Kingdom's most sanctified site, where Egypt's first kings and great god Osiris (supposedly) were buried, supports the notion of an increasingly

"democratized" afterlife in which non-royals could access a new kind of magical, liminal power.

The interesting factor in this mortuary diversification is not necessarily *what* is represented, but *how* each Egyptian has been represented in terms of mortuary customs. The diversity of wealth at Abydos North - both in tomb style and in material goods - is apparent. Abydos contains a wide range of burials styles, from simple pit graves to small surface architecture like mastabas and funerary chapels, the apex of monumental architecture for non-royals of the time. The material wealth of the burials is also quite varied: nearly every item on Richards' wealth index (which are based off findings at Haraga and Riqqa) is found in at least one burial context, and many are identified in more than one instance. Wealthy graves may contain a few small but high-ranking items (Peet G6) or a wide range of artifacts from across the list (Peet Z2a, Garstang E3). Low wealth burials contain more than just low-grade materials such as mud and pottery, and a large portion (~34%) rank as middle-wealth burials in terms of burial goods. Lastly, this cemetery appears to have been sought after by both local Upper Egyptians and Lower Egyptians alike; the burial of a high-ranking Lower Egyptian in Peet's mastaba shaft 36a is evidenced by his golden pendant of the Lower Egyptian crown.

However these materially wealthy graves don't all align with seemingly wealthy burial styles. For example, the two most materially wealthy graves from Richards' 1988 excavation (E830/N780 - 9 and E840/N780 - 12) are juveniles buried in crude surface graves, while E760/N855 (shafts 1-9), a set of plastered-wall shaft tombs with adjoining funerary chapels, contained little more than crude ceramic sherds and a few faience

beads. It should still be noted, however, that this could also be caused by the higher rate of looting in larger mortuary complexes as well.

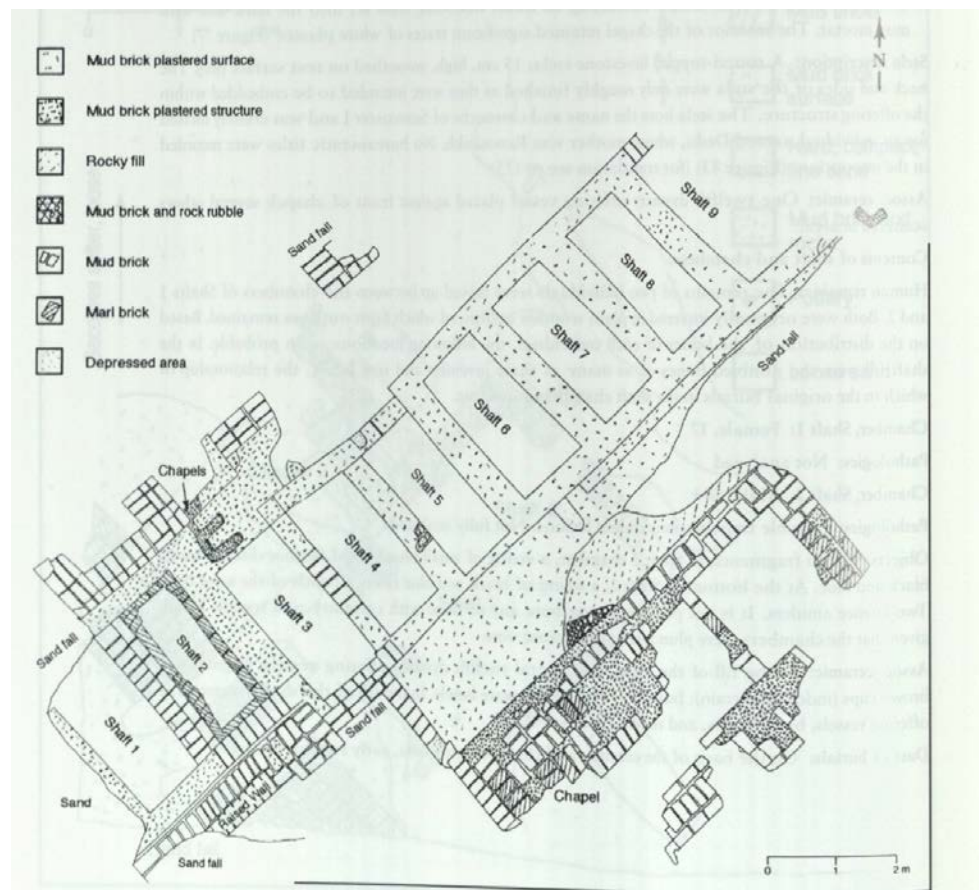


Figure 7: Sketch of E760/N855 shafts and chapels (Richards 1988:186)

Though ancient looting cannot be completely ruled out as the cause, when compared to other, looted shaft tombs of the nearby Peet cemetery there is an obvious difference in material wealth. Additionally, though the Peet shafts contain higher-grade materials, they do not have the connected chapels. This variation in mortuary representation is reflected throughout the various divisions of Abydos North. Two of the Peet cemetery's richest (material) burials are simple shaft graves, in particular s44, which contained a female surrounded by amulets, beads, and other artifacts of amethyst,

hematite, and silver to name a few. Meanwhile, a number of shafts belonging to the cemetery's small mastabas contained little to no material wealth. The Garstang cemetery lists only shaft tombs, but there is varying wealth within these as well. Some contain high-ranking material wealth, while others, though devoid of typical artifacts, were found with large stele indicating the proper upkeep of the owner's small funerary cult.

There are also exceptions to the case. One of the larger mastaba shafts in Cemetery S (N38a) contained several artifacts of gold but little else, yet there were obvious signs that the tomb was plundered. An adjoining burial (N39) contained a wealth of artifacts made from a wide range of valuable materials, indicating that this set of individuals likely were able to afford all of the necessary pleasures for the afterlife. Garstang's Cemetery E and its apparent uniformity in tomb style (and small variation in wealth, with high, middle, and low wealth burials making up an equal third of all deposits) is likely evidence for that section's restriction to at least moderately wealthy individuals. The cemetery's proximity to the ancient mastabas of early dynastic rulers also suggests that restricted access was likely. Abydos North was once restricted to royal-use only (Richards 2005), especially considering the concentration of Early Dynastic royal tombs to the southwest. As Garstang's cemetery is the closest segment of the North Cemetery to this early necropolis, it is likely that burial there was still more highly restricted than the other two.

Abydos North's wide-ranging access has made it an excellent example of Egyptian mortuary patterns during the Middle Kingdom. Unlike Haraga and Riqqa, Abydos provides both royal and non-royal patterns alike, and exemplifies the widening diversity and presence of choice that first emerged during this period. But how do the

burials at Abydos North reflect the transitional period that was the Middle Kingdom?

To truly understand how individual burials define a transforming, dynamic society, we have to look at the agent of personal choice within each burial context - in this case, amulets.

Case Study: Wedjats at Abydos North

Abydos' North Cemetery is by far the largest of the cemeteries located at the site. What makes it particularly ideal for analysis is the fact that the North Cemetery includes burials spanning the Middle Kingdom, including some from later periods as well (Richards 2005:131). It is also one of the most excavated areas of the site, with field work dating back to the late 19th Century. This provides me with an incredibly large set of data to initially work with. Other Middle Kingdom cemeteries, such as Lisht, Haraga, and Riqqa, would prove too inconclusive as their use was restricted to the upper classes (Richards 2005:156).

Abydos Amulet Statistics

Overall, twenty-seven burials at Abydos North still contained at least one amulet at the time of excavation. For the purpose of my analysis, I chose to keep the classification simple: along with *wedjats* and scarabs, there are also the categories encompassing any animal symbols, as well as those amulets reflecting inanimate objects not of the other three categories. Among these divisions there is a relatively even dispersal of amulet types. *Wedjats* and scarabs each were found in ten contexts, while animal and inanimate amulets were both excavated from eleven different burials. Sixteen burials contained only one amulet, in most cases one that falls into the inanimate category. Of those that contained multiple amulets, very few (4) contained amulets of three different categories.

In relation to the rest, *wedjat* burials make up a surprising percentage of the data. Prior to this period, *wedjat* symbology was one restricted to upper elite and royal use only, and is seen in very few cases starting in the twilight years of the Old Kingdom. By roughly 1991 BCE this appears to have changed: not only had the *wedjat* and its manifestations spread into non-royal contexts, it quickly became one of the most potent and frequently chosen tools for the journey through the afterlife. This also highlights the presence of choice that was illustrated in the general survey of Abydos burial patterns in that Egyptians from this period appear to have begun taking advantage of a society with less royal co-option of resources, both physical and magical, and extending to tomb style, personal possessions, or even the burial location itself.

Once again, this less-constrained choice would not have been remotely possible in the Old Kingdom and 1st Intermediate Period. The Middle Kingdom's loosening of the central grip on both economic and cultural practices provided non-royal Egyptians like those buried at Abydos with a wider access to material wealth and, therefore, ways in which it might be represented. In much of the earlier literature, the scarab was seen as the symbol for this diversification in that it too was a symbol once reserved for royals that found its way into popular circulation among more mainstream Egyptian society. While this is true, I find the scarab's typical treatment as the *only* symbol of this "democratization" to be unsatisfactory. As described earlier in this thesis, the *wedjat* was an incredibly potent symbol to all Egyptians, and its use in burial contexts was hardly superficial. The expanded use of such power among Egyptian non-royals speaks volumes to the changing social atmosphere of the Middle Kingdom. The state no longer controlled every aspect of Egyptian life - including religious practices and rites - in a

trend that would continue to re-divide "church" and "state" until ritual centers became nearly autonomous in the New Kingdom. Though the *wedjat's* relation to other amulet popularity, at least at Abydos, is only a portion of the story that the artifacts tell us.

Wedjat Tombs at Abydos

| Richards 1988 Cemetery | | | | | <i>Wedjat</i> | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>Burial</u> | <u>Dynasty</u> | <u>Tomb</u> | <u>Occupant</u> | <u>Wealth(2)</u> | <u>Material</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Size (cm)</u> | <u>Number</u> | |
| E830/N780 - 9 | XII-XII | Surface Burial | Child 18-20 mo. | 17 | Faience | Above r. scapula | ~2.5 | 1 | |
| E840/N780 - 12 | XII | Surface Burial | Child 11-14 mo. | 27 | Faience | Anklet | ~1.8-1.9 | 4 | |
| Peet Cemetery S | | | | | | | | | |
| 36a | XII | Mastaba Shaft | | 24 | Faience | | n/a | 1 | |
| 622-3 | XII | Shafts S. of Mastaba | | 15 | Faience | Isolated | ~1.35 | 1 | |
| | | | | 32 | Faience | | ~2.13 ~3.2 ~4.26-4.8 | 1 small 1 medium 3 large | |
| Z2a | XII-XII | Shaft Burial | | | | | | | |
| S253 | XII | Shaft Burial | | 11 | Faience | Isolated | ~1.35-1.8 ~2.7 | 2 small 1 medium | |
| Z3 | XII-XIV | | | 30 | Faience | | ~0.85- 1.37 | 4 | |
| T71 | XII-XIII | | | 19 | | anklet and one isolate | ~0.875 | 7 | |
| S201 | XII | Shaft Burial | | 28 | Faience | amulet | ~1.8-2.1 | 1 | |
| S29 | XII | Shaft Burial | | 11 | Faience | | ~1.2-2.4 | 1 or 2 | |

Table 2: *Wedjat* Data. Table listing burials with *wedjats* present. Includes any demographic and wealth indicators of each burial, along with specifics regarding the amulets themselves

The above table was compiled from the data taken from the overall Abydos survey, and in fact tells us a great deal about the use of *wedjats* in the North Cemetery burial contexts - and therefore about Middle Kingdom. Those with at least one *wedjat* in their burial appear to be of least moderate wealth according to their material value sums (based on Richards' Index 2, considering that there is much smaller variance among effort value wealth). Thought there are only 10 burials total that include *wedjat* amulets it does not mean that *wedjat* use was minimal compared to other amulet styles - in fact, there is a near-equal distribution of the most common amulet styles (11 scarab, 10

animal, 8 inanimate - see Appendix) among the Abydos burials, some of which are found in the same instance. Though a few of these tombs appear to have low material wealth, namely S253 and S29, these two tombs were not given a comprehensive entry in Peet's report, and given the quality of the artifacts and tombs it is likely there were more - however, I can only provide a sum based on the images provided by Peet. Still, the use of *wedjat* amulets does not appear tied to burial style, as they are found in almost every tomb style present at Abydos North. Unfortunately, there is little data to make a demographic comparison, although it is curious that out of all the individuals excavated during Richards' 1988 season, the only burials that contained these amulets were those of young children. It is also worth noting that these children were both buried with faience cat amulets; symbolic of protection and family (Pinch 2002), among many other things, these amulets when coupled with the *wedjat* may have expressed an awareness that the dead children would have needed much stronger protection and guardianship in the life hereafter. The fact that this belief extends to such young individuals also stresses the range at which Middle Kingdom burial rites extended to. Children, despite their very short time among the living, were still in need of at least a fraction of the aid their older relatives might receive when passing from one form to the next. These rites, though much more accessible than in periods prior, were certainly not guaranteed. For one's child to receive the magical tools once reserved for kings alone, such an object would only come into this context if either the family was rather wealthy or the object was made readily available. The evidence compiled from Abydos certainly speaks to the latter.

As Peet recorded little demographic data from his excavations, and there were no tombs from Garstang's cemetery that contained *wedjats*, we must turn to the artifacts themselves. As the data shows, all of the *wedjats* from Abydos North are of blue glaze faience, but they appear in varying quantities and sizes. Many were listed without any positional context, with most cases left isolated from the body in ways that might reveal a correlation between the artifact and its particular usefulness. The smallest amulets are usually found in large groupings around the wrist or ankle, while the slightly larger *wedjat* from S201 shows a cord notch at its top, revealing it's likely use as a necklace amulet. While the *wedjat's* powers as a tool of healing or regeneration may have been linked to potential diseases, disfigurements, or causes of death among these individuals, the little demographic information provided (in this case only by Richards) shows no noticeable correlation.

So what do these artifacts tell us about the state of the Middle Kingdom, especially during the XIIth and early XIIIth Dynasties? The use of these items in death and the afterlife is already well described, but when we look at the life cycle of the *wedjat* it reveals much more. Though the end result is always the center of study in mortuary contexts, the creation and living use of each artifact provides volumes more information regarding the lifeways of its respective culture - much of which can be observed from the item at the end of its use.

Manufacturing Methods - The Birth of an Amulet

The life cycle of an artifact, like any living organism, starts with its creation. Though we obviously cannot directly observe the creation of such artifacts like Middle

Kingdom *wedjats*, we may discern its origins simply through an examination of the raw materials from which it is made. The *wedjats* from the Abydos data are entirely faience-based products. Faience is a composite of ground silica and an alkaline (typically copper) based glaze found in the Egyptian sequence as early as the 4th millennium BCE (Tite et al. 1983:17). While considered a ceramic, faience is not made from clay; instead, several laboratory examinations - including one conducted by Patricia S. Griffin at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2002 - have revealed through microscopic examination that faience is 90% silica or more, with the remaining percentage dispersed between alkali and lime for the glaze and coloring (Griffin 2002). While the silica was added in the form of ground sand, quartzite, or flint, previous research has indicated that the alkali was composed of naturally abundant Egyptian natron that allowed the melting of silica at lower temperatures (Griffin 2002:114.2.5). Lastly, the vast majority of faience products received their distinct blue to sea-green coloration through the addition of copper flakes (Nicholson & Shaw 2000).

In terms of manufacturing, faience is what's known as a thixotropic material - meaning that it requires a large amount of force to mold and shape. Faience, like clay, is also fired to produce the final product. Though the earliest forms were crafted by hand, by the Middle Kingdom most craftsmen employed the use of molds or cores. Two detached beads in Griffin's Cleveland Museum collection were examined through xero-radiography and found to have been molded around bundles of straw. A similar style was used to create a New Kingdom faience "double khol tube," using reeds instead of straw (Griffin 2002:114.2.8).

These elements already tell us a great deal about the relationship between Middle Kingdom individuals and the state. While flint, quartzite, and natron (sand having been ruled out by both studies) were all readily abundant resources in Egyptian antiquity, copper was not. Once again turning to Richards' wealth indices, copper has one of the highest effort expenditure ratings of any material, likely due to the fact that naturally occurring copper had to be mined from the fringes of the state like Sinai or Lower Nubia (Bard 2008). Thus it is likely to assume that the procurement, movement, and distribution of copper is a royal- or upper elite-controlled industry. Yet only two of the burials within this data set might be considered "wealthy," namely Z2a and Z3. Therefore we may assume that these amulets could not be privately crafted, since the lower-wealth individuals would certainly not have direct access to copper or perhaps even ground quartzite.

This leaves us to assume that the production of faience amulets is likely controlled by the highest of elites - either the state government or the priesthood - at some level. Further evidence pointing to priesthood control comes from Memphis, the city that once served as the capital for the kings of the Old Kingdom. When Petrie conducted his excavations there in 1913 he took to examining the area surrounding the great temple to Ptah, a patron to craftsmen and creator deity whose influence rivaled that of Osiris. During this excavation he discovered a room close by belonging to the XIXth Dynasty, therefore placing it long after the Middle Kingdom. However, inside this room his team discovered several sacred objects including two Osiris figurines and two *wedjat* amulets. Unfortunately, the composition of these objects was not listed (Engelbach 1923). Despite this, the Memphis excavation is one of the few instances

where *wedjats* have been found outside a burial context, additionally in relation to the Egyptian priesthood.

So where does this place the Abydos *wedjats*? We know that their distribution and consumption are no longer completely controlled by the state due to their appearance in middle- and low-wealth burials, but neither are they privately manufactured due to the value of the necessary crafting materials. In fact, this leaves them in middle of the spectrum between the all-encompassing state control of the Old Kingdom and the dispersal of that power during the New Kingdom. On a materialistic level, the presence of these *wedjats* at Abydos shows the widening availability of what were once purely state-controlled resources - and therefore a widening dispersal of power - during the Middle Kingdom. The production of these amulets was not completely separated from the state, however, as individuals would likely have had access only through the crown (or more likely the priesthood). However, *wedjats* were likely not produced through a centralized system - though pinpointing the actual production centers (likely related to temples or priestly holdings) would require additional research. Other amulets from the upper elite cemetery of Lisht and the central Middle Kingdom cemetery at Haragah consist of varying materials (metals and semiprecious stones) and quality (Englebach 1915, 1923), and there is even variance among the faience amulets at Abydos.

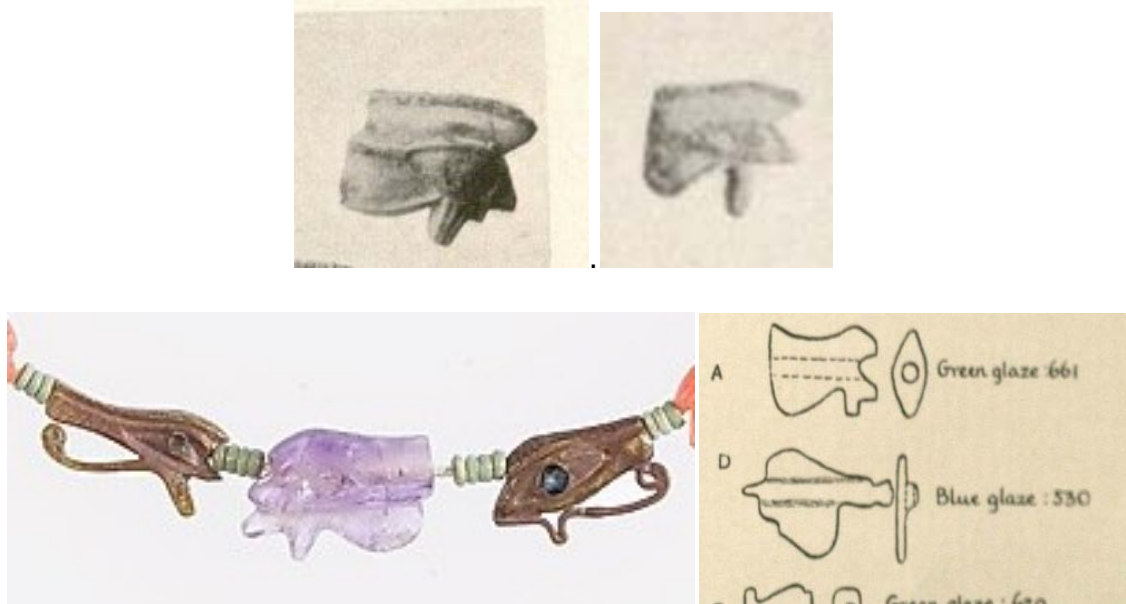


Figure 8: Wedjat Variance. Top Left: Wedjat from S253 (Peet 1912). Top Right: Wedjat from S29 (Peet 1912). Bottom Left: Portion of an elite bracelet from the royal cemetery at Lisht (Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum). Bottom: Two of a very small series of wedjat beads from Haraga, a more modern MK cemetery)

A material examination of *wedjat* amulets only tells half the story. Amulets themselves - especially ones as potent as the *wedjat* - have dual properties as both physical artifacts and magical symbols. While the physical value is highlighted in an artifact's "birth," the symbolic component can be best understood through an investigation of the item's living utility.

The Living Symbol

An amulet's utility in life is difficult to fully understand since it cannot be directly observed in the archaeological record. We must then look to the amulet's symbolic nature to determine how Egyptians would have viewed it during their day-to-

day lives. The *wedjat* symbol, as discussed earlier in this thesis, serves many purposes in life and death. While some from the Abydos set, namely those found in isolation from other objects, were likely obtained only for burial afterlife purposes, those *wedjats* with string holes likely served a purpose in life as they did in death.

The symbol was also one of royal, if not divine, power. As mentioned before, the *wedjat* was used to legitimize the king's relationship with Osiris and Horus. What we see at Abydos is a select group of individuals tapping into that divine relationship once restricted to kings and upper elites. The presence of *wedjat* amulets in the graves of lower-wealth individuals alludes to the fact that, during the Middle Kingdom, even the royal hold on acceptable religious belief and practice was becoming much more dispersed. This is not to say that the individuals within the *wedjat* burials believed themselves equal to the king as a living incarnation of Horus, but rather that they were also able to receive the same blessings, protections, and general magical potency that was given to the higher echelons of Egyptian society.

Wedjat use during the Middle Kingdom is also likely related to the rise of Osiris' popularity across the kingdom. One of the best ways to indicate one's own power is to replicate those who already clearly exhibit it; it is only natural to believe that the Osiris and Abydos-based projects of Senusret I and III would inspire common Egyptians to want to show their dedication and relationship with the god as well. Ownership of a *wedjat*, as a symbol of Osiris himself, could easily fulfill this purpose, allowing the individual a physical token of identification.

Wedjat amulets in many ways relate directly to the Middle Kingdom birthing bricks. Designed for and available to Egyptians outside of the high elite circle of

control, both items carried with them an extreme magical potency. Not only did they both ensure successful transitions during liminal phases, they allowed their owners the prospect of identifying with the gods themselves in a completely new way. Middle Kingdom coffins, too, show this relationship: imbuing their owner with the aid or direct power and form of the divine, coffins would ensure the safe passage of their owners through the incredibly tumultuous transition from life to afterlife. Whereas in the Old Kingdom the king and related priesthood were the only conduits between these deities, the Middle Kingdom shows a people who have begun to take on a more personal relationship and, ultimately, provide themselves with a new form of personal identity. Compare this, then, to the use of scarabs during the Middle Kingdom. As stated earlier, the symbol was often used outside of royal circles for the display of title. While this did allow the owner to keep that title (and rank) in the afterlife, the scarab itself did not aid in that crucial liminal transition, unlike coffins, birthing bricks, and the *wedjat*.

Final Synthesis and Conclusions

The inherent purpose of a symbol is the instilment of personal meaning and utility within an otherwise non-relevant object. However, as the *wedjat* amulets at Abydos have shown, that meaning goes much, much deeper than the symbol's base definition. Even this small data set of *wedjat* amulets at the Abydos North Cemetery reveal a great deal about Middle Kingdom Egypt. Amulet deposition is an intentional act, and as such we have to take nearly every facet of information they give us as the product of intent.

On both broad and specific scales, the distribution of *wedjat* amulets within Abydos North symbolizes the growing decentralization of the Egyptian state during the Middle Kingdom. The simple availability of this potent symbol outside of royal circles signifies the lessening regulation and complete co-option of power within a single class. Even though the artifacts' regulation - specifically the copper required for the final element of the production process - through noble or priestly channels is likely, the availability of this resource and power to these lesser-elite Egyptians was previously unheard of.

This also parallel's the *wedjat*'s place as a symbol of transition. Though state control of the material was certainly lessened, the relatively low variance in amulet styles at Abydos points to a series of production centers and craftsmen rather than a private industry. Not only would these groups require the aid of upper elite figures for access to materials like copper and quartzite, but the relatively low diversity of artistic styles among the Abydos amulets makes some level of regulated production likely. On the other hand, the variation in material, style, and overall size of the amulets, especially

compared to the *wedjats* of other Middle Kingdom cemeteries, shows a growing trend towards a more localized production, culminating in the extreme variation seen among New Kingdom amulets. This follows the general trend of the Egyptian timeline as well: the Old Kingdom served as the hallmark for centralized power, while the New Kingdom was a very bureaucratic state with lists of titles and sub-titles under both the crown and the priesthood. While scarab amulets and their "self-made" title engravings show one aspect of this transition, the *wedjat's* material and symbolic wealth serves as another line of evidence.

Additionally, the Abydos *wedjats* serve as agents of personal choice and identity, a subject of both Egyptian and general human importance. Middle Kingdom Egyptians, primarily during the XIIth Dynasty, saw fit to identify themselves with both their king and Osiris through the *wedjat*. The diversity of the burials at Abydos North, when viewed with the context of amulet selection, reveals a society that was experiencing a new range of personal choices by which they might identify themselves. *Wedjat* amulets are only one possible option of identity - others might include tomb style, or general material wealth - and yet this makes them no less important than the other interred objects. Scarabs are one of the most frequently discussed symbols indicative of Middle Kingdom identity due to their clear, textual evidence of titular diversification. Yet the Middle Kingdom, especially during the XIIth Dynasty, was only on the cusp of utilizing text and literature as a widespread tool for the transfer of ideas and identity. As a symbol of kingmaking, regeneration, and Abydos itself (through Osiris), the *wedjat* was just as intertwined with Egyptian identity as a whole, along with the developing notion of personally determined identity.

When the specific terms and conditions are removed, all archaeological investigations ask the same questions about humanity as a whole. Today, symbols play a massive role in personal identity, shaping the nature we view ourselves as well as each other. The *wedjats* of Abydos show just how long we have identified ourselves through symbols that are not necessarily reflective of our physical form. They signify the human desire to become something larger than oneself, and the hope to continue on after we have left our earthly bodies behind. There is an overwhelming tendency to see cultures as old as the ancient Egyptians as far-off entities, almost existing in a different time and space. If nothing else, the *wedjat* symbolism of the Middle Kingdom shows that, though the names and shapes may have changed, the human search for identity remains much the same.

Prospects for Future Research

In the future, I would aspire to create a much larger database for Abydos North for both supplemental and personal research purposes. With a more complete list of burials, occupants, and the like, I would hopefully be able to provide a deeper examination of personal identity through both the *wedjat* and other amulets or personal objects, potentially even creating a comparative study with more upper elite and royal burial settings like those at Lisht and Haraga.

| John Garstang - Cemetery E (between Cemetery D and Khasekhemwy Enclosure), 1901 (In order of original text listing) | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>Tomb</u> | <u>Tomb Style</u> | <u>Dynasty</u> | <u>Disturbed</u> | <u>Occupant</u> | <u>Contents</u> | <u>Wedjat</u> | <u>Wedi. Form</u> | <u>Wealth 1</u> | <u>Wealth 2</u> |
| E. 108 | Pit tomb | XIII | yes | no body, artifacts indicate upper class | i) cowry-like electrum beads, ii) two ribbed bracelets of gold, iii) shell pectoral of gold, iv) small fishes with bodies of green felspar set in gold, v) electrum charm case, studded with rows of small pins bound by an entwined thread, containing papyrus, vi) multiple scarabs | no | | 48 | 37 |
| E. 30 | pit tomb w/ surface architecture | XII | partly | unmummified body, head fallen westward, upper class | animal pendants, various jewelry, alabaster vessels, scarabs | no | | 20 | 12 |
| E. 45 | pit tomb | | no | four burials; (1)? (2)child (3)adult female (4)male child, all facing north with head to west | statuettes, pendants, gold disc, serpentine vessels, alabaster vase, copper mirror | no | | 45 | 31 |
| E. 105 | pit tomb | early XII | yes | Male, mid-upper class | globular beads, <i>shemu</i> pendant, fine alabaster vessels, figurine (ushabti?), inlaid eyes meant for coffin | maybe | coffin inlays | 9 | 5 |
| E. 30 | pit tomb | XIII | yes | | cylindrical ivory box w/ three incised panels enclosing an ape, uraeus, and Bes figurine | no | | 8 | 10 |
| E. 282 | | late XII or XIII | yes | | compound cylinder bead, bound like a lotus column, alabaster cup, blue glazed beads | no | | 20 | 12 |
| E. 251 | surface (?) | XIII | highly | | rough pottery figure resembling bear and cub, marble and alabaster vessels | no | | 26 | 10 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|--------------|-----|--|---|-----|--|----|----|
| E. 303 | | XII | yes | | glazed seated Horus figure, beads, garnet scarab, serpentine vase | no | | 38 | 17 |
| E. 238 | | | yes | Male, mid-upper class | offering table (inscribed), | no | | | |
| E. 11 | | XII | yes | male, general of war | limestone stele | no | | | |
| E. 181 | | | yes | male, several | limestone stele | no | | | |
| E. 295 | Mastaba | XIII | yes | male, noble/admin. | 2 limestone steles | no | | | |
| E. 252 | pit tomb? | (late?) XIII | yes | male, noble (Regulator of the <i>Sa</i> order) | limestone sarcophagus with painted, incised hieroglyphs, "weeping" eyes on east side, rounded lid with raised head and foot, head marked with ankh; early ushabti | yes | pair on east side of sarcophagus | | |
| E. 236 | pit tomb | XII | yes | | limestone door carving, alabaster vessels | no | | | |
| E. 345 | "monument" | XII (?) | yes | | limestone octagonal column | no | | | |
| E. 107 | | MK | yes | possibly female | hathor figure, beads (related to headdress), headdress stand | no | | | |
| E. 281 | pit tomb | XII | yes | possibly foreign | two-handled vessel of blue marble | no | | 13 | 4 |
| E. 237 | | XII | yes | | blue marble dish with monkey handles, alabaster vessels, serpentine palette, blue glaze beads | no | | 45 | 21 |
| E. 189 | | XII | yes | | serpentine statuette on pedestal | no | | 12 | 5 |
| E. 281 | pit tomb | XIII | yes | | broken wooden coffin with black, white, red and blue paint, depicting mourners and polebearers, offerings, and single large eye on eastern side | yes | single, large eye on east side of coffin | | |

| E. 3 | pit tomb | XIII-XVI | two of three undisturbed | (1) adult, (2) infant, (3) child, (4) young male | (1) alabaster jar, mirrors, kohl palette, green glazed beads, (2) beads, wrapped mirror, kohl vessels, glazed staff head with lotus pattern, small dog/lion (glazed), scarab, (3) ball beads and kohl vessel, (4) two weights near head, two spatulae (one bone, other slate), gold disc with grains of kohl, wood coffin with stuccoed inside, plaster mask | ? | | 43 | 33 |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| E. 172 | pit tomb under mastaba | Late MK (XIII-XIV) | disturbed | male | colored limestone stele, small limestone statuette | yes | two wedjats on top of stele | | |
| T. Eric Peet - Cemeteries of Abydos Pt. II (1911-1912) | | | | | | | | | |
| Cemetery S - note: all found with wooden coffin, laying on left, unless stated otherwise | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Tomb</u> | <u>Tomb Style</u> | <u>Dynasty</u> | <u>Disturbed</u> | <u>Occupant</u> | <u>Contents</u> | <u>Wedjat</u> | <u>Wedi. Form</u> | <u>Wealth 1</u> | <u>Wealth 2</u> |
| 21 | Shaft | XII | y | female | mud wig, alabaster vase, few dark blue glaze beads | no | | 21 | 13 |
| 22 | " | XII | y | empty | | | | | |
| 23 | " | XII | y | | unfinished | | | | |
| 25 | Shaft with 4 chambers at end | XII | y | adult f. with infant, female, male | two vases (where head should be), spherical carnelian beads, (with child) were beads of carnelian, blue glaze, silver disc. Red polished ware vases, second fem. w/ blue glaze beads at neck. Body w/ blue glaze beads at wrist and hippo-head amulet in carnelian at neck. | no | | 38 | 29 |
| 26 | " | XII | y | adult male | no finds | | | | |
| 27 | " | XII | y | female | two strings of discoid beads of blue glaze at neck, three strings at wrist | no | | 11 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|-------|--|--|-----|--------------------|----|----|
| 36a | Mastaba shaft (Ruined mastaba) - 4ch. Two at each end | XII | y | n/a | Lower S: two small spherical amethyst beads. Upper N: pendant of white stone and one of carnelian; also amulets of blue glaze incl. scarab, sacred eye, crown of Lower Egypt | yes | amulet, blue glaze | 39 | 23 |
| 36b | " | XII | y | | unfinished | | | | |
| 36c | " - 4 ch. | XII | mixed | Upper S: Male, others empty and plundered | lower S: few lg spherical blue glaze beads and one long cylindrical. Two N. chs fallen into one; two blue glaze beads | no | | 11 | 7 |
| N 38a | Shafts belonging to Mastaba N | XII | | n/a | sm. Pierced disc of gold and 2 beads | no | | 14 | 14 |
| N 38b | shaft - empty | | | | | | | | |
| N 39 | shaft - 4 ch. | XII | y | Upper S: female, upper N: male, lower S: untouched female, lower N: 3 burials (unidentified) | Lower S: long cylindrical beads of glazed steatite, small ring of beads of gold, broken carnelian scarab, two barrel beads of carnelian, small blue glaze amulets, pieces of an ivory pin with knot representation; Lower N badly plundered, w/ small discoid beads, two gold flies, drop pendants, one large green glaze spherical bead, minute scarab of green stone, green glaze hawk amulet. | no | | 63 | 46 |
| 62 | shaft | XII | mixed | S ch: n/a, N ch.: young male | green glaze scarab, small rounded discoid beads of carnelian and blue glaze | no | | 21 | 14 |
| M 121 | Shafts belonging to Mastaba M | XII | n | unidentified body (likely female) | mud wig | no | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|-----|-----------|--|--|----|--|----|----|
| M 122 | " | XII | n | female | small discoid beads of blue glaze | no | | 11 | 7 |
| M 123 | " | XII | collapsed | | | | | | |
| I 131 | Shafts belonging to Mastaba I | XII | y | Upper S: child's body, lower S: two unidentified bodies, Upper N: empty, Lower N: male | Upper S: discoid beads, small spherical beads (blue glaze and carnelian), white shell bead | no | | 22 | 17 |
| I 132 | " | | | | unfinished | | | | |
| 159 | shaft w/ S ch. | n/a | y | male body | n/a | no | | | |
| 171a | shaft | | abandoned | | | | | | |
| 171b | shaft | n/a | | | unfinished | | | | |
| K 173a | Shafts belonging to Mastaba K | XII | y | male | none | no | | | |
| K 173b | " | XII | y | female | small blue glaze discoid beads around neck | no | | 11 | 7 |
| 175 | shaft | XII | y | Upper burial: headless male, Lower burial: female | Lower: few discoid beads at neck | no | | 1 | 1 |
| H 190-2 | Shafts belonging to Mastaba H | XII | y | n/a | completely plundered | no | | | |
| 193 | shaft | XII | y | n/a | empty | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----|---|--|--|----|--|----|----|
| 194 | shaft | XII | y | unidentified body | plundered from Shaft 285; on right ankle three strings of small glaze beads, and leg amulet of carnelian | no | | 21 | 14 |
| 198 | shaft | | | | unfinished | | | | |
| 199 | Shallow shaft | XII | y | male | re-used shaft over older burial | no | | | |
| 258 | shaft | XII | y | male | n/a | no | | | |
| 260 | shaft w/o bricking | XII | y | female | blue discoid beads round neck, wrist w/ one green glaze cylindrical bead. Vase over pelvis | no | | 15 | 8 |
| 262 | shaft | XII | y | | plundered | no | | | |
| <i>D 268</i> | Shaft belonging to Mastaba <i>D</i> | XII | y | | completely plundered | no | | | |
| <i>D 272</i> | " | XII | y | empty | | | | | |
| <i>E 273-7</i> | Shafts belonging to Mastaba <i>E</i> | XII | y | 273, 274, 277: unfinished. 275-6: plundered | | | | | |
| <i>C 281</i> | Shafts belonging to Mastaba <i>C</i> | XII | y | two unidentified bodies | n/a | no | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-----|-------|--|--|----|--|----|----|
| C 282-3 | " | XII | y | | completely plundered | no | | | |
| G 284-5 | Shafts possibly belonging to ruined Mastaba G | XII | y | n/a | completely plundered | no | | | |
| F 321-2 | Shafts belonging to Mastaba F | XII | | unfinished | Note: proposed that Mastaba completed before tenant's death, who was buried elsewhere | | | | |
| AA 323 | Shaft belonging to Mastaba AA | XII | | unfinished | | | | | |
| 340 | Large shaft to the S of plot, with 6 ch. | XII | mixed | Lower S: 3 women (2 contracted position) and child, Lower N (int.): female | Upper N and S plundered, Middle S plundered but w/bowl of unusual thin buff ware. Lower S: carnelian necklace, blue glaze necklace, small vase. Middle N plundered but w/ blue glaze beads. Lower S: two carnelian amulets - one a heart, other an animal's head | no | | 25 | 15 |
| 498 | shaft | XII | y | female | carnelian bead in mouth, vase, mud wig, and stucco mask. Other vases in top of shaft | no | | 15 | 9 |
| AA 500 | Shaft belonging to Mastaba AA | XII | y | unidentified body | string of small glaze beads on l ankle | no | | 11 | 7 |
| BB 501 | Shaft belonging to Mastaba BB | XII | | unfinished | | | | | |
| BB 502-3 | " | XII | y | n/a | completely plundered | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----|-------|---|---|-----|-------------------|----|----|
| 509 | Shaft, possibly to Mastaba <i>A</i> or <i>B</i> but impossible to certify | XII | y | male in N, S plundered | n/a | no | | | |
| 510 | " | XII | y | unidentified body | n/a | no | | | |
| 511-2 | " | XII | y | n/a | plundered | no | | | |
| 513 | " | XII | y | empty | inlaid eye of obsidian and alabaster set in copper | no | | 48 | 18 |
| 514-17 | " | XII | n | all unfinished | n/a | no | | | |
| 519 | " | XII | n | abandoned and unsafe | n/a | | | | |
| <i>DD</i> 520-2 | Shafts belonging to Mastaba <i>DD</i> | XII | mixed | 520: plundered, 21: empty, 22: unfinished | n/a | no | | | |
| 570 | originally closed with a barrel vault | XII | y | n/a | alabaster vase | no | | 9 | 5 |
| 571 | Similar to 570 | XII | y | n/a | a few cylindrical glaze beads | no | | 11 | 7 |
| 622-3 | Shafts to S of ruined mastaba | XII | y | n/a | rough flint, shell, blue glaze eye amulet, large blue glaze spherical bead, two pear-shaped pendants of very fine light blue glaze. Also smaller spherical bead and two cylindrical beads | yes | blue glaze amulet | 21 | 12 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---|-----|--------------------------|--|-------|---------------------------|----|----|
| 624 | shaft w/ 4 ch. | XII or possible reburial from 2nd Intermediate or XVIII | y | n/a | Upper S: painted vase, blue glaze lion, pendant and spherical beads, carnelian barrel bead, cowrie, two spirally coiled earrings of lead, scaraboid with the upper surface in the form of a sacred eye, other vases, Upper N: blue glaze tubular and carnelian barrel beads | Maybe | carved into scaraboid (?) | 26 | 18 |
| 627 | Shaft | XII | n/a | n/a | red polished bowl of pottery. S ch.: vase, rough flint, lid of an alabaster kohl vase, shell,, fragment of a fine black pottery vase with rivet holes, two bracelets of thin silver wire, two blue glaze amulets, and blue glaze beads, short and long cylindrical, spherical, and barrel-shaped | ? | | 48 | 32 |
| s12 | surface burial | ~XII | n | girl, knees bent on side | necklace of blue glaze spherical beads with silver disc as center, four cylindrical beads, two wrist strins of beads of blue glaze and carnelian, small alabaster kohl pot near chin and small string of blue glaze beads on l. ear | no | | 43 | 26 |
| s20 | surface burial | ~XII | n | female | two strings of beads round neck | no | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------|---|--|---|----|--|-------|-------|
| s44 | surface burial | ~XII | n | female | tall alabaster at the chin, blue marble kohl pot in left hand. Long necklace of dull blue glaze beads, long drop-shaped bead of carnelian, and numerous blue glaze amulets. Small string of haematite beads at r. forearm and 3 scarabs of blueglaze, amethyst and black stone at r. hand together with short string of miscellaneous beads, possible veil-holder or pendant of fine silver wire on matrix of black material in front of face | no | | 83-86 | 42-45 |
| s51 | surface burial | ~XII | n | female with hair in numerous fine plaits | coffin, small globular vase of potter before breast, and before face small alabaster kohl pot. L. forearm a mass of decayed hair, possibly a wig. Each ear - ring of small discoid beads of dark blue glaze, and string of same hung over neck. | no | | 29 | 15 |
| nc11 | surface burial | XI-XII | n | unidentified | coffin, necklace of bright ultramarine blue glaze beads, one barrel bead of wood(?) and long drop-shaped pendant of alabaster | no | | 25 | 14 |
| nc20a | surface burial | XI-XII | n | child | wooden coffin | no | | 5 | 2 |
| nc24 | surface burial | Possibly OK | n | adult, contracted | wooden coffin, few small blue glaze beads | no | | 16 | 9 |
| nc95 | surface burial beneath grave of late dynastic period | ? | n | adult female on back diagonally | wooden coffin | no | | 5 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|----------------------|--|-----|--|----|----|
| nc136, 137 | surface burial above grave 137 | XII or slightly later | n | unidentified, female | wooden coffin, (137): necklace of small blue glaze beads | no | | 16 | 9 |
| nc 230 | surface burial above 1st Dynasty tomb 231 | XII | n | child | wooden coffin | no | | 5 | 2 |
| The North Cemetery - Mixed cemetery, with scattered MK burials | | | | | | | | | |
| G6 | unbricked shaft | MK | y | unidentified | carnelian beads, gold pendant representing the crown of Lower Egypt over the <i>neb</i> sign, two strings of very fine discoid beads of blue glaze and shell | no | | 35 | 30 |
| M2 | small shaft | MK | y | unidentified body | spherical beads of amethyst, carnelian, and dark blue glaze, various amulets (2 sphinxes, six hawks) | no | | 36 | 19 |
| K2 | small shaft | MK | y | unidentified | six amulets: two sphinxes, one hawk, one a lion, and two apes | no | | | |
| Z2a | shaft | XII-XIII | y | n/a | gold foil, two pottery dishes, white spotted red ware dish, inlaid eye, alabaster kohl pot, blue glaze beads, drop-shaped pendant of glazed rock crystal, fragments of the wooden coffin of the <i>w'rtw</i> of the ruler's table, Amenemhat. (Additional image on Pl. XXXVIII shows winged scarab amulet, five sacred eye amulets (three large, two small), and small other amulets. Connection uncertain but likely) | yes | | 56 | 28 |

| Misc. Tombs: - Tombs only catalogued by plates in back; dating | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| S253 | Likely shaft from Cem. S | XII - Peet confirms nearly all Cem. S are XII | unk. | n/a | Two cords of discoid beads (material unk), three sacred eye amulets, most likely blue glaze, shell, curved jewelry | yes | | | |
| Z3 | unk, from N. Cem | Likely XII or even XIV | unk. | n/a | multitude of amulets, incl: fish tails, 3 sacred eyes, frogs (?), avian-like amulets | yes | | | |
| T71 | unk, from N. Cem | Anywhere from late MK to XVIII - amulet style similar to late MK | unk. | n/a | earrings, two scarab seals, two miniature figurines (?), seven small sacred eye amulets, one sacred eye amulet (separate), seven (conical?) beads/amulets (?) | yes | | | |
| S 201 | Likely shaft from Cem. S | XII - Peet confirms nearly all Cem. S are XII | unk. | n/a | four amulets: one sacred eye, one scarab, one djed pillar, and one sword-shaped | yes | | | |
| Abydos North Cemetery Project 1988 - Janet Richards | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Tomb</u> | <u>Tomb Style</u> | <u>Dynasty</u> | <u>Disturbed</u> | <u>Occupant</u> | <u>Contents</u> | <u>Wedjat</u> | <u>Wedj. Form</u> | <u>Wealth 1</u> | <u>Wealth 2</u> |
| E. 720/N. 880-90 | two groups of 3 shaft burials | XII (reused in 3IP) | badly | none | offering vessels, brown bowls | no | | 4 | 1 |
| E. 720/N. 890 (7) | surface | XII | yes | female adult | cone-shaped offering vessel | no | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----|---------------------------------|----|----|
| E. 725/N. 940 | Shafts 1, 2, and associated Chapel 2 | Early XII | yes | Female, 17 (1), Male, 50+ (2) | wood coffin fragments, string of blue glazed beads, two faience amulets, offering vessels, red ware bowls (shaft 2), limestone stela bearing cartouche of Senwosret I belonging to "Dedu" (Chapel 2) | ? | | 33 | 14 |
| E. 760/N. 855 | Shaft 2 (of 9, with several postdating chapels) | Late XI - Early XII | yes | Female 30-40, with possible juvenile | wooden coffin, mass of small blue glazed faience beads, plaster fragments, offering vessels, Ptolemaic Roman jar sherds | no | | 20 | 10 |
| | Shaft 4 | Late XI - Early XII | yes (unfinished) | none | none | no | | | |
| | Shaft 6 | Late XI - Early XII | unfinished | none | burnished red bowl | no | | 4 | 1 |
| | Shaft 8 | Late XI - Early XII | heavily | adult male, 20-30 | none | no | | | |
| E. 830/N. 660 | Surface Burial 1 | Early XII | yes | male, 17-18 | 1 blue faience bead, 4 lithic fragments, small water jar sherd | no | | 15 | 8 |
| | Burial 2 | XII | yes | female adult | water jar sherds, wooden coffin in sand | no | | 9 | 3 |
| | Burial 3 | XII | yes | Female, 50+ | polychrome painted coffin, large water jar | no | | 9 | 3 |
| E. 830/N. 780 | Surface Burial 1 | possibly XII | yes | Female 30-35 | plain wooden coffin, 6 flakes, 2 retouched flakes, 3 scrapers, water jar sherd | no | | 9 | 3 |
| | Burial 9 | Possibly MK (Found near XIX burials) | undisturbed | child, 18-20 months | faience <i>wedjat</i> amulet above right scapula, two faience cat figures near chest, small shell large shell disk bead, carnelian barrel bead, three pieces of lithic debitage | yes | <i>wedjat</i> amulet of faience | 22 | 17 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----|--|----|----|
| E. 830/N. 790 | Shaft 1, finely constructed, near mastaba | Early XII | yes, intrusive NK burial | Male, 18-19 | poorly preserved wooden coffin, 8 blue faience ball beads, 1 chert sidescraper, 1 chert awl, 1 chert flake, complete and broken offering vessel | no | | 20 | 17 |
| E. 840/N. 780 | Row of 3 shafts with remains of 3 mud-brick chapels | XII | | Male (?), 50+ in upper N. chamber | ceramic sherds | no | | 4 | 1 |
| | Surface Burial 1 | XII (MK sure) | slightly | Female, 30-35 | anthropoid coffin, 9 chert flakes, 1 end-scraper, 1 sidescraper, 1 awl, 5 large water jar sherds w/cord impression, 4 brown bowl sherds, 5 brown cup sherds, 3 brown cup rims, several other minor sherds | no | | 9 | 3 |
| | Burial 4 | Possibly MK | yes | Juvenile, 3 years | flakes, 1 sidescraper, bag jar sherds, bowl rim sherd | no | | 4 | 1 |
| | Burial 6 (and bone group 6A) | lateXI (possibly) | heavily | female, 20-30 | coffin in sand, fragments of ceramic anthropomorphic figurine, water jar sherds, brown bowl sherd | no | | 9 | 3 |
| | Burial 7 | probably XII | yes | Adult | lithic debitage, water jar rim sherd | no | | 4 | 1 |
| | Burial 8 with possible chapel | probably XII - jewelry | no | Juvenile, 3-4 years | two metal amulets, blue faience bead, cowrie shell (all top of right shoulder) | no | | 25 | 15 |
| | Burial 9 | possibly XII | no | Male, 22-25 | plastered wooden anthropoid coffin in sand, buff unpainted plaster, charcoal chunk, fabric (near skull), water jar body sherds with rim and base, fine brown cup, 2 possible ED sherds | no | | 12 | 6 |
| | Burial 10 | XII | light | Female, 30-35 with black curly hair | decayed wood and charcoal, water jar sherds, offering vessel | no | | 9 | 3 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---|-----|--|----|----|
| | Burial 11 | XII | mostly undisturbed | Male, 35-39 | poor plaster mask, wood fragments, cloth shreds, 50 12th dynasty water jar sherds, with 1 rim and base, MK jar rim | no | | 12 | 6 |
| | Burial 12 | Possibly XII - jewelry | intact | child, 11-14 months | wooden rectangular coffin, beaded bracelets of small blue faience, carnelian, cowrie shell beads, and metal elements. Five faience <i>wedjat</i> amulets around wrist, four small <i>wedjat</i> amulets in vicinity of right ankle, decayed wood, cloth fragments, lithic flakes, lithic sidescraper, 12th dynasty water jar sherds | yes | multitude of faience amulets near both wrist and ankle | 31 | 27 |
| E. 860/N. 600 | Surface Burial 4 | XII | yes | inc. juvenile, 10-12 | lithic debitage, complete 12th dynasty poststand, bag jar, MK water jar sherd | no | | 4 | 1 |

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