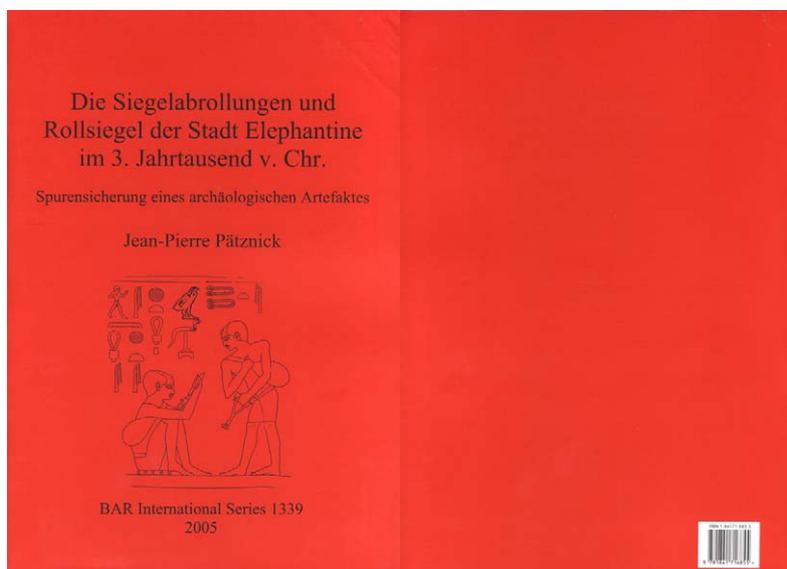


**Pätznick, J.-P. 2005. Die Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Spurensicherung eines archäologischen Artefaktes. - Oxford, Archaeopress (BAR International Series 1339)**

Book review by J. Brakenhoff



The German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, started its excavations on the island of Elephantine in 1969, but the objects, which are topic of this study, were recovered during 1972-1991. Among the numerous antiquities there exists an important group of cylinder-seals and clay-sealings, over 1600 objects in all. A collection of this size is suitable for thorough research. Note that the corpus is the biggest from urban context.

Elephantine was an important transit port because of the exchange of goods from Egypt with those from Africa. A substantial number of stores were needed and those stores had to be secured from theft. To realise this, civil servants sealed up the doors of these stores.

Objective of his study is the chronographic determination of the Elephantine seal material from the Archaic Period (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty) and the early Old Kingdom. The author approaches his subject in three ways: 1) typology; 2) archaeology; 3) epigraphy. The material has been conveniently arranged, so Pätznick's work is a useful reference book for future studies.

After the description of the cylinder-seals (pp. 5-11) follows a typology of the distinct sealings (pp. 13-62). In the next section the inscriptions on the objects are discussed (pp. 63-170). A lot of titles are reviewed, in hieroglyphics and transcriptions. The next section (pp. 172-195) deals with the vocabulary of the inscriptions. The author distinguishes words composed of two, three, four or five consonants. In his summary (p. 195) Pätznick concludes with an epigraphic base stock of 330 different words, followed by a historical survey of the town, its districts and the fortress (pp. 199-214). Every subdivision is closed by a summary and analysis. The numerous notes (1979) show the thorough research by the author.

The seal material proves to be an important source of information in relation to local, regional and national government. The majority of the official seals dates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty; they belong to the reign of Horus Netjerikhet, Horus Sanakht, Horus Sekhemkhet and Horus Khaba. Therefore, author (p. IV) calls the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty "the climax of the royal administration on the Island of Elephantine." Further proof of royal activity is the small granite pyramid on Elephantine, also dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty, being attributed to king Huni.

The Annex (pp. 217-268) consists of a number of divisions: religious names (gods, goddesses), king's names, titles and personal names. The extensive list of titles (pp. 217-218) may be compared with the titles from other sites relating to the same period, e.g. Abydos and Saqqara. One of the titles, *Kherep mitr*, appears on the stela of *Ra-neb*, now in the Egyptian collection of the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty (p. 218, no. 8).

A comprehensive bibliography has been included (pp. 221-232) as well as typological and palaeographic illustrations (pp. 233-256), whereas plans and surveys can be found on pp. 257-268.

The catalogue forms the last part of the book (pp. 270-631). It contains descriptions of 665 seals or sealings. Each description has nine fields, within them are all features of each seal recorded. The catalogue itself has been divided into four parts, according to their place of discovery (Satet temple, North East town, fortress and East town).

The information in this book is very specialised, and is very useful for future studies concerning local and regional government. The results can be added to those of the German excavations at Elephantine: they add substantially to the history and development of an important frontier town and its fortress in the early years of Egypt's history. This study also shows the importance of the trade between Egypt and its African hinterland.

Some minor objections: there is no division into chapters. Therefore, chapter names at the top of the pages are missing, only the title of the book being mentioned. This prevents a quick consulting of the work. This however, does not prevent that this profound study can be considered as an asset to Egyptology.

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