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## Tell Basta the (Ancient City of Bubastis) Historical and Archaeological Study

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### ARTICLE INFO Abstract

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The current site of Tell Basta is one of the most important archaeological sites in Egypt. The location was vital during the different historical periods in ancient Egypt. The city is located in Sharkia Governorate in the Eastern Nile Delta. However, it became the Eastern entrance of Egypt during the ages and became an important religious, commercial, and administrative center. The city was a spiritual place where people came every year to practice their rituals. The location was a station for exchanging trading goods and providing campaigns. The site included many archaeological remains and monumental objects dated from the old kingdom until the Graeco-Roman periods. The site reached its glory during the (22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>) dynasties, and it became the political capital of Egypt during that period. The most important discoveries at Tell Basta are the great temple, the royal cemetery, unique buildings, statues, and other monumental blocks. This research aims to highlight the archaeological sites in Sharkia, especially Tell Basta and the nearby locations. The site needs many scientific studies and further excavations to be developed. This research focuses on the historical archeological importance of the area to be placed on Egypt's Tourism Map and included in the Local and International Tourism Programs.



### I. Introduction

Tell Basta is considered one of the Eastern Delta's most important archaeological sites. The location had different periods from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Graeco-Roman period. The site dated back to the Old Kingdom (2282-2117 BC). The Asian tribes came later to the Eastern Nile Delta during the Middle Kingdom (1985-1650 BC), and they lived in it. The Egyptians later succeeded in expelling them out of the borders of Egypt (Rowe, 1941). Egypt was later unable to protect its fast lands since the late period. It was divided into two authorities: the political authority in the North, governed by foreign rulers, and the religious authority in the South, ruled by the priests (Taylor, 2000).


During the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the Libyans had been used in the military as mercenaries; they came to Egypt with many immigrants and settled in the Eastern Delta. After that, they held the throne of Egypt. Smendes declared himself the king of Egypt (1069-1043 BC); he founded the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, and his capital was Tanis, not too far from Tell Basta. However, the location was still the capital of Egypt during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, which had been founded by Sheshonk I (945-



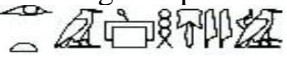

924 BC), and Tell Basta started to flourish. Tanis was left later, and the capital moved to Tell Basta during the 23-24 Dynasties (Abd-Elfattah N.S. 2020).



Tell Basta is located in the Southeastern corner of the Nile Delta; its location played an important part during the ages in ancient Egypt. The Pelusiatic and Tanitic branches of the River Nile surrounded it. The archeological discoveries are represented in the remains of the ancient Baset temple, the Amenemhat III palace, a large burial cemetery, and others. During the chronological ages, the site was a substantial commercial, administrative, and religious center in the Eastern Delta. The site had been used to exchange trading goods and provide campaigns. It is looked over the Pelusiatic and Tanitic branches of the Nile that had been used for trading transportation. It provided water for agriculture, especially with the seasonal Nile flooding in ancient Egypt. The two branches of the River Nile ran around the city and highlighted the old administrative borders of Bubastis (Alexander Gobel, 2017).

Tell Basta took its name from the ancient Egyptian Name (Per-Baset)  (Wb 1, 423.6) "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.8), which means the house of Baset. Tell Basta was the capital of the 18<sup>th</sup> Lower Egyptian Province during the New Kingdom. The site later became the capital of ancient Egypt during the (23<sup>rd</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup>) dynasties. The city had an excellent strategic location on the Pelousic branch of the River Nile at the Eastern Nile Delta. The location was used to manufacture the copper that was brought from Sinai and send it to the capital of ancient Egypt. The trade caravans had visited the site and military campaigns during the different ages. The Holy Family later saw it during their trip to Egypt (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).

### I- The Historical Importance of Tell Basta

Tell Basta is one of the most important archaeological sites in Egypt. The site is located in Sharqia Governorate near the current capital city of Zagazig. The Greek historian Herodotus visited the site of Tell Basta in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. He said the city had a great temple in the center of the town, surrounded by water as an island, and it provided trees on both sides of the two canals. Herodotus also mentioned that about 700,000 pilgrims visited the city to participate in the annual festival for the goddess Baset (Wb 1, 423.7)  (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).




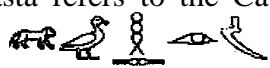
Herodotus gave an excellent description of the city and its temple. The city was surrounded by water from the two canals branching off the Nile to reach the temple. Each channel was about 100 feet wide. The temple had been constructed in the Middle of the city. It took the shape of a square, and there was a discovered stone road in line with the entrance, about 120 m wide, surrounded by trees. The ancient city of Bubastis  (Wb 1, 423.8) was the worshiping center of the Goddess Baset  (Wb 1, 423.7). The cat Baset was a sacred animal of the ancient Egyptians during that period. This deity was represented by the head of a cat or lioness *m3j - h33*  (Wb 2, 12.7), and then the cat mummies were discovered in the cemetery of Tell Basta (Evans Elaine, 2001). The ancient Egyptians had annually visited the ancient city and its great temple. The boats and ships, full of people, sailed from everywhere to reach the city. The joyful procession showed the men playing with the lotus flowers and women playing music and dancing. The ancient Egyptians came to Butastis  (Wb 1, 423.8) to celebrate the Feast of Baset at the same time every year (Scott, Nora, 2018).

The city was called as Pr- Bast by the ancient Egyptians  (Wb 1, 423.6) "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.8), meaning the House of Baset. The city was located to the Southwest of the city of Tanis, on the Eastern bank of the Pelusiac branch of the River Nile. Tell Basta became a royal residence after Sheshanq I (943 BC), who founded the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty. The city reached the top of its glory during the (23-24) Dynasties. Then, the city had been declined after the Persian conquest of Cambyses in 525 BC, and the city was destroyed. Pasmatic I succeeded in expelling the Persians from Egypt, and he founded the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The king rewarded his mercenaries with some lands to the South of Bubastis as a gift for their service. King Necho II later started to construct a canal to connect the River Nile with the Red Sea, located on the northern side of the city (Mohamed I. Bakr, Helmut Brandl, 2010).

However, the site dates back to the old, middle, and new kingdoms; it extended to the end of the Graeco-Roman period. Ramesses III led his successful military campaigns against the "Sea People"; he left the Libyan mercenaries in his Army, and they settled in the Nile Delta. The Libyans later became a strong power in the region of the Nile Delta, and they held critical positions in Egyptian society during that period. They founded the 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasties, whose capital was Tanis, and the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, whose capital was Tell Basta. Therefore, they had the ancient Egyptian identity and became the original people, especially in Northern Egypt, while Southern Egypt came under the rule of the temple's priests (Mohamed I. Bakr,2010).



During the late period, Egypt divided into two authorities: the political capital was in the North of Egypt at Tanis and Tell Basta, and the religious capital was in the South of Egypt at Thebes. One of the essential kings was Shoshenq I, who founded the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty (945-924 BC). According to Manetho, the kings of that Dynasty set up the city of Tell Basta as their royal residence. After that, Osorkon I (927-889 BC) and Osorkon II (874-850 BC) were interested in building on the site; they built the main temple of Bastet and made the city as the best in the country (Mohamed I. Bakr,2010).

## II- The Location of Tell Basta and its ancient names according to the Greek Historians

The site of Tell Basta is located in the Southeastern corner of the Nile Delta (Fig. 1), next to the current city of Zagazig, the modern capital of Sharkia Governorate. The city's ancient Name was Per-Baset "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.6) "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.8), which means the (House of Baset), the prominent cult of the Goddess Baset  (Wb 1, 423.7). Tell Basta in Arabic, "tell" means (a mound or hill), and Basta refers to the Cat Baset; sometimes she was represented as lioness-headed *m3j - h33*  (Wb 2, 12.7). Tell Basta is one of the most important cities in ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom to the end of the Graeco-Roman period. The site played an essential role due to its strategic location as the connection point between the Pelusiac and Tanitic branches of the River Nile and its being the principal station on the trade routes between Egypt and Asia (Syria and Palestine) during ancient times. The location played an excellent part for the mining expeditions to bring copper and turquoise from Sinai and send them to Memphis. The kings of ancient Egypt interested in the city, and they used to build their temples, tombs, palaces, and constructions in it (Jimmy Dunn, John Warren, 2011).



**Fig. 1** Map of ancient Lower Egypt showing Bubastis: retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bubastis>

Tell Basta  (Wb 1, 423.6) "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.8) was a great city in ancient Egypt. The old city was ruined entirely, and its monumental blocks are scattered everywhere on the site. The city is located in Lower Egypt in the Eastern Nile Delta to the Southwest of the ancient city of Tanis. The city had an excellent strategic location at the point of connection between Egypt and the Eastern World. The city was located in the ancient Egyptian Nome of Am-Khent, according to Petrie, 1906. The city was thriving during ancient times; it was dedicated to the goddess Baset from the Fourth Dynasty (2613 BC) until the Graeco-Roman period (395 AD). According to Manetho (305-285 BC), the city had faced civil unrest, and the inscriptions found on the site documenting the ancient city dated back from the fourth Dynasty until the Roman era. Tell Basta reached its glory when Osorken I (924-889 BC), who was the son of Shashank I. The king proclaimed himself as the king of Egypt in 945 BC; his royal residence was the ancient city of Bubastis (Breasted, 1909).

The ancient city was visited by Greek historians such as Herodotus, Diodorus, Siculus, and Strabo. They gave an excellent description of the ancient city of Bubastis and its impressive temple. Herodotus (484-425BC) wrote about the city as very rich, the temple surrounded by trees growing up, and the water canals around the site connected the temple with the River Nile. Additionally, the temple was located in the central city and decorated with fine inscriptions. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gaston Maspero visited the location; he found the temple was ruined and destroyed the whole site (Maspero, 1914). Napoleon's campaign came later to the site; they found the location was also completely demolished, and the monumental blocks spread on its surface (Navielle, 1891). According to Strabo and Aristotle, Sisostris carried out a great project to connect the two branches of the River Nile from Avaris to Bubastis. The temple was on high ground, surrounded by water from all sides (Maspero et al., 1903).

### III- The History of Excavations of the site at Tell Basta





Edouard Naville was initially excavated at the site between the period (1887-1889). The large head of the colossal statue of Amenemhet III was discovered at the site by Edouard Naville, but this statue was moved to the British Museum in London. However, the place was entirely ruined, Naville was able to reconstruct the Layout of the Baset temple. The temple's entrance hall belonged to Osorkon II (22nd Dynasty); he might be added a festival hall and hypostyle hall, and a sanctuary was later built by Nectanebo II (30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) Naville E. (1889).

Labib Habachi later on excavated at the site in 1944. He discovered remains of Roman constructions, limestone pedestals, and pink granite columns (Habashi L. 1957). The Egyptian team of the Ministry of Antiquities excavated at the site between (1960-1990). They found the grand palace of Amenemhat III and other significant monuments (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019). Between the period (1992-1996), the excavation work was done in the monumental area by the Egyptian-German Mission. They discovered a great discovery that included small golden statues, some faience, bowls, and other objects. A limestone gateway related to the Old Kingdom was also discovered in 1996. The Potsdam University mission, under Christian Tietze's direction, excavated at the site between (2002-2003). The Egyptian German mission excavated the site, and they discovered an excellent stone stela in 2004, dating back to 238 BC. The stone is inscribed with a royal decree in the reign of Ptolemy III, and it stated a reform in the Egyptian calendar during this period. It is recorded in ancient Greek hieroglyphs and medieval writings, like the significant Rosetta Stone, which taught us much about ancient Egyptian history and civilization (Eva Lange, 2014).

The extraordinary discovery was the Canopus Decree, recorded on a stone block. It dates back to the reign of Ptolemy III and was discovered in the temple's entrance hall. This significant discovery proved that the Bastet temple was still one of the essential temples in Egypt until the Ptolemaic period, and the rulers were interested in the cult of Bastet during that period. They also discovered a colossal statue in the Bastet temple, which was made from pink granite and dates back to the reign of Ramesses II. It was believed that this statue was fronted by a significant temple dated back to this period, which was about 11 m high on the site (Eva Lange, 2014).

In 2008, the excavation work started again in six seasons, two yearly until 2011. They discovered the remains of a paved floor decorated with limestone slabs dated back to the Roman era and housing buildings called "tower houses" that formed the design of the ancient Egyptian houses from the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the Graeco-Roman period. In those houses were discovered various monumental tools, different kinds of pottery, and some pigments used in coloring the massive figures. Additionally, it was found that different types of pottery, vessels, bowls, glass, coins, faience and statuettes reflected the daily life and the religious activities practiced at the site. Numerous terracotta statuettes were also discovered here at the site in the form of the God Bes, one of the principal deities in the region during that time. They also discovered remains of pottery pieces dated back to the Late Period indicating the daily activities in the area of the main temple, as well as fragments of two vases known as Bes-type, inscribed with various reliefs of the face of the deity, dated back between the period (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) century B.C. However, the location had been excavated by multiple scientific missions under the head of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Zagazig University, the site still needs many further studies and excavations since that time (Eva Lange, 2014).

#### IV- The temple of Baset at Tell Basta

The temple was built in the Middle of Tell Basta  (Wb 1, 423.6) "pr-b3s.t"  (Wb 1, 423.8). It was dedicated to Baset, who was represented as a fertility and protective deity. She was depicted on the monuments as a lioness-headed *m.3j - h.s.3*  (Wb 2, 12.7), and later a cat-headed  (Wb 1, 423.7). This temple was surrounded by two channels connected with the Nile and lined with giant trees (Fig. 2). The temple was built during the Old Kingdom, and additional extensions to the temple related to the kings of the Middle and new empires and some additions related to the late period until the end of the Graeco-Roman period. King Osorkon, I constructed the temple's entrance, and Osorkon II built the main gate behind the courtyard. The king was depicted celebrating the Heb Sed Festival. King Osorkon II, the hypostyle hall surrounded by columns taking the shape of Hathor and Papyrus. King Nectanebo II 30th Dynasty renewed the Holy Shrine (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).



**Fig. 2** the ancient city of Bubastis and its temple as it might have been. The temple is currently ruined: retrieved from <https://www.thegreatcat.org/bubastis-city-of-cat-goddess-bast/>

The site is completely ruined, and the monumental objects of its temple are scattered on the site's surface (Fig. 3). The location is currently covered with monumental blocks dating back to different historical periods, making the area an open-air museum (Fig. 4). Additionally, many statues were discovered, such as the red granite statue of Ramses II standing between Hathor and Ptah, Hathor and Papyrus capitals columns, and other monuments scattered everywhere on the site's surface (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).



**Fig. 3** The Monumental remains of the temple at Tell Basta, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Discover Egypt's Monuments retrieved from <https://egy monuments.gov.eg/archaeological-sites/tal-basta/>



**Fig. 4** Tell Basta's Open-Air Museum, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Discover Egypt's Monuments retrieved from <https://egy monuments.gov.eg/archaeological-sites/tal-basta/>

The temple of Baset is located in the southeastern corner of the site. It was built from red granite blocks, initially built in the Old Kingdom, and Ramesses II added to it. The temple is now ruined and needs more effort to be reconstructed (Fig. 3). A great discovery in 1906 included unique golden and silver pieces and valuable jewelry dating back to the Ramesside period; some were illegally moved to the Berlin Museum, and others moved to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In the same year, just a few meters found a new treasure that included various pieces now displayed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).

Despite the capital of Egypt still being at Tanis during the 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasties, the kings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty were interested in Bubastis and prepared it to be their other residence.

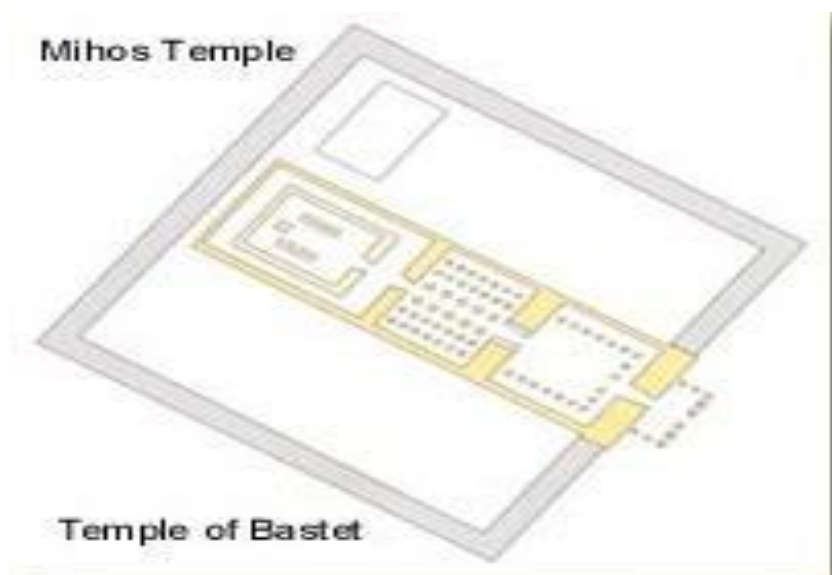
Osorkon I started building a small temple dedicated to Atum, and he decorated its walls with various reliefs. Osorkon II built a new courtyard, front hall, and a granite gateway decorated with significant reliefs commemorating his Sed-Festival in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of his reign. Osorkon III built a festival hall and a hypostyle hall; he also constructed the temple of Mihos, the son of Bastet in the form of a lion-headed, and another son called Horekhenyu, who was also venerated in the area. Nectanbo II (30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) built a new chapel here, and another temple was later built in the Roman period (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).

A limestone statue was discovered at the site; this statue is represented as a woman with her three children seated on a chair with its legs taking the form of a lion and flanked by baboons. Additionally, a cemetery was discovered dated back to the New Kingdom; it included the tomb of luti (19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) and two high officials from Kush, the father and his son called Hori I, and Hori II. Bastet was initially represented as a lion-headed Goddess and then a cat-headed Goddess. A cemetery was discovered to have several mud-brick tombs for the mummified cats associated with the local cult (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).

The temple's entrance hall seemed to belong to Osorkon II (22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty); he might add a festival hall and hypostyle hall. Nectanebo II later built a sanctuary in the 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Wilkinson, Richard H.,2000). Additionally, Osorkon II constructed a granite gateway to his Sed-Festival; this essential building was decorated with scenes taken from the Sed-Festival reliefs of Amenhotep III (Grimal, Nicolas, 1988).

#### V- The Description of the Temple and the Other Constructions

Edouard Naville excavated at the site of the ancient city under the supervision of the Ministry of Antiquities. They discovered the remains of Bubastis's ancient city, located on the Eastern Nile Delta. One of the most important discoveries is the temple of Baset; it is now completely ruined due to the storm earthquake about 2000 years ago. The destroyed blocks and broken monuments spread everywhere, bearing different inscriptions dating back to the old kingdom until the Graeco-Roman period (Jimmy Dunn, John Warren, 2011).



**Fig. 5** the Layout of the temple: retrieved from <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/tellbasta.htm>

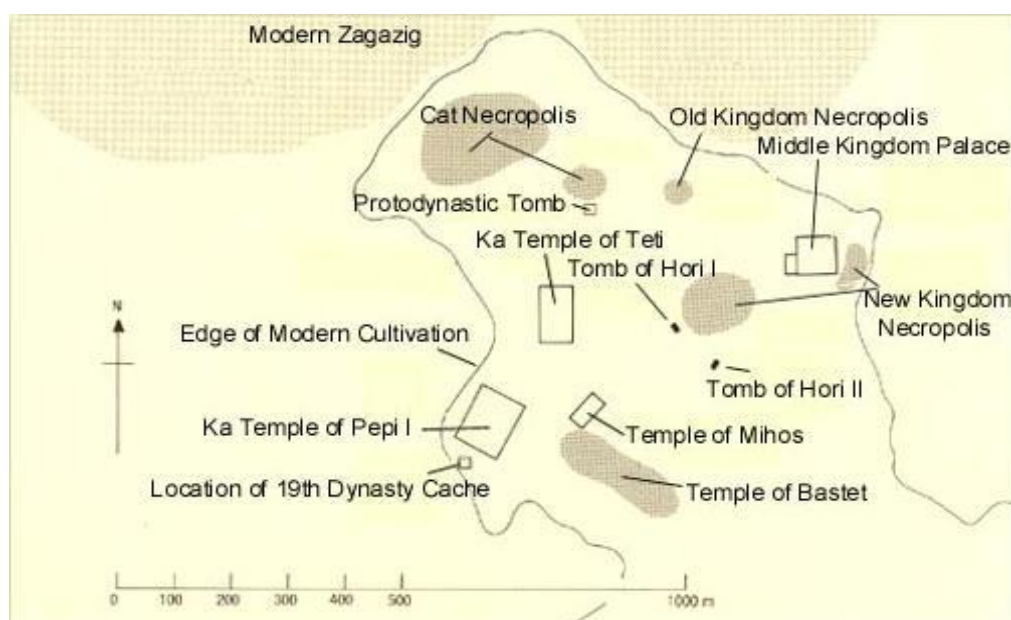
The temple's main entrance is located on the east side (Fig 5), surrounded by monumental blocks bearing the Name of Osorken I, presenting the offering to various deities. It leads to the temple's court. According to the scattered monuments on the site's surface, the temple court



measured about 50 m long and 30 m wide and was surrounded by columns whose capitals took the shape of palm-leaf. A granite statue of the queen from the Ramesside period was found in the temple court. This statue might represent Queen Nefertari, the wife of Ramses II. Additionally, an inscription was found on the back of the statue, added later by Osorken II, as well as on some monumental blocks located on the site bearing the Name of Osorken II practicing the rituals of the Sed Festival (Jimmy Dunn, John Warren, 2011).

Next to the court were found the foundations of a long colonnade about 30 m long leading to another hall with papyrus columns taking the shape of Hathor Capitals, which means that area related to Osorken II. Hathor played an essential role in the ancient Egyptian religion. However, many statues related to Ramses II were found in the central court, and Nectanebo II added a chapel to the temple bearing his name. The chapel façade was decorated with a large frieze of uraei and inscriptions bearing the king's names and titles. The walls were decorated with scenes representing the king offering to Bastet and other deities, and the ceiling was decorated with the stars. A famous manuscript related to Ptolemy III (238) was found in the temple, which means the rituals of the ancient Egyptians were still practiced in that temple until that period (Ahmed Mansour, 2008).

Two ka temples dated back to the 5th Dynasty that belonged to the kings Teti and Pepi I were discovered at the site (Fig 6). Moreover, two Jubilee chapels were constructed by Amenemhet III and Amenhotep III. The remains of the ka temple of Pepi I are located to the west of Baset's main temple, which is represented by two rows of pillars. The Ka temple of Teti is situated at the north-western corner of the Bastet temple. Additionally, it was discovered that a rectangular chapel belonged to the lion god Mihos, located north of the Bastet temple. According to ancient Egyptian legends, Mihos was the son of Baset, probably worshipped in that area. Additionally, several burials were found on the site for the vizier Luti, and two high officials from Kush called Hori and his son who were buried here at Tell Basta (Tell Basta Project, 2013).



**Fig. 6** The Layout of the monumental area of Tell Basta showing the Ka temples, Cat Necropolis, and Other Constructions.

It was also discovered that numerous bud-brick tombs were taking the shape of vaulted ceilings and were dedicated to burying the sacred cats. A great discovery was found at the site in 1906, including valuable jewelry pieces and unique golden and silver pieces moved to the

Egyptian Museum. One of the most important pieces is a golden necklace that King Ahmose might award to one of his Generals who won the war against the Hyksos. This necklace was discovered beside Ahmose's cartouche, who defeated the Hyksos and founded the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty 1570-1546 BC. It was discovered in 1964 the tomb of vizier Luty in the cemetery of Nobles at Tell Basta (Tell Basta Project, 2013).

The site was occupied by the remains bearing the names of Khufu and Khafre (the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), which means that these great kings might have started to build cult temples. The site later reached the peak of its glory during the 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Dynasties. Additionally, the remains of ka temples are located on the main temple's western side. Moreover, a cemetery was discovered at the site that dates back to the Old Kingdom, and an earlier tomb dated back to the Proto-dynastic period (Robinson Ellis, 2005).

### VI- The grand palace of king Amenemhat III

The Egyptian missions discovered the grand palace of Amenemhat III, who worked at the site from 1960 to 1990. The court dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and was built with mud bricks (Fig 7). This palace was the royal residence of King Amenemhat III and the city's governors during that time. The palace was about 16'000 square meters; it included multiple rooms, halls, and a kitchen where some ovens were still. A magnificent limestone lintel door was found; the king was depicted practicing the Hed Sed Festival to renew the royal coronation (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).



**Fig. 7** The grand palace of king Amenemhat III, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Discover Egypt's Monuments retrieved from <https://egy monuments.gov.eg/archaeological-sites/tal-basta/>

Amenemhet III (the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) built a festival hall for his Sed-Festival Jubilee, a chapel dated back to the Middle Kingdom, and a grand palace built from mud-brick dedicated to this king found on the north-eastern corner of the site. This palace included many different halls and rooms decorated with scenes depicting Amenemhet III with Bastet and mud-brick houses dating back to the Graeco-Roman period found next to it (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).

## VII- Tell Basta was one of the most important stations of the Holly Family

The Holly Family stayed at the site of Tell Basta, and Christ asked his mother for the water. According to some historical resources, the idols immediately fell down when the Holly Family came to tell Basta. They had been destroyed as soon as the Child Christ and his mother arrived. They sat down under a leafy tree after they asked the people there for water, but they refused to give them any water. The Child Christ struck the ground, and the water containing a water well (Fig. 8) was springing up (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019).



**Fig. 8** A well in Tell Basta, believed to have been struck by St. Joseph – Egypt Today archive



**Fig. 9** A well in Tell Basta, believed to have been struck by St. Joseph – Egypt Today archive  
Additional reporting by Hanan Fayed <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/9/29649/Ep-2-Holy-Family-in-Egypt%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98cat-house%E2%80%99-met-with>

According to historical studies, the Holy Family ran away from the Roman emperor, and they entered the land of Egypt through Sinai. They stopped by Tell Basta, where they had rested. (Beckearth, J.,1984). However, Labib Habashi discovered the temple and excavated at the site in 1991; he did not find the location of this well. After that, he announced in 1997 that he had found the well that witnessed and documented the arrival of the Holy Family to Tell Basta, and they stayed there. The well was found during the hard work of excavations, and then they found some burnt bricks and pottery pieces on the site's surface (Habashi L,1957).

The well had been initially discovered by finding some burnt remains (Fig. 9), broken pieces, and pottery vessels on the top of the location. Underneath, they found the monumental material forming the construction of the well, which was full of debris and ruins. The red bricks and burnt blocks had constructed the well. The pottery vessels were used to bring water from inside the well. Beside the well were found charred wooden pillars, one of which was displayed in the Museum of Antiquities, and it was about 17 cm thick and 205 cm long. This kind of well, a waterwheel, was widespread in the Roman era (Eggebrecht, A. 1975). The remains of animals' bones and utensils used to grab the water from the well were also found. The water had been used for daily drinking, purification, or blessing. The well is circular; it measures about 62 cm thick with 294 cm diameter from the inside and about 6.6 m deep (Kelley A.1976).

### VIII- The discovered treasures at Tell Basta

The golden vessels, silver pieces, precious jewelry, and other treasures were discovered at Tell Basta in 1906. They were announced by Gaston Maspero (1907), the director of Egyptian Antiquities. He described the site as surrounded by water; the location was full of large granite blocks and broken monuments. The treasures were discovered during the setup of the railway connecting Cairo with different areas passing on Tell Basta. In 1906, they found many precious monumental objects and discovered the remains of ancient houses and burial cemeteries. Therefore, they discovered the treasures at a low ground level while completing the railway project. The catch included different types of silver and gold pieces; some were moved to the Metropolitan Museum in the USA (Fig. 10), some were transported to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Fig. 11), and others to Berlin (Edgar, 1907).

According to the discoveries, the precious pieces dated back to the Second Intermediate and Roman eras. Those golden and silver vessels had been used for various daily purposes; they were used for serving and drinking wine, and those vessels found at Tell Basta match that were used for the wine service, as depicted on the ancient Egyptian temples and tombs (Radwan, 1983). This incredible discovery indicated the importance of Tell Basta's site and how the fine arts recorded on those pieces reflected the cultural, religious, and administrative aspects of the ancient Egyptian society during that period (Christine Lilyquist, 2012).



**Fig. 10** Major Gold and Silver Vessels discovered at Tell Basta. They are now displayed in the Metopolitain Musuem.



**Fig. 11** Golden and Silver Jars discovered at Tell Basta. They are now displayed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

## XI- Conclusion

Tell Basta is one of the most important archaeological sites in Sharkia Governorate. The city is located near the modern town of Zagazig and about 80 km northeast of modern Cairo. The ancient city of Tell Basta was an actual location from the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the end of the Graeco-Roman period (2613 BC-395 AD). In addition to the site of Tell Basta, which has an excellent strategic location in the Eastern Delta, the city occupies the main routes from Memphis to Sinai and Asia. It seems that the city reached the highest of its glory during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty. However, the capital of Egypt was still at Tanis during that period, and it moved later to Tell Basta during the 23<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty. Tell Basta took its name from Per-Baset and the city took its name from its temple. Baset's cult flourished in Tell Basta; she was depicted as a woman with a cat head, and many mummified cats were found there. The site was the capital of the 18<sup>th</sup> province during the new empire (1550-1069 BC), and it also was the capital of ancient Egypt during the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (945-715 BC). However, the city was visited by traders, travelers, historians, and campaigns and by the Holly Family, who were heading to Egypt (Jimmy Dunn, John Warren, 211).

Baset was one of the principal deities in ancient Egypt. However, Baset was identified as a lady with a cat head or a lioness head, indicating the kindness of a lovely cat and the strength of the lion. She was worshipped in Lower Egypt, especially in Tell Basta. She was identified as a lady with a cat-headed holding the ankh, the sign of life and the Was-Scepter, the symbol of solid power. The Cat Baset was sacred in ancient Egypt. The temples had been built for her, and the ancient Egyptians used to present offerings for her, asking for fertility and protection. The Cat Baset was represented as a protective goddess, and she was able to protect the vast lands of the fields and different kinds of crops. She was identified as Ra's daughter and became one of those known as the Eye of Ra. She related to the other deities, such as Hathor, Sekhmet, Wadjet, Tefnut, and Mut. Baset was very closely related to Hathor. She was depicted holding a sistrum (the sacred sign of Hathor). However, Hathor is the Lady of Dandara in Upper Egypt, and Bastet is the Lady of Bubastis in Lower Egypt. It shows that Hathor Upper Egypt and Baset represent Lower Egypt, and Greeks called her the goddess of the moon. However, she was also called the daughter of Ra and the eye of Ra (Jimmy Dunn, John Warren, 211).

## IX- Results

- Baset was one of the most popular goddesses in ancient Egypt. However, Baset was a cat goddess and sometimes represented by a lioness head. It was referred to as the kindness, the lovely cat, and the potent power of the lion.

- Baset was worshipped all over Lower Egypt, especially Tell Basta, where her temple had been built. She was depicted on the Egyptian monuments as a cat, a lady with a cat head, a desert cat, or a lion; she was also depicted holding the sign of ankh representing life, the papyrus indicating Lower Egypt, and sometimes holding the Was-Scepter, the symbol of the strength.
- The cats in ancient Egypt were sacred, and temples were built for them. Whenever they died, they were mummified and buried in a sacred place. The ancient Egyptians used to present the offering to them.
- Baset was represented as a protective goddess who protected the fields and crops against insects and diseases. She was also identified as Ra's daughter and became known as the Eye of Ra.
- Baset related to the other deities such as Hathor, Sekhmet, Wadjet, Tefnut, and Mut. Bastet was very closely related to Hathor. She was depicted holding a sistrum (the sacred sign of Hathor). However, Hathor is the Lady of Dandara in Upper Egypt, and Bastet is the Lady of Bubastis in Lower Egypt.
- Tell Basta had a great location in the Eastern Nile Delta on the Eastern Branch of the River Nile. The site was an essential religious, administrative, and trade center for different ages.
- The city was the capital of Egypt, located on the country's eastern border, where it faced more invaders and conquerors coming through Sinai's Desert to attack the Egyptian Lands. The Egyptians had worked hard to defeat them and protect the Egyptian borders.
- Tell Basta was one of the most important stations for the Holy Family. The site was honored with the arrival of the Virgin Mary and her Child Christ, who came to Egypt, running away from the face of the Roman Emperor.
- The location of Tell Basta needs more attention, studies, and excavations to be developed and opened to people from all over the world. This site must be placed on the local and international tourism map.
- The site needs to be provided with all services to match all visitors' needs. The area is considered an open-air museum, so it needs to be secured by setting up a security system, providing guidance signs and an accessible entrance system, and promoting the area on documented cultural media, local and international newspapers, and meta-social media.
- The location must be supported by advanced innovative technology systems, site management, and intelligent information systems, inviting scholars, researchers, archaeologists, and specialists to visit the area and post about their experiences and feedback.
- The area must be provided with all services and facilities (Hotels, parking and rest areas, shopping centers, and modern transportation). Additionally, cultural programs and tourism activities must be held to inform visitors of the region's cultural heritage and nearby historical locations.
- We do our best to highlight the area's development, support the local society, and invite visitors to our great history and civilization. Additionally, they can visit nearby locations and do some activities, such as watching the environmental landscape, natural life, cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and archeological locations in the region.
- The government has to provide the area with a new museum that includes all modern technologies, construct a round highway to connect the area with the nearby capital locations and support the one-day tours for all travelers who stay in the other locations.
- The region's tourism development is essential to the local community by providing the infrastructure operations (Road Networks, Communication Services, Electricity and water Stations, and other Facilities). It also creates investment and employment opportunities beneficial to the national economy.

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## تل بسطة (المدينة القديمة بوباستيس) دراسة تاريخية وآثارية صبري العزازي

المعهد المصري العالي للسياحة والفنادق - شيراتون

المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>تل بسطة هو واحد من أهم المواقع الأثرية في مصر. كان الموقع حيويًا خلال الفترات التاريخية المختلفة في مصر القديمة. تقع المدينة في محافظة الشرقية في دلتا النيل الشرقية. ومع مرور الوقت، أصبحت المدخل الشرقي لمصر وأصبحت مركزًا دينيًا وتجاريًا وإداريًا هامًا. كانت المدينة مكانًا روحياً حيث كان الناس يزورونها سنويًا لممارسة طقوسهم الدينية. وكان الموقع محطة لتبادل السلع التجارية وتوفير الحملات. يحتوي الموقع على العديد من البقايا الأثرية والأشياء التذكارية التي تعود إلى العصر القديم حتى الفترات اليونانية والرومانية. بلغ الموقع ذروته خلال الأسر (22-24) وأصبح العاصمة السياسية لمصر في تلك الفترة. من أبرز الاكتشافات في تل بسطة هو المعبد الكبير، والمقبرة الملكية، والمباني الفريدة، والتماثيل، وغيرها من الكتل التذكارية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على المواقع الأثرية في الشرقية، وخاصة تل بسطة والمناطق القريبة منها. الموقع يحتاج إلى العديد من الدراسات العلمية والحفريات الإضافية لتطويره. يركز هذا البحث على الأهمية التاريخية والأثرية للمنطقة ليتم إدراجها على خريطة السياحة المصرية وتضمينها في البرامج السياحية المحلية والدولية.</p>	<p><b>الكلمات المفتاحية</b> مصر القديمة؛ المواقع الأثرية؛ الموقع التاريخي؛ تل بسطة؛ السياحة.</p> <p><b>(JAAUTH)</b> المجلد 27، العدد 2، (2024)، ص 22-38.</p>