

Beyond the Naos: A Revisited Naos of Edfu

Abstract:

The present paper aims to revisit the Late Period naos, particularly naos of Edfu. During the 30th Dynasty, King Nectanebo I began a wave of important construction activities throughout Egypt, and later King Nectanebo II completed this effort. Among the monuments constructed were naos, or sacred shrines that housed the cult statue of the local deity during religious festivals. Among the materials used in the construction were red granite, light gray granite, green slate, and black syenite. Wood was also often used as one of the materials, either for the entire naos or for one of its parts. It is notable that the majority of the naos that still exist are those made of stone. Sadly, those made of wood have almost completely vanished. Most previous studies on 30th Dynasty naos have concentrated on those of Lower Egypt, resulting in a lack of in-depth research into their Upper Egyptian contemporaries. In an attempt to remedy this gap, the current study contains an examination of the naos of King Nectanebo II found at Edfu. Considered to be the oldest element in the temple, it occupies the middle part of the sanctuary and provides physical evidence of the orientation of the temple started from the New Kingdom until the collapse of the 30th Dynasty. Texts on the naos reflect the religious role of the naos and mention cult centers. This paper provides a revisit of the Edfu naos to illuminate this type of architecture and its role within Late Period temples, looking particularly at its location within the temple, construction material, architectural design, function, dedication, decorative symbolism, and the religious concepts behind the texts.