The Environment Within:
The Archaeological Context of the Texts from House 3 at Kellis in Egypt’s Dakhleh Oasis

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Amongst the documents retrieved during the excavations in House 3 at Ismant al-Kharab, ancient Kellis, are several that pertain to aspects of garment and textile manufacture. Material remains left behind when the occupants abandoned the house include spinning and weaving implements, unworked warp thread and dyed unspun cotton. This emboldened me to suggest that a woman named Tehat, together with her husband or son, Hatre, conducted a small tailoring business from the house (Bowen 2001; 2002, 97). My assumption was challenged by Lisa Nevett (2011), who questioned whether the find-spot of the texts necessarily indicated that the people named in the documents lived and practised their trade in this particular house. The relationship of documents to occupants of House 3 has also been questioned by Gagos (1999, 757; Nevett 2011, 22), Worp (1995, 52; Nevett 2011, 22) and Gardner (1996, xi; Nevett 2011, 22). In the intervening years since my publications, other texts from House 3 have been published and the objects studied in greater detail. In this contribution, I contextualise the data on which my original assumptions were made and consider the weight of the evidence pointing towards a tailoring business operating from the premises and the likelihood of Tehat and Hatre’s involvement. This entails a discussion of the architecture of the house, the abandonment process, its excavation, the find-spots of the documents relating to the textile industry, their contents and the names of people referenced, in order to determine whether they belonged to the final generation occupying the house; the relevant material remains are also discussed.¹

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

House 3 is situated at the northernmost extent of the 4th century residential area in the south-central part of the village, a region designated Area A (Hope 1997, 5) for excavation purposes. The house is part of a single block, which includes Houses 1 and 2, and the structure to the north of House 3.² The block is surrounded by streets or lanes and open spaces (Hope 1999, 100); each house has a single entranceway that opens onto a street at the south. The houses share a common rear wall that separates them from structures to the north; none of the houses communicates with these structures or with each other (fig. 1).³ Of the three houses, House 3 is the largest and first to be built. It was a single storey structure comprising ten major rooms, nine of which (Rooms 2-10) are accessed from an entrance room in the south (Room 1A), via a north-south corridor (Room 1B), and one that opens off the rear courtyard (Room 11). All rooms are to the east of the corridor. Room 6 is the main internal space off which the other rooms open and Room 7 has a staircase that gave access to the roof. At the rear of the house is a substantial open courtyard, 9 x 8 m, with two ovens for cooking, as well as animal pens and troughs. As the only entrance to the courtyard is from the corridor, animals kept there must have been taken along it.⁴ Each of the rooms, as well as the corridor, was closed off with a wooden door.

As with all of the residential structures at Kellis, House 3 was built of sun-dried mud-brick tempered with straw; the floors were of compacted earth. Most of the rooms, including the entrance room and corridor, were barrel-vaulted; the exceptions are Rooms 6 and 11, which were flat, and Room 7, the staircase. The spaces on either side of the vault in the barrel-vaulted rooms were filled to the top with sand and earth to create a flat floor for the roof. The flat roofs were made from palm beams overlain with ribs from palm branches tied securely to the beams; a layer of thick mud plaster sealed the ribs rendering the roof accessible for use. As with the older houses in use in the Dakhleh villages today, activity took place on the roofs, which were also used for storage.

The light source for the barrel-vaulted rooms was from narrow, angled windows set above the doors in the walls that fronted the internal courtyard, some three metres from the floor (Hope
1991, 41); these also aided ventilation. Remnants of these windows survive in Rooms 2 and 3. Room 4, which is accessed through Room 5, and Room 10, which opened directly into Room 9, must have been extremely dark. A further aid to light and ventilation was provided by open spaces left above the doors (Hope 1991, 41). Internal features included niches, cupboards and shelves built into the walls and these were outlined with a coat of gypsum plaster, presumably so that the residents could see the salient features in the gloom of the oil lamps. In some instances, a strip of gypsum
was also painted longitudinally in the centre of the barrel vaults. Other interior features included palm-rib shelving attached to the walls with wooden beams. These were encountered in Rooms 2 and 3 and were also highlighted with gypsum paint (Hope 1991, 41).

**THE ABANDONMENT OF THE VILLAGE AND THE HOUSES**

Following almost thirty years of excavation at the site, all indication is that Kellis was abandoned during the closing years of the 4th century (Hope 2001). Evidence for this comes from several sources: the latest dated text from the site is a horoscope cast for the year 392 (de Jong/Worp 2001, 212-213, no. 4b), found in a building to the north of the Main Temple (D/8; Hope herein); the latest dated texts from House 3 are circa 389, 386 and 382 (Worp 1995, P.Kell. Gr. I: nos. 26, 45 and 44; Hope 1997, 14; 2001). Numismatic evidence from the site is sparse after the reign of Valentinian I (364-375) and only three specimens of the massive *Salvs Reipublicae* issue, struck between 388 and 394, have been found. This issue is well attested in excavations in neighbouring Kharga Oasis and circulated widely throughout Egypt where it dominates early 5th century hoards (Bowen 2001). Moreover, the ceramic and artefactual assemblage from the site is not indicative of a 5th century date (Hope 1997, 14; 2001).

Houses 1 to 3 were also abandoned towards the end of the 4th century for reasons unknown. Evidence from House 3 suggests that the occupants were having trouble with sand accumulation outside (Hope herein). The entranceway had been raised by about a metre and a semi-circular brick structure was erected in the south street to the east of the doorway in an effort to keep the sand at bay. There is no evidence to indicate whether the three houses were abandoned at the same time or whether the occupants moved out of Houses 1 and 2 before those in House 3. On leaving, the residents removed most of the timber fittings: the doors, door-frames, lintels and thresholds. Timber was removed from all structures that have been excavated at the site, including the churches, which must have been operational until the villagers moved out. On abandoning the houses, the occupants left behind household items and other possessions no longer required, such as pottery, baskets, worn shoes, elements from furniture, brushes and combs as well as documents and personal letters. It cannot be determined how long the process of removing the timber took but it seems unlikely that it was more than a few months at the outside. A *Salvs Reipublicae* type coin found in the floor material of Room 3, and others struck in the 370s-380s retrieved from the floor deposits of Rooms 2 and 8, indicate that there was some activity here in the early 390s (Bowen 1999, 111).

Removal of the timber left the houses exposed to the elements and the rooms appear to have filled quickly; over time, the sand that blew in from the north across the plain further eroded the site deflating the tops of the exposed upper walls (Knudstand/Frey 1999, 191) and the barrel-vaults. This process continues today and we witness the occasional collapse of vaults that have withstood the elements for hundreds of years.

**THE STRATIGRAPHIC SEQUENCE OBSERVED DURING THE EXCAVATION OF HOUSE 3**

House 3 was excavated in its entirety. The depth of preservation ranges from near intact rooms, preserved to three metres on the south (Rooms 2-4), to badly-eroded outer walls in the courtyard on the north, which is exposed to the prevailing winds, and is preserved to around 30-40 cm high. All of the rooms were cleared to the floor level, with tests cut through floors in selective areas. The barrel-vaulted rooms exhibited the same stratigraphic sequence: mud floors covered with a thin powdery deposit in which most of the material remains were found; this was sealed with a deposit of windblown sand, devoid of objects except for potsherds, as was the floor deposit in Room 6. In the corridor at the entrance to Room 6 mud-brick had collapsed onto the windblown-sand deposit and reached almost to floor level. The collapse from the roof in Room 6 was in two phases, separated by sand; these deposits were encountered in the east, along the north wall, and in the centre of the room. The collapse within the lower sand included a few mud-bricks and some palm ribs. In Room 11, which opens off the rear courtyard, there were three distinct phases of roof collapse, separated from and contained within sand deposits. The lowest of these deposits comprised sand and a considerable amount of straw that presumably blew in from the courtyard; this lay directly atop the compact earth floor.

**THE MATERIAL REMAINS**

The quantity of textual and domestic material retrieved from House 3 far exceeds that found in other houses excavated at Ismant al-Kharab and this has caused much speculation, especially in relation to the texts, and whether they all originated from that establishment. Although an abundance of
items was left behind (Hope 1991, 41-42), with the exception of a number of glass beads and a ring with an intaglio bezel, which one assumes had been lost, the remaining finds were mostly worn and of little or no value. The coins were low-denomination bronzes, of the types that are found in most of the 4th century structures excavated at the site. There is no evidence to corroborate suggestions that the house had been used as a storage place for villagers, presumably intending to collect items they wanted to take with them when they moved on (Worp 1995, 52; Gardner 1996, ix; Nevett 2011, 23); there was nothing left worth collecting. Nor is there any reason to suppose that it was used as a refuse dump by others following its abandonment, as suggested by Nevett (2011, 23). Dumping of garbage results in a different depositional pattern, as was noted by Hope (1986, 83) in the west rooms 1 and 2 of the North Structure, which had been used to deposit rubbish; these dumps were mounded, whereas the material left behind in House 3 was horizontal. From all evidence found at the site thus far, House 3 was one of the last structures to be vacated. The most prolific category of object left behind was pottery and around 150 vessels from Room 6 have been restored (Hope 1999, 103, fn.160). This might seem excessive, but ceramics were essential for daily life as they were used for cooking, storage, eating and drinking; they were cheap to produce and it was easier to leave them behind than to carry them away. Many pots were small, and Patten (Hope et al. 1993, 22) noted that several of those found in Room 6 included miniature versions of well-known types of vessels. Large quantities of ceramics were also left behind in the neighbouring House 2 and it is unlikely that they would have been taken into the House 3, down the corridor and placed on the floor of Room 6, just prior to its abandonment; rather, they belonged to the household.

The material suggestive of textile manufacture retrieved from House 3 includes substantial scraps of both natural and dyed unspun wool; most was found in the floor deposits but some was retrieved from rats’ nests. The majority was found in Room 2 in the floor deposits which were sealed by windblown sand. Also found within this room were spindles, spindle whorls and a length of palm rib with regularly-spaced notches, which probably served to hold the warp in place on a loom. Other elements associated with weaving and tailoring retrieved from the house include fragments of weavers’ combs used to beat the weft, a probable shuttle and a wooden needle, complete with knotted yarn. Sections of worked wood left behind could have been from loom frames, as could some of the numerous pegs retrieved, although this is inconclusive. A length of prepared warp, which had been removed from the loom, was found in the floor deposit in Room 5.

*Fig. 2. The upper floor deposit in Room 6, House 3, Ismant al-Kharab (copyright C.A. Hope).*
The Texts and the Identification of Probable Archives

House 3 yielded an exceptional amount of inscribed material mostly written on papyrus but some on wooden boards, two on parchment and 12 are ostraka; it includes official documents, such as deeds, loans, petitions to the praeses of the Thebaid, as well as private letters and religious texts. The language used is Greek and Coptic, whilst some of the religious texts have Syriac glosses (Hope 1991, 42; Worp 1995; Gardner 1996; Gardner et al. 1999). Thus far, 228 texts from the house have been published (Worp 1995; 2004; Gardner 1996; Gardner et al. 1999; 2014); these include both documentary and literary texts.

Several documents were found in association with ceramic vessels in which they were probably stored, and in one instance, in a basket (Hope 1999, 102-104); I argue here that they represent archives. It is likely that the documents were stored within the rooms where they were found, perhaps in the cupboards, or on the roofs and therefore belonged to the occupants of the house but were no longer required. In the course of excavation, papyri that were found together were isolated and allocated a specific designation to aid with reconstruction and study; this comprised the letter P followed by a numeric specific to the group, and later P plus a year reference and number. The following papyri, which include many of the texts relating to weaving, were found in floor material as follows. Deposit P17 from Room 10 fanned out from a large vessel just inside the doorway to Room 9. Deposits P51 and P57, from Room 9, were found at the door leading to Room 10 and are possibly from the same context as P17. I include all three deposits and have given them the designation Archive 1. Two deposits, P52 and P56, were found in Room 9, just east of the doorway to Room 6 and were associated with a large ceramic vessel found nearby. Deposits P68 and P79, on the floor of Room 6 just west of the door into Room 9, could be part of the P52/56 archive, according to the excavator, and are designated Archive 2. The papyri from Room 8, P61, lay just inside the door with a large ceramic keg that had been broken by bricks; the excavator believed that the papyri came from the vessel as did deposits P63 and P65, also from this room; they form Archive 3. P.Kell. Copt. 78 and 79, from Room 11, were found together with broken pots amongst roof collapse, where the pots were presumably stored. They were fragmented but a piece from each of the letters was found within the same deposit, P92.22. It is impossible to determine whether they derived from the same pot but the contents of the two letters are closely related; they reference the same people, are addressed to the same recipient from the same sender and so for practical purposes, I refer to them here as Archive 4. Because of the quantity of papyri and other material retrieved from Room 6 (fig. 2) that could not be left exposed to the elements once excavated, together with the wind activity on the day the deposits were found and the inevitable movement of underlying papyrus fragments during the course of excavation (Hope 1999, 98), it is impossible to determine whether any further deposits were associated with specific vessels and therefore likely to represent archives.

Documents Relating to the Textile Industry

Seventeen documents in Coptic and five in Greek relate to aspects of textile production. Of these, three are written on wooden boards (P.Kell. Copt. 46, 47 and 48). The documents written on papyri were found in Rooms 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Four are from Archive 1, seven from Archive 2, one is from Archive 3 and two are from Archive 4. They are given in tabular form for convenience in table 1. The dates of the relevant Coptic texts can be determined, it should be possible to establish whether they relate to the last occupants of the house. The Coptic documents can only be dated by association with dated Greek texts and then only by internal reference. This is complicated by

Table 1. Identifiable archives retrieved from Rooms 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11, House 3, Ismant al-Kharab.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive</th>
<th>P numbers.</th>
<th>P.Kell Copt./Gr. numbers.</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17, 51, 57</td>
<td>Copt. 18, 58, 96, Greek 71.</td>
<td>Adjoining doorway area of Rooms 9 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>52, 56, 68, 71, 81, 82</td>
<td>Copt. 33, 75, 76, 81, 82 103, 108.</td>
<td>Adjoining doorway region of Rooms 6 and 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61, 63, 65</td>
<td>Copt. 111, 68</td>
<td>Room 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>92, 19, 22, 35</td>
<td>Copt. 78, 79</td>
<td>Room 11, roof collapse with broken pots.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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the use of bilingual names adopted by the residents of Kellis: Greek names on Greek texts and Egyptian/Christian for the Coptic texts. They did, however, address their Coptic letters in Greek, a few with the Greek form of the writer’s name, which is of some assistance, and some personal names are used in both Greek and Coptic documents. Worp (1995, 51) was able to produce a tentative family tree of those people referred to in the Greek documents. Gardner et al. (2014), using that family tree, have identified the following people mentioned in the Coptic letters, who link with the third generation referenced in the Greek texts. These include Pekysis/Pegosh, son of Psais, who is included in P.Kell. Gr. 44, a loan of money dated to 382 and Kapiton, included in P.Kell. Gr. 45, another loan of money, dated 386. Some of the other people who can be related to this late 4th century generation, by association with the Pegosh and Kapiton documents, are Andreas, Antinou, Apolloni, Charis, Heni, Hor, Horos, Lammon, Louishai aka Theognostos, Maria, Pamour, Pane, Pannute, Partheni, Philemon, Psais/Pshai, Shai, Tagoshe, and Tiberios. The list is selective and I have omitted some of the more common names that may relate to other people.

Eight Coptic letters that include aspects of weaving/tailoring relate to this generation: P.Kell. Copt. 33, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81 82 and 103. One is from Archive 1, six from Archive 2, one from Archive 3 and two from Archive 4. A significant number of documents found in floor deposits in Room 6 can also be associated with this generation and are probably from archives. These include P.Kell. Copt. 71, which includes four of the names referenced in P.Kell. Copt. 82: Andreas, Maria, Pamour and Partheni; the fragmentary P.Kell. Copt. 44 has one shared name with P.Kell. Copt. 82, Heni, and thus provides another link as do P.Kell. Copt. 19, 20, 24, 25, 26 and 68, all addressed to Maria in Kellis, and which include references to many of those listed below as well as Pegosh/Pekysis, brother of Pamour.

I have identified 53 Coptic and seven Greek documents in which the better-known names of the final generation represented in the House 3 texts appear. These are given in tabular form in table 2, together with the location in which the documents were found. Again, I have eliminated such names as Hor, Horos and Pshai, which are common within the Kellis texts and could refer to more than one person. There are probably more documents which reference these members of the last generation but several texts are fragmentary and names are not preserved. The people represented in the documents did not all live in Kellis; many were located in the Nile Valley or in neighbouring Kharga Oasis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of references</th>
<th>P.Kell. Copt. and Greek numbers</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andreas</td>
<td>20 Copt; 2 Greek</td>
<td>12, 19, 25, 26, 37, 59, 65, 71, 73, 78, 79, 84, 86, 88, 96, 104, 107, 111, 115. Greek: 45, 71.</td>
<td>5 x Archive 1; 2 x Archive 2; 1 x Archive 4; 7 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 2.3; 1 x Room 8 floor; 1 x surface. 1 House 2, Room 2.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charis</td>
<td>12 Copt</td>
<td>19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 64, 66, 67, 70, 76, 102, 105.</td>
<td>2 x Archive 1; 1 x Archive 2; 1 x Room 9, floor; 6 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 3, floor; 1 x surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapiton</td>
<td>11 Copt; 2 Greek</td>
<td>65, 70, 72, 75, 77, 81, 82, 86, 88, 108, 109, 110, 116. Greek: 45, 76.</td>
<td>2 x Archive; 1; 4 x Archive 2; 6 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 9, floor; 1 x Room 3, floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamour</td>
<td>20 Copt; 3 Greek</td>
<td>22, 24, 25, 26, 44, 64, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 77, 80, 82, 110, 120. Greek: 30, 33, 72.</td>
<td>2 x Archive 1; 13 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 3, floor; 1 x Room 9, floor; 1 x Room 8, floor; 1 x Room 11, collapse; 1 x surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partheni</td>
<td>9 Copt</td>
<td>19, 25, 47, 64, 70, 71, 75, 76, 95, 102, 117.</td>
<td>2 x Archive 1; 2 x Archive 2; 5 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 3, floor; 1 x surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pegosh/Pekysis</td>
<td>25 Copt; 3 Greek</td>
<td>25, 26, 27, 65, 66, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 86, 103, 108, 109, 110. Greek: 30, 33, 72.</td>
<td>4 x Archive 1; 5 x Archive 2; 2 x Archive 4; 9 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 8, floor; 1 x Room 3, floor; 2 x Room 9, floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philammon</td>
<td>18 Copt</td>
<td>19, 25, 47, 64, 65, 66, 67, 70, 73, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 88, 89, 108, 114.</td>
<td>2 x Archive 1; 3 x Archive 2; 2 x Archive 4; 7 x Room 6 floor; 2 x Room 9, floor; 2 x Room 3, floor. 1 x surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theognostos</td>
<td>14 Copt; 3 Greek</td>
<td>65, 72, 73, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 95. Greek: 67, 71, 72.</td>
<td>5 x Archive 1; 2 x Archive 2; 2 x Archive 4; 3 x Room 6 floor; 1 x Room 9, floor; 1 wooden board, surface.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Contents of the Documents

To demonstrate the likelihood of textile manufacturing/tailoring being conducted from House 3, I present relevant sections of the textual evidence relating to that business, together with the persons mentioned within those documents. This should assist in determining the relationship between the letters and confirm that one is dealing with archives. These are listed according to the archives from which they derive.


P.Kell. Copt. 18 is a business letter to Tahat and Hatre from Horion and is devoted entirely to tailoring. As to the fabric that I sent by way of Lautine, I wrote to you: Make it into a kolobion ... there is no need to make a sticharion. The variegated cloth: Tailor it for a coat. Provide warp for it. Here, I have found another kolobion: Take it and see whether it is possible to dye it. ... also take this small portion of white wool ... 5 staters there and you make the weft for me ... of a cloak for him. Send it and make them weave a cloak for the double-fringed own.

Other names included in this letter are Ambrosios, Lautine and Sa-ren.

P.Kell. Copt. 58, written in the same hand as P.Kell. Copt. 18, is another business letter concerning textiles. The author is not named but Gardner et al. (2014, 23) assume it to be Horion and the addressee Tahat. It reads:

... a good cloak ... I also ask you ..., to see whether you can find two good (and) fine fabrics. See the sample I sent you or else, can you find wool of their colour and cause it to be spun very fine ... also would you search after wool at this place? These fabrics and the cloths belong to our brother Saren ... he wants the fabrics to be made into jerkins ... to cut them and their cloak ... two mna for (their) cloak one mna ... staters for the large warp and this cloak ... cut one from the ... the weaving wage so that ... spin for me with a distaff.

Others referenced are Herakles, Lauti (=Lautine?), Saren, Talaphanti, Tharre.

P.Kell. Gr. 71, from Pamouris to Psais. Pamouris writes:

Please send me 10 loom weights from Kame and give them ... In the letter Pamouris is travelling with Pekysis; he greets Theognostos (aka Louishai) and his son Andreas, and Kapiton the son of Tryphanes, Maria and 'little Tsemmpnoutes'; Kame, Psais, Philamon are also mentioned.

P.Kell. Copt. 96 is extremely fragmented but the text includes:

Tagoshe ... two sticharia ... cut them ... send ... Take 30 mna of wool ... from Andreas. I have cleared the freight charge ... Other names are Andreas, Pine, Pshai and Tagoshe.

Archive 2: P.Kell. Copt. 33, 75, 76, 103 and 108, with possible 44, 81 and 82.

P.Kell. Copt. 33 is fragmentary and preserves no sender’s or recipient’s names but reads:

... set right for us the warp to the mat ... hand it to Heni .... Send to me, and I will come (and) she can weave it.

Others named are Pshenmpnoute and Phil [ ...]

In P.Kell. Copt. 75, Pegosh (aka Pekusis) requests Partheni, perhaps his wife, to take six mna of wool and sixteen coils. Take them from Pane, cut it for a good sticharion, and send it to me ... The small quantity of wool that I sent you. Cut it for a good sticharion and send it ...

Other names included in this letter are Kapitou, Pamour, Pane and Tagoshe.

In P.Kell. Copt. 76, also sent by Pegosh to Partheni, he instructs her to: ... give it to Heni to cut and send it ... pay her ...

The letter also names Chanes, Hor, Maria, Pamour, Polon and Tiberi [os].

P.Kell. Copt. 103 is a letter addressed to Pegosh, son of Psai, concerning the delivery of dye and spun yarn. The unnamed sender writes to Pegosh:

They have brought me the other mna of dye (made from) antimony ... I have put it aside to be spun here ... You can cut cushions until they bring it ... You can cut them for me by hand ... Just do not appoint them to set up (the loom) until I get them to spin it and send it to you. You can cut them for me by hand ...

Other names referenced in this letter are Lo and Pshai.

P.Kell. Copt. 108, from Pshai to Pegosh

Lo says, I beg you ... Let him send me a small portion of dye.

Other names here are Hapia, Kapidon (Kapiton), Pegosh, Philamon and Pshai.

The other documents that have been assigned tentatively to this archive are: P.Kell. Copt. 44, a business account relating almost entirely to textile production and tailoring, complete with wages paid. The sender is not named but Gardner et al (1999, 257) suggest tentatively that it may be Tahat.

I have made 5 mna of wool. I charge 1200 talents ... You have cut a cowl for Kame: Heni spent three days, Kame spent three, while they were weaving ... For my part: I gave you a share of the warp (and) made the wool for the blanket ... I have found 3 mna and a half for the wool, which was given to us for the cell of Amou. Five minus (a) share for the wool of the sticharia. What is bad, we have left for the blanket. I have made 5 mna ready: 3 mna of weft, 2[mna of warp ... at] 400 talents to the mna of weft, to be fulled, to be worked, (and) to be spun, (and) 600 for the mna of warp ... so that they make 2400 Their weaving wage is 1616 nummi.

Other names included in this document are Joubei (deceased), Kouria, Pamour son of Belles, Pion, Shai son of Mersh, Tapshai and Theodora.
The three wooden boards recovered from Rooms 3 and 6, P.Kell. Copt. 46, 47 and 48 are relevant to the discussion and the appropriate section of the texts is presented here.

P.Kell. Copt. 46, found on the floor of Room 6:
... I have cut for him a garment ... I charge 13 maje as my wages ... Father Pamour ... I have 10 (maje) from him for a cowl ... Bes ... I have 6 from him for the matter of a maphorion, for which I have bought the cloth (and) cut it (out). The man whom I gave a cowl; 2 maje are what he gave me. Remainder: another 8. The two other coeils, which I gave for ... I have 10 maje from him for a cowl for Pshe.

Other names are Ammon, Pamour, Pshe, Shai son of Mersh, Bes, Shiham.

P.Kell. Copt. 47, from the floor in Room 3:
I have brought a centenarium and a half of wool, and 6 mna of dyed wool, and 10 mna of dye, and 3 mna of warp, in respect of weft, for Shai ... the weft for a head-scarf. If he causes them to bring the warp to you, cut it (the head-scarf) and sell it for a chous of oil ... Mother Partheni has 2500 talents from me ...

Other names include: Gena son of Ouonsis, Kale, Loutou, Pabok, Partheni, Paulos, Shaei and Tamouenia.

P.Kell. Copt. 48, floor of Room 6:
... on the day for the wool of Shai ... There are 2 mna there ... They must be fulled and moistened for Ouait ... mna ... to full it and to moisten it ... because these are poor wools ... There are 3 mna there and 10 for the head-scarf ... I have also cut it (out). It is I who have given the weaving wage for the other 3 ... Count 3 days of weaving on her (?) to 1. Then 13 days apart from the day of preparation, which I spent at thread. We shall make 800 for the weaving wage for these 13 days ... Also the wool wage on the day that Father Shai gave his ... he paid wages ... A warp, you have spun it ... I, myself, have spun the weft ...

This text includes the names Lo Herakles, Shai and Shemnoute.

Wooden Boards from Room 6

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Other names are Ammon, Pamour, Pshe, Shai son of Mersh, Bes, Shiham.

P.Kell. Copt. 47, from the floor in Room 3:
I have brought a centenarium and a half of wool, and 6 mna of dyed wool, and 10 mna of dye, and 3 mna of warp, in respect of weft, for Shai ... the weft for a head-scarf. If he causes them to bring the warp to you, cut it (the head-scarf) and sell it for a chous of oil ... Mother Partheni has 2500 talents from me ...

Other names include: Gena son of Ouonsis, Kale, Loutou, Pabok, Partheni, Paulos, Shaei and Tamouenia.

P.Kell. Copt. 48, floor of Room 6:
... on the day for the wool of Shai ... There are 2 mna there ... They must be fulled and moistened for Ouait ... mna ... to full it and to moisten it ... because these are poor wools ... There are 3 mna there and 10 for the head-scarf ... I have also cut it (out). It is I who have given the weaving wage for the other 3 ... Count 3 days of weaving on her (?) to 1. Then 13 days apart from the day of preparation, which I spent at thread. We shall make 800 for the weaving wage for these 13 days ... Also the wool wage on the day that Father Shai gave his ... he paid wages ... A warp, you have spun it ... I, myself, have spun the weft ...

This text includes the names Lo Herakles, Shai and Shemnoute.

Relationship Between the Archives

If the names of those people referred to in the abovementioned documents appear in the four archives, then a relationship between the archives can be established. It should also show that the archives were associated with the residents of the house during its final stage of occupation. It then gives added weight to the argument that the archives derived from the house. Each name is listed in table 3 according to the archive/s in which it appears. The numeral in brackets behind the name indicates the number of documents in which reference to the person is made.
The name Pshai appears in all four archives but this is a common name and they may not all represent the same man. Andreas and Tagoshe are less common and each appears in three of the archives. Pegosh/Pekusis, who is also known in three of the four archives, is identified by Worp (1995, 51; P.Kell. Gr. 44, 72 and 76) as a member of the last generation, as is Kapiton, who may have married into the Pamour/Pegosh family (Worp 1995, 51; P.Kell. Gr. 45, 76). All of these Greek documents were found in the floor material in Room 6.

Of other people whose names are included in these letters, Heni is known to be a weaver. In a business account for weaving and tailoring expenses found in Room 6, she is named alongside Kame, another weaver:

You have cut a cowl for Kame: Heni spent three days, Kame spent three, while they were weaving (P.Kell. Copt. 44). Kame is referenced in P.Kell. Copt. 19 alongside Charis and Partheni, which confirms that these weavers belong to the last generation.

TehAT, hATre And The lAsT generATion

Tehat is known only from three documents (P.Kell. Copt. 18, 43 and 51) and one (P.Kell. Copt. 50) by inference (Gardner el al. 1999, 46). Her name is noticeably absent from documents attributed to the last generation but she can be linked to it through Hatre, who is included in six documents, two with Tehat (P.Kell. Copt. 18 and 50); the remaining four are P.Kell. Copt. 17, 24, 25 and 26. The people included with Hatre in P.Kell. Copt. 25 and 26, include Andreas, Charis, Maria, Pakosh/Pegosh, Pamour, Partheni and Philammon. Horion, the author of the letters to Tehat and Hatre, can also be linked to this generation.

**The Weaving/Tailoring Premises**

Spinning and weaving were household occupations in antiquity and women are thought to have woven everyday garments for the families; consequently, the houses must have been equipped to accommodate such labour. The documents from House 3 indicate that the authors and the recipients were members of the closely-knit Manichaean faith, several of whom were in the Nile Valley, Kharga Oasis or elsewhere in Dakhleh, but the clothes they requested were of everyday wear and could easily have been made in the house. The garments ordered were mainly *sticharia*, *kolobia* and cowls; other products include blankets, made from inferior wool, and cushions. *Sticharia* are tunics woven in one piece, sideways, and require a loom that spans around 2.5 metres; *kolobia* were also tunics but were made in separate pieces, joined at the shoulders, and require a loom half the size of that for *sticharia* (Carroll 1986, 38). *Kolobia* were standard wear at the time.

Egyptian looms of the Roman Period were vertical two-beam types (Carroll 1986, 34). They consisted of an upright wooden frame approximately 1.5 metres wide. Close examination of the weave of a fragment of textile found at Ismant al-Kharab, indicates that it was made on a two-beam vertical loom and these were presumably in use in the village. The wooden elements found within House 3 are consistent with this type. Upright looms are portable and can either be attached to

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### Table 3. Names of those from the last generation referred to in the documents from House 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Archives in which the names appear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andreas</td>
<td>1, 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hor</td>
<td>2 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapiton/Kapidon/Kapidou</td>
<td>2 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louishai/Theognostos</td>
<td>2 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pegosh/Pekusis</td>
<td>2, 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shai</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philammon</td>
<td>2 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagoshe</td>
<td>1, 2, and 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. People known from multiple archives from House 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Archives in which the names appear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Shai</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Philammon</td>
<td>2 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagoshe</td>
<td>1, 2, and 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a base or suspended from a roof beam, with the latter, the tension maintained by pegs driven in to the ground (Carroll 1986, 17); these can be removed when not in use. Cushions and head-scarfs would be made on small portable looms, possibly of the horizontal type. There is ample room within House 3 for such looms to have been used.

Concluding Remarks

Nevett’s (2011) argument that the documents did not necessarily belong to the occupants of House 3 was based, in part, upon the comments made by the editors of those texts, Worp and Gardner. Worp (1995, 52), who noted that some of the people recorded in the documents could not obviously be slotted within the tentative family tree, speculated that some documents could have ‘… blown into House 3 … after it was deserted’ or that the house was ‘… used as a kind of ‘storage place’ when people made preparations to move from Kellis …’. Gardner (1996, ix), in his introduction to Kellis Literary Texts, expressed similar reservations, based upon the quantity of textual material retrieved from the house; he reiterated Worp’s proposal stating ‘… it may be that the material had been amassed or stored there. The reasons for such can only be speculative …’. He did, however, publish Hope’s caution: ‘We do not have a good idea just how much the residents would have owned, and without a detailed comparative study then I would avoid assuming that the contents of House 3 could not have belonged to its owners only (private communication 3/8/95)’ (Gardner 1996, ix, footnote 15).

One hundred and seventy documents written on papyrus have now been published from House 3: 69 in Greek and 101 in Coptic. Of these, 130 were retrieved from material deposited immediately above the floor or on the floor itself. These were found either within a single context or from deposits that fanned out in doorways of adjoining rooms; many are reconstructed from numerous fragments. Seventeen documents were found in rubble collapse, ten in sand and only 13 are made up of fragments found in rooms that are either not connected or from variant deposits within adjoining rooms. Most important, however, is the fact that all documents, including the various fragments of such, derive from the house itself. This negates Worp’s (1995, 52) argument of windblown papyri.

Nine of the 17 documents found in rubble are from the roof collapse in Room 11 and some may well be associated with pots that fell with the roof (see above). Those written in Coptic include religious texts and private letters that refer to the same people as encountered in other documents from the house, while those written in Greek are mostly amulets. The remaining eight are from the collapse in the doorway between Rooms 1 and 6 and other collapse in Room 6. Four are Coptic letters with known names of the Manichaean community, two are religious texts and the remaining two are a contract and receipt written in Greek. The same scenario applies to six of the ten documents retrieved from low in the sand deposits: names include Andreas, Charis, Loutou, Maria, Pamour, Parthene, Pegosh, Philammon, Ploutogenes, Pshai, Tagosh, Tapsais and Tehat. The remaining four are Greek administrative texts.

Of the thirteen documents that are made up of fragments found in non-connecting rooms, or at various depths within the sand or rubble of adjoining rooms, nine comprise fragments retrieved primarily from floors but with one or two scraps found in sand deposits. The remaining four include fragments from non-connecting rooms as follows: Rooms 9, 1 and 11 (P.Kell. Copt. 31), Rooms 6 and 11 (P.Kell. Gr. 26), Rooms 6 and 1 (P.Kell. Gr. 27) and Rooms 10 and 6 (P.Kell. Gr. 33). In P.Kell. Gr. 26, Worp (1995, 77) notes that the relationship of each fragment to the other is uncertain, and they may not represent the same document. Most fragments from P.Kell Gr. 27 were retrieved from the floor of Room 6 with two fragments from the sand and collapse in Room 1A, the entrance hall; P.Kell. Gr. 33 is largely from the floor in Room 10 but with one fragment from sand in Room 6, and P.Kell. Copt. 31 derives mostly from the papyrus deposit in the doorway between Rooms 9 and 10, with one fragment from the sand in Room 11. The movement of fragments can be explained by human agency. The sand fill, which extended to the floors in Rooms 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10, was removed via Rooms 6 and 1, the only means of exit from these central rooms. This must have resulted in disturbance of the material beneath and small papyrus fragments could easily have been dispersed during this process. As noted in the four documents listed above, the smaller pieces were found in sand, which could easily have been blown around during excavation. One can only reiterate the conclusion arrived at by Hope (1999, 109) when considering the same issue: ‘The small number of such dispersal pattern highlights the regularity attested by the vast majority’. The statistics need no interpretation but speak for themselves; the documents found in House 3 belonged to the occupants.
NOTES

1 Much of the information is taken from the field note books and I am grateful to Colin Hope for allowing me access to these. I was responsible for recording the textiles and worked wood and therefore the information for these categories is taken from my own notes. A study of the textiles and textile manufacture at Ismant al-Kharab is currently being undertaken by Rosanne Livingstone for my PhD dissertation; I am indebted to her for the clarification of technical terms used for clothing in Roman Egypt. I was fortunate enough to have access to Iain Gardiner, Anthony Alcock and Wolf-Peter Funk’s unpublished Coptic documents, which was invaluable in preparing this paper; my sincere thanks to all. Finally, as I was present on site during the excavation of House 3 and have returned to it on a regular basis since that time, certain comments relate to personal observation. I am aware of the care taken by the excavator, Kevin Hicks, who worked under difficult conditions, especially during the excavation of the floor deposits in Room 6.

2 House 3 and the structures in Area A are described by Hope elsewhere in this volume, but a brief overview is given here to support my argument.

3 In preliminary reports published prior to the completion of the excavation of House 3, Hope (1988, 167; 1991, 41) reported that this house had a second entrance to the north that opened into what appeared to be a vacant enclosure. This proved to be incorrect; there is no rear entrance to this structure.

4 The same scenario was observed in the annex to the West Church, where the internal courtyard was used for stabling. Access to this courtyard was through another room to the south-west. Imprints of donkey hooves on the floor of the inner courtyard indicate the presence of these animals.

5 The architecture of the old mud-brick houses still in use in Dakhleh resembles that of the houses at Ismant al-Kharab in that some of the rooms are accessed through adjoining rooms and are windowless. In some instances a small, narrow opening is set high in the exterior wall to aid ventilation. Prior to the installation of electricity, the rooms were adequately lit by candles.

6 One assumes that the removal of timber fittings when structures were abandoned was standard practice in an area where such resources were scarce. The same process is encountered in buildings at Ismant al-Kharab that were abandoned in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Timber fittings were also removed from structures at Amhida, in western Dakhleh, a contemporary site that is currently being excavated under the direction of Roger Bagnall, New York University.

7 The same sequence was observed in Houses 1 and 2 (Hope 1999, 101), although House 2 had more roof collapse near the floor than the others.

8 For a discussion of the stratigraphy, see Hope (1999, 101 and table 1).

9 See Hope (1999, 102-106) for the recording system he adopted for the papyrus deposits as well as a full account of their distribution and interconnections.

10 See Hope (1999, 102-104 and tables 2-5) for the distribution of the papyri.

11 Two Greek documents relate to an earlier period than that under consideration here and are eliminated from this study.

12 Fragments from the document P.Kell Gr. 45 were from Archive 2.

13 Pekysis is also known as Pekusis, Pegosh, Pagosh and Pegos. Kapiton is also written Kapidon and Kapitou (Gardner et al. 1999).

14 I am indebted to Rosanne Livingstone for this information.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hope C.A. 1988, Three seasons of excavation at Ismant el-Gharab in Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt, Mediterranean Archaeology 1, 160-178.


