



INNOVATIONS IN THE TOMB OF KHNUM-HOTEP II AT BENI HASSAN



FIG. 1: TOMB OF KHNUM-HOTEP II, EAST WALL, CLAPNET SCENE (Photo: Effy Alexakis)

Beni Hassan, arguably the most important site of the Middle Kingdom, includes some of the most beautifully decorated tombs of all periods of Egyptian history. Despite some deterioration in the colours of the scenes and inscriptions found in these tombs, enough has survived to show the quality of their decoration. The site was originally recorded and published by Newberry at the end of the nineteenth century and although some scholars have since published studies on the site, Newberry's record remains the most complete and is still used. The Australian Centre for Egyptology is currently undertaking a major project of re-recording the tombs at Beni Hassan and publishing them, according to modern standards, in coloured photographs as well as line drawings and with commentary.

It was decided to start the project by recording the tomb of Khnum-hotep II, one of the most completely decorated and well preserved tombs on the mountain. In addition, Khnum-hotep II has left us an excellent autobiography in which he informs us of his background and how he was appointed by Amenemhat II to the position of hereditary prince and governor of the Eastern Desert at Menat-Khufu. Interestingly he states that this was an inheritance from his maternal grandfather who received the same position from Amenemhat I.

Khnum-hotep II gives us a great deal of information on the system of succession to offices at the time and tells us how his family arranged marriage alliances with the governors of the neighbouring provinces, thus establishing a formidable power base in Middle Egypt, the most fertile and richest part of the country. However, this rising power was apparently not tolerated by the king and the central government, and

soon after, the authority this family enjoyed appears to have come to an abrupt end. It might not have been a coincidence that the magnificent two tombs, that of Khnum-hotep II and the adjacent one of Amenemhat, are the last richly decorated tombs on the mountain.

Of particular interest in the tomb of Khnum-hotep II is the representation of Asiatic settlers, men, women and children arriving at Beni Hassan and presenting their tribute to Khnum-hotep II as if he were a king. An examination of the figures of the Asiatics clearly shows them with lighter coloured skin and eyes and a different hairstyle. Their dress is very colourful, unlike that of Egyptians which is predominantly white. A quick examination of the scenes in this tomb and others instantly shows a different style of provincial management from that of the Old Kingdom. In the earlier period the governor of a province was a mere representative of the central authority and his responsibilities seem to have focussed on production of livestock and agricultural produce, which is emphasised in the scenes. But in the Middle Kingdom one gets the impression that the governor considered his province almost as his private property and responsibility, emphasising the general well-being of the people in his care. Thus we see more scenes of people engaged in sports, games and entertainments, but also depictions of private armies.

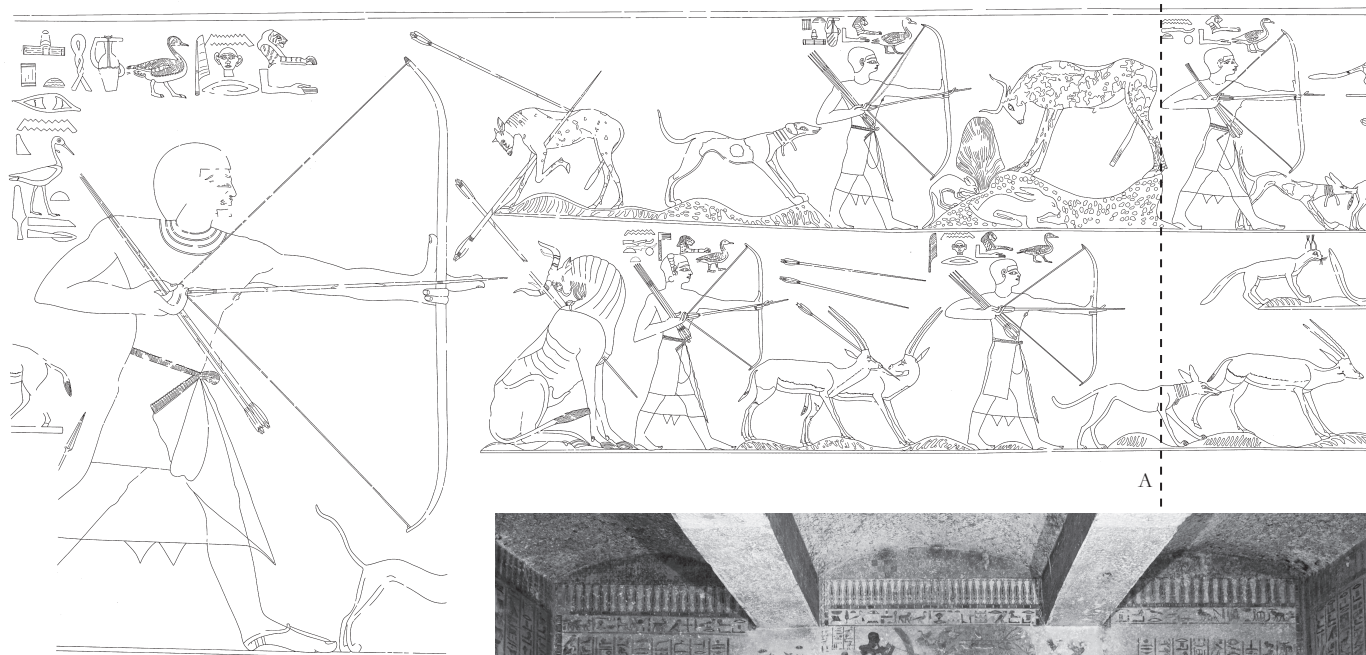
While the Old Kingdom themes of spear fishing and fowling with a throw stick continued in the Middle Kingdom at Beni Hassan (Fig. 3), here for the first time we see the tomb owner and his family hunting in the desert with bow and arrow (Fig. 2), a weapon that seems to have been a prerogative of the king in the Old Kingdom. Paradoxically, we also see the tomb owner in the marshland pulling on the rope that closed the clapnet to trap birds (Fig. 1), a task performed by professional fowlers in the Old Kingdom.

It is hoped that a re-recording of the Middle Kingdom tombs at both Beni Hassan and Meir by the Australian Centre for Egyptology will open new doors into the study of the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians and allow us to compare the development of these traditions during the two great periods of the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

Naguib Kanawati

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ALICE MCCLYMONT



FIG. 3: TOMB OF KHNUM-HOTEP II, EAST WALL, FISHING AND FOWLING (Photo: Effie Alexakis)

Meet Alice McClymont

- 2011 – Completed Bachelor of Ancient History (Honours) First Class
- 2012 – First year PhD candidate
- Thesis Title: *The Classification and Interpretation of Inscriptional and Pictorial Erasures in the Tombs of the Theban Necropolis*

Like many before me, my passion for Egyptology began at an early age, looking at picture books on Tutankhamun and watching Asterix and Cleopatra, but it wasn't until researching undergraduate degrees at Macquarie University that I discovered my dream of working in the field could perhaps become a reality.

I commenced the Bachelor of Ancient History (Hons) in 2008, initially with an open mind about which ancient culture I wanted to focus on. But, it was as if a light-switch went on in my brain one day in my second semester, while researching Middle Kingdom tombs, which said that Egyptology was for me and I haven't looked back since!

During my first years of undergraduate study, I tried to soak in as much as I could – attending ACE conferences, taking archaeological drawing courses, enrolling in the Macquarie Ancient Languages School (MALS) – and by the end of my third year I was thrilled to be presented with several ACE and Departmental awards. But the cherry on the cake was being accepted to accompany Assoc. Prof. Boyo Ockinga and Dr. Susanne Binder for their 2010-2011 season at Dra Abu el-Naga. Spending six weeks upon that mountain not only gave me valuable practical and

cultural experience, but also helped me to define my research interests just in time for my Honours year. Drawing on my love of Egyptian religion and funerary beliefs, my thesis explored the representation and role of the goddess Hathor in New Kingdom Theban tombs.

But to prevent being buried in my own 'tomb' of books during this challenging (but rewarding) year, I balanced my studies by taking up a volunteering position in the ACE office, joining Tele's Angels (Telemachus Ancient History Mentor Program) and acting as student co-ordinator for the inaugural Young Egyptology Forum (YEF). I was also fortunate to present a paper at this event, with fellow Ancient History student Evan Jewell, examining bilingualism in Ptolemaic decrees.

At the end of 2011, I was awarded First Class Honours, as well as an Australian Postgraduate Award for PhD candidature, which I officially commenced on 1st April 2012 (April Fool's Day – just to lighten the mood!). This time around, my thesis will look at classifying and interpreting the erasure of text and image within New Kingdom Theban tombs, again, developing from my interest in funerary beliefs and the Egyptian tomb, but also, more broadly, the use of and attitude towards 'sacred space'.

While I am eager to begin this next chapter in my own studies, I am also excited to become more involved in the Egyptological community in Australia, and making any contribution I can. In 2012, I can look forward to being co-coordinator of Tele's Angels, post-graduate student co-ordinator of YEF 2012 and, of course, enjoying another wonderful year in the ACE office!

I have a long road ahead of me, and I anticipate many bumps along the way, but it is made all the easier by doing what I love, and having the support of those who share my passion.

Alice McClymont

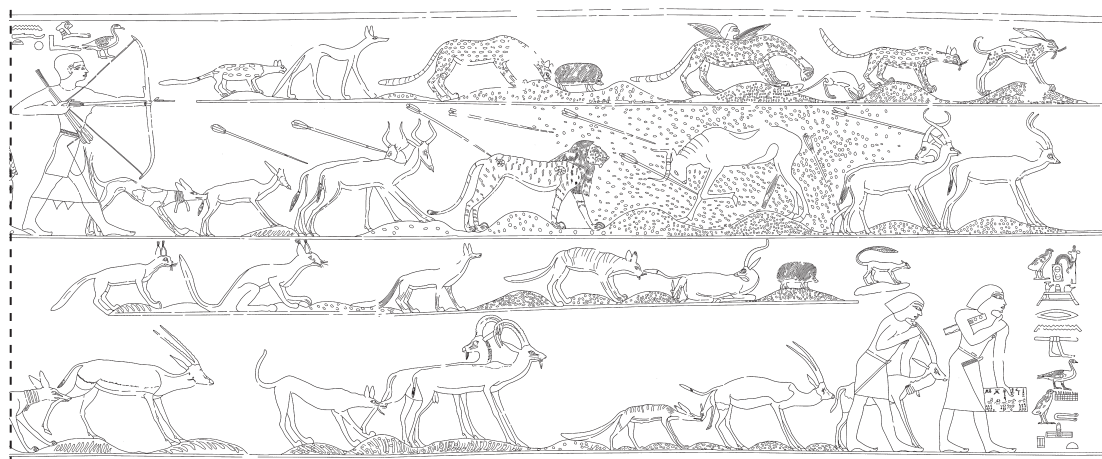


FIG. 2:
TOMB OF KHNUM-HOTEP II,
NORTH WALL, DESERT HUNT

B

Meet Melanie Pitkin

- 2002 – Commenced Bachelor of Ancient History degree at Macquarie
- 2005 – Student member, Saqqara and Deir el-Gebrawi excavations; appointed Research Assistant, Australian Centre for Egyptology
- 2006 – Graduated with Honours, completed internship in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum, commenced full-time employment at Powerhouse Museum
- 2008 – Graduated with a Masters of Museum Studies (Merit) from the University of Sydney; commenced PhD in Egyptology (part-time) studying false doors and funerary stelae of the First Intermediate Period under the supervision of Professor Naguib Kanawati and Dr Nigel Strudwick, Cambridge
- 2009 – Presented a paper on the representation of First Intermediate Period history in UK Museums at the First Australasian Conference of Young Egyptologists in Melbourne
- 2010 – Invited to lead tour groups to Egypt for Alumni Travel, Sydney and led the first tour in 2012
- 2012 – Joining the British Mission to Tell el-Amarna as an archaeological assistant in September.

For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to study Egyptology and work in a museum. Growing up, my Dad (who is English), relished sharing his interests in history with me and I can vividly recall my first overseas trip to England when I was 8 years old. We spent 2 months visiting every castle, English Heritage and National Trust site and museum possible. Even though we bypassed the British Museum because it was supposedly “full of old, dead stuff!”, I knew I would return and that I would make history and archaeology my career.

It helped having very supportive Ancient History teachers at High School and I will never forget being a nervous 16 year old ringing up Prof. Kanawati to interview him for an assignment. That conversation put a stop to any hesitations I might have had about what becomes of an Egyptology graduate in Australia - I was passionate, I felt Egypt was in my veins and if I worked hard enough, things would fall into place. I like to think that more than 10 years on, they have (well, they are on the right track anyway!).

During my undergraduate and honours year I focused predominantly on late Old Kingdom history, but always had somewhat of a ‘fatal attraction’ to the First Intermediate Period! I had read books like Professor Kanawati’s *Governmental Reforms*, Strudwick’s *Administration* and various articles by Fischer and Brovarski among others, and was always intrigued by the shifting arguments for the date of the end of the Old Kingdom. The more I read the more I realised there were more questions than answers to be had about the First Intermediate Period! Just how long did it last? We have contradictory evidence which points to both a long history of more than 700 years and a short history of around 200 years. Where was the ancient capital of the Herakleopolitans? Twenty plus

years of excavations at ancient Herakleopolis (modern day Ihnasya el-Medina) have failed to conclude that this was indeed the site. And, what was the nature of events that led to Mentuhotep II’s defeat of the Herakleopolitans and the reunification of all Egypt? Then, of course, there is also the great mystery of who were the kings at this time and where are all their monuments?

Since false doors and stelae are some of the few archaeological remains which can be studied continuously between the 7th and 11th Dynasties, I decided to take these as the focus of my study to see if we can establish a benchmark for dating other events of the period. Although some scholars like Dunham, Dawood and Brovarski have already done this on individual sites in Egypt (such as Naga ed-Deir and Saqqara), my study stretches across both time and place and includes all sites in both Upper and Lower Egypt. A megalithic task, like any PhD thesis, I currently have for study about 540 examples of false doors and stelae from more than 30 different sites, all of which I am currently translating (and re-translating to be consistent with the rest of my thesis).

One of the highlights of my research so far has been a study trip I made in 2009 to the United Kingdom. Part-funded by Macquarie’s Department of Ancient History, I spent over 2 weeks studying the First Intermediate Period material in the collections of the British Museum, the Petrie Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the John Garstang Museum, the Bolton Museum and World Museums Liverpool. This culminated in a paper I presented titled ‘Invisible History: the First Intermediate Period in UK Museum Exhibitions’ at the First Australasian Conference of Young Egyptologists in Melbourne in the same year (a paper which was subsequently accepted for peer-reviewed publication). For me, this was the greatest indulgence and I look forward to following this up with a similar study on the representation of First Intermediate Period collections in US museums.

I guess my love of Egyptology and museums has also resulted in my rather crazy decision to try and complete my PhD while working full-time. Since 2006, I’ve been at the Powerhouse Museum, initially working in Registration and Evaluation and Audience Research before moving to the post of an Arts & Design Curator in early 2009. It’s a wonderful place to be employed and I am so fortunate that working with archaeological collections, including Egyptology, is actually a part of my job description. Another amazing aspect to my work is outreach with Sydney’s Arabic speaking community and it is an absolute pleasure to be currently co-curating an exhibition, due to open in May 2012, on contemporary Muslim women’s fashion in Australia.

As I write this, I have actually just returned from Egypt after having led my first tour group for Alumni Travel – ‘Egypt: From Alexandria to Abu Simbel’. It was a terrific experience and the perfect opportunity for me to also visit sites I haven’t been to before – like Siwa Oasis. Now that I am back, I turn my attention to my thesis again as I am now at the stage of applying my dating criteria, starting with an analysis of the *hṫp dj nswt* formula. This has already proved interesting in light of existing research by Leprohon, Franke and others and I look forward to presenting the findings at an upcoming conference.

Melanie Pitkin

Update: Ronika Power

Macquarie graduate, Dr Ronika Power has secured a postdoctoral position at the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, UK. Ronika will be joining the European Research Council funded Trans-Sahara Project, a collaboration between the Universities of Cambridge and Leicester. The project seeks to build a cultural profile of the Garamantes civilisation, the prehistoric people of the Libyan Sahara (ca. 500 BC to 500 AD). The Cambridge team will be undertaking all aspects of the skeletal analyses, and Ronika will be applying her portfolio of interdisciplinary skills, including Physical Anthropology, Archaeology and Philosophy, to formulate a biocultural profile of the Garamantes. She will also act as the consulting Egyptologist, as it is thought that there may be evidence for material and cognitive exchange between Egypt and Libya during the Garamantian period. Ronika has asked the editors to pass on her thanks to everyone involved with The Australian Centre for Egyptology and The Rundle Foundation for their support, encouragement and friendship over the years.

Important notes to members

- As the Fax machine is not located in the ACE office we cannot guarantee security for information sent using this method, particularly credit card payments. **If you would like to pay by credit card please send payment details through the mail or a scanned copy via email.**
- Recently we have had several emails to members "bounce back"; if you have not received any emails from us in the last six weeks, please update your email address with the ACE office.

2012 Annual Dinner

Saturday June 30, 2012
The Heritage Function Centre
Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club
6.30 for 7.00 pm

Due to Dr Power having to take up her position at Cambridge University in May, she will be unable to speak at the Dinner as advertised in an earlier Newsletter. Fortunately Dr Kim McCorquodale has accepted our invitation to speak. Dr McCorquodale is a Macquarie graduate and her thesis was on *Representations of the Family in the Old Kingdom: Women and Marriage*.

A booking form is included with this Newsletter.
Cost \$60 per person

Egyptology Forum No. 2

Sunday, September 16 2012 at 12.45 for 1.00 sharp
Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club Auditorium

We are again holding a forum to celebrate and demonstrate the talent of our upcoming Egyptologists, young and no-so-young. The format this year will be similar to last year, with three sessions, a break after Session 1 and an afternoon tea served after Session 2. There will also be a keynote speaker.

A Booking form is included with this Newsletter.
Cost: \$25, Students \$15, including afternoon tea
Tickets will also be on sale at the door.

Diary Dates

Annual Dinner

Saturday June 30 2012, 6.30 for 7pm

Annual Conference

Saturday August 11 2012, 10 am sharp

Egyptology Forum No. 2

Sunday September 16 2012, 1.00 pm sharp

2012 Annual Conference

THE TOWN IN ANCIENT EGYPT: INSIGHTS FROM RECENT SETTLEMENT ARCHAEOLOGY

Saturday August 11, 2012
Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club Auditorium
9.30 for 10 am sharp

For this year's conference we have invited two very well known scholars.

Dr Ian Shaw, Senior Lecturer in Egyptian Archaeology at the University of Liverpool, author of *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons* and *Hatnub: Quarrying Travertine in Ancient Egypt*, co-author of the *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, editor of *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* and co-editor/author of *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*. His fieldwork includes Tell el-Amarna and quarrying / mining sites from the Early Dynastic period through to Roman times. Since 2005 he has undertaken work on a new multi-disciplinary survey of Medinet el-Ghurob, established by Thutmose III as a royal harim, in the Faiyum. Dr Shaw has also surveyed and excavated at the tomb-site of Ankhthify at el-Moalla.

Dr Cornelius von Pilgrim, Director of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt, Cairo, leads the Swiss archaeological project in Elephantine. Since 2000, in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, he has excavated in ancient Syene, buried under the modern city of Aswan. His main publication is *Elephantine. XVIII. Untersuchungen in der Stadt des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit*, Mainz 1996 ("Elephantine XVIII: Studies in the city of the MK and the SIP") and he has co-authored many publications on Elephantine and Syene (Old Aswan).

This year the conference price will include morning tea, a light lunch and afternoon tea. As this is a catered function, tickets will be **pre-sold and will not be held at the door unless they are already paid for**. Only if the event is not sold out, will there be tickets for sale at the door.

A booking form is included with this Newsletter.

Cost: Members \$70, Non-Members \$80
Students and Pensioners \$50

School Groups with a minimum of 5 students \$40 per student
Teacher with 5 students FREE

All Cheques should be made to MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY and all prices quoted include GST

Address mail and enquiries to:
The Australian Centre for Egyptology
Faculty of Arts
Macquarie University NSW 2109

Phone: (02) 9850 8848
10 am – 3 pm, Monday – Friday
email: egypt@mq.edu.au