

RESULTS OF THE 2019
RESEARCH SEASON
AT QUBBET EL-HAWA

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JOSÉ MANUEL ALBA GÓMEZ Y CRISTINA LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ
(COORDINATORS)

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PREFACE

This is the first volume of the preliminary results produced by the multidisciplinary research team of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project, led by the University of Jaén. The main aim of this publication is to offer updates on the fieldwork carried out at the necropolis by the Spanish Mission to the wider scientific community. A similar volume will be published after each working season. Although these preliminary studies have previously been published in the *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Egiptología* (nos. 18-27) since fieldwork began in 2008, the increasing number and size of contributions necessitates their publication in book format rather than as articles, written now in English to help those colleagues who are not fluent in Spanish.

In the following papers, the reader will find previously unpublished information on the material culture of the site, as well as its primary interpretation, which should be seen as the first step towards more in-depth research. Doubtless, all the material will be analyzed over the next few years as part of a global project to reconstruct life and death in the First Cataract region in antiquity, with contributions by researchers from a broad range of disciplines highlighting the exceptional nature of this border territory.

These volumes presenting the discoveries made at Qubbet el-Hawa each season will be complemented by *Archaeological Memoirs*, some of which are already in preparation.



Ramón Martínez Martos (1954-2020): .

The Qubbet el-Hawa 2020 season would not be possible without the financial support of Project HAR2016-75533-P (funded by Ministerio de Investigación y Ciencia), Fundación Gaselec, Fundación Palarq, Cátedra de Egiptología de la Universidad de Jaén (funded by Grupo Calderón) and Asociación Española de Egiptología. We are very grateful for their ongoing support.

Finally, this first volume is dedicated to the memory of the first member of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project who, after a long battle against illness, passed away after the beginning of the Project.

We wish to express our gratitude to the whole village of Garb Aswan for their smiles and hospitality. To all our workmen, the best workforce that a mission can find. A special mention goes to Mr. Mohamed Orabi and his family, who took care of all the members of the mission and made us members of his family.

Finally, our thanks to our colleagues from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA), especially to its staff in Aswan. Among all of them, we want to highlight the help, collaboration and kindness, especially of Mr. Abdelmonen Said, Director of the MOTA in Aswan and Nubia, Mr. Hany Salah, MOTA Responsible for the Foreign Missions (Aswan Office), Mr. Ahmed Awad, Chief Inspector of West Aswan and Inspectors without whose help and cooperation our fieldwork and research would not have been possible.

1. PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE EXCAVATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF A NEW, PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED TOMB: QH23/2019

JUAN LUIS MARTÍNEZ DE DIOS
RAQUEL RODRÍGUEZ SÁNCHEZ*

The specific objectives of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project during the 2019 season was a visual recognition and inspection in the space south of tombs nº 25 and 26. The surface cleaning was carried out in an area adjacent to the courtyard of these tombs, where a previously unknown tomb was detected, dating to the Old Kingdom, without decoration and anepigraphic. Material culture retrieved during the excavation was inconclusive, therefore the investigation will remain ongoing in the coming months.

Keywords: Qubbet el-Hawa, Old Kingdom, tomb, anepigraphic.

Uno de los objetivos del Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa durante la campaña 2019 fue el reconocimiento visual y la inspección del espacio al sur de las tumbas nº 25 y 26. En un área colindante con el patio de estas tumbas se procedió a la limpieza superficial, donde se detectó una tumba no documentada con anterioridad. Fechada en el período de Reino Antiguo, sin decoración y anepigráfica. En lo que respecta a la cultura material los resultados de la excavación no resultaron concluyentes por lo que la investigación continúa en curso a nivel documental.

Palabras clave: Qubbet el-Hawa, Reino Antiguo, tumba, anepigráfica.

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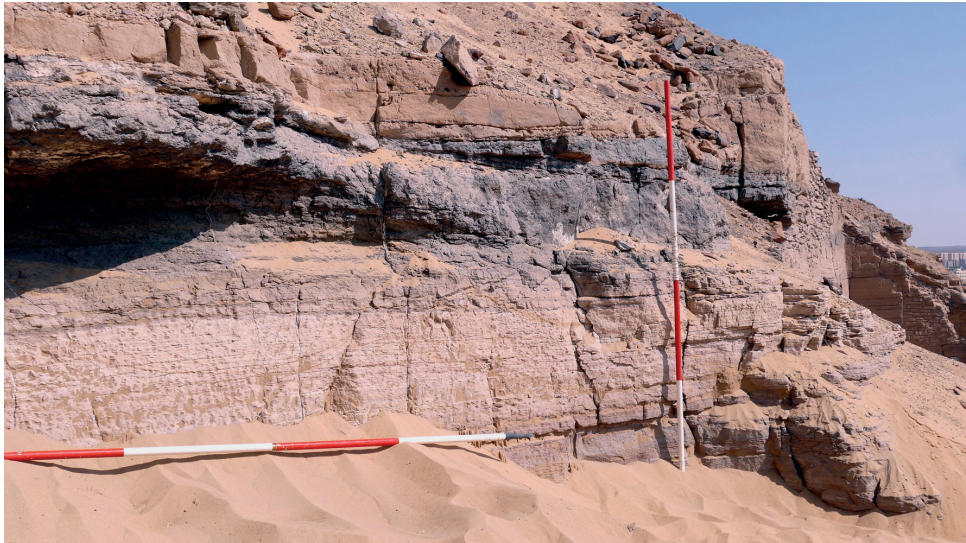


Figure 1.1. Previous exterior condition. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Photography: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

When at the end of the 19th century, during the 1885-1886 campaigns (BUDGE, 1887: pp. 4-40), General Sir. F. W. Grenfell identified alphanumerically the hypogea¹ which were known of at that time, he made no mistake in beginning the classification at number 25, the tomb furthest south in the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa (EDEL 2008: p. XVII).

From the beginning, General Grenfell suspected the existence of other ancient tombs located in this place, and he was convinced that if they had carried out excavations here, the discoveries would have been interesting.

Fifty years later, Hans Wolfgang Müller (1940: p. 12) stated that “Solange nicht neue Ausgrabungen eine andere Zählung der Gräber verlangen, ist es praktisch, a dieser Bezeichnung festzuhalten”.²

Among the objectives of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project for the 2019 campaign was the supervision and visual recognition of a 3.75 ha³ extension south of tombs nº 24, 25 (Mekhu) and 26 (Sabni).

1. From Latin, *hypogeum*, and from this, the Greek ὑπόγειον, meaning “under the ground”.

2. “As long as new excavations do not require a different numbering of the graves, it is practical to adhere to this designation”.

3. 37.500 m².



Figure 1.2. Detail of the cult chamber. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Photography: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

Therefore, taking a two meter separation from the southern limit of the courtyards of tombs nº 25 and 26, an excavation area of six meters in length by three meters wide was proposed (Figure 1. 1).

After the beginning of the archaeological work the façade was documented and immediately the access to a hypogeum-type tomb was found. Did Grenfell know of this tomb, or did he just sense that there could be other tombs and this is the reason why he started the identification from nº 25?

However, following the established system we identified this tomb with the number 23. This burial structure is recognised as a cult chamber hypogeum and is generally composed of an underground structure and an exterior courtyard where the façade is configured. From the cult chamber (C0) inside, which works as an ante-chamber, there is access to two funerary chambers (C1 and C2) (Figure 1. 2).

The first funerary chamber (C1), located in the north wall of the cult chamber, is accessed after a short descending corridor.

The second funerary chamber (C2) is located on the west wall of the cult chamber, and is also accessed via a descending corridor.



Figure 1.3. Funerary chamber C1. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Photography: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

The whole tomb is anepigraphic both inside (underground) and outside (façade), with no evidence of ever having had any decoration or text.

The archaeological material collecting process was unsuccessful in retrieving any material culture from which to establish an absolute date for the original construction and occupation of the tomb, due to the meagre remains left within the tomb. About thirty pottery fragments made on a slow potter's wheel, with oxidative or reductive treatment firing and a badly decanted clay with the absence of coating, were located inside the cult chamber and the access to both of the funerary chambers.

Funerary chamber C1 was found to be unusually clean of sand or any other depositional layer that would hinder methodological excavation, except in the northwest corner, where human bones appeared in disordered and dispersed positions: fragments of skull, femur and ulna were among those identified, belonging to a single individual (Figure 1.3).

In funerary chamber C2, there was a total absence of archaeological material after removing the sand that occupied two-thirds of the space (Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.4. Funerary chamber C2. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Photography: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

Based on the tomb plan and the arrangement of burial chambers with sloped access, the tomb has been dated as belonging to the Old Kingdom. This is supported by the dating of the ceramic materials found within.

However, the neatness and cleanliness of the tomb at the time of its excavation, with clean sand without intrusions of any kind, led us to deduce that the tomb had been excavated using archaeological methods or at least inspected and subjected to the removal of its original contents and funerary material during the first third of the 20th century, and not because of any pillage, looting or intrusion.

Even though there is no documentary evidence for the existence of this tomb, we know of the investigation campaigns from the beginning of the 20th century undertaken by Lady W. Cecil (CECIL, 1905: pp. 271-283; CECIL, 1903: pp. 51-73), and separately, the campaigns from 1913 and 1914 of Ernesto Schiaparelli (2008: pp. 256-257) in the necropolis, specifically in tomb 35d (Heqaib- Pepinakht).

Thin and smooth screen-printed iron or steel sheet of a specific commercial brand found inside funerary chamber C1 was dated between the years 1902-1912 (Figure 1. 5).



QH 23 / 2019

C1 UE 4

8



Figure 1. 5. Thin and smooth iron or steel screen-printed sheet. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Photography: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

Also, paper fragments from a pamphlet or leaflet printed in Arabic were found that provide a date in 1918. This indicates the possibility that either the Cecil or Schiaparelli missions may have known of and explored this specific tomb (Figure 1. 6).

The tomb has a regular transversal section pit which varies between a square shape and a rectangle with dimensions not exceeding two meters in length and variable in width, excavated inside a small room and with sufficient dimensions to facilitate the burial.

An inclined recess in the upper corner in the mouth of the pit is characteristic, to make the access into it easier. This type of architecture can be dated to before the second third of the reign of Pepi II (EDEL, 2008: p. XXIX).

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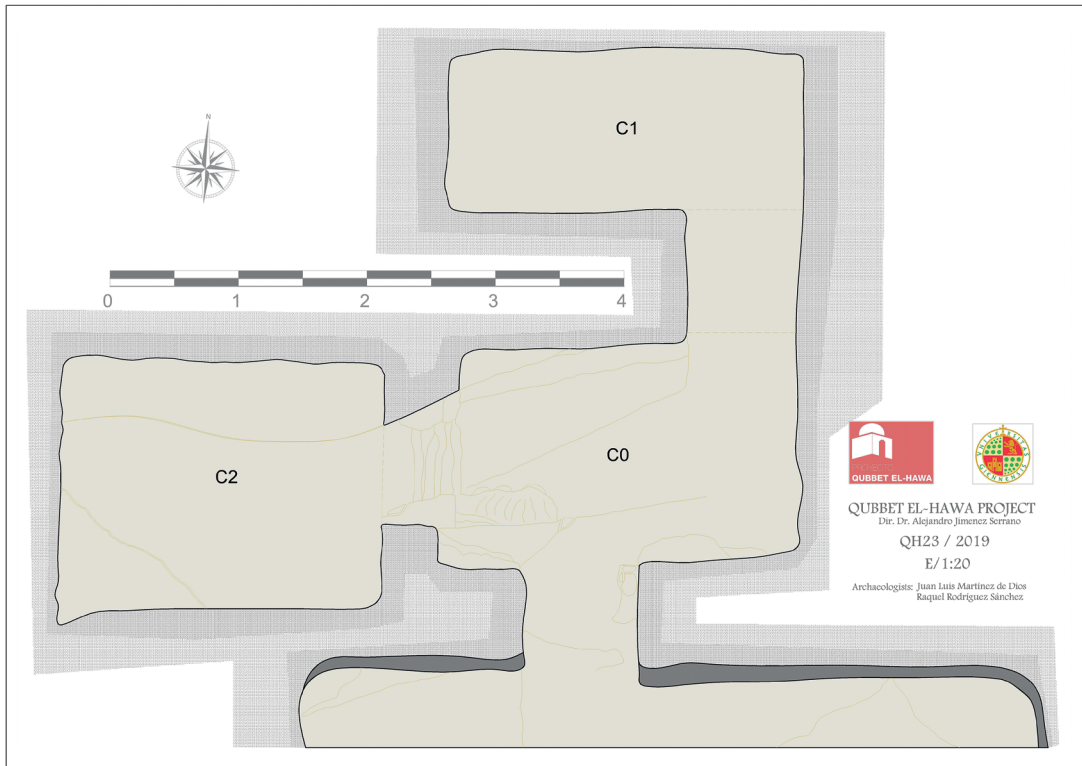


Figure 1. 6. Plan of the tomb. ©University of Jaén, Qubbet el-Hawa Project. Picture: Juan Luis Martínez de Dios

MÜLLER, Hans Wolfgang (1940): *Die Felsengräber der Fürsten von Elephantine aus der Zeit des Mittleren Reiches*. Gluckstadt, Hamburg, New York, Verlag J. J. Augustin.

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