

RESULTS OF THE 2020-2021  
RESEARCH SEASONS  
AT QUBBET EL-HAWA

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RESULTS OF THE 2020-2021  
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JOSÉ M. ALBA GÓMEZ AND CRISTINA LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ  
(EDITORS)

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

JOSÉ M. ALBA GÓMEZ  
CRISTINA LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ\*

We are pleased, once again, to be able to share with you the latest advances in the research carried out by the Qubbet el-Hawa Project of the University of Jaén. The project publication began in 2019, and this volume includes the campaigns from 2020 and 2021.

Although this book covers two seasons, the number of contributions may not be as extensive as expected. The primary reason for this is the global health crisis experienced during 2020 and 2021, which caused several research projects to be postponed until conditions improved. Despite this, readers will have the opportunity to access fresh information about new discoveries in various tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa, such as QH32, QH34LL, and QH36 (Sarenput I). The book also includes various studies related to the site including surveys, scanning, photogrammetry and cartography. Additionally, progress has been made in the study of pottery and writing materials, providing deeper insights into the funerary equipment, which is primarily dated to the Middle and New Kingdoms. In short, the work presented in this volume sheds further light on the First Cataract region in antiquity.

We would like to thank all those who supported us and who funded each campaign: Grupo Calderón SL, the Spanish Association of Egyptology (AEDE), the Palarq Foundation, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, and of course the University of Jaén. Without

\* José M. Alba Gómez: co-director of Qubbet el-Hawa Project. ORCID: 0000-0003-4692-5327; Cristina Lechuga Ibáñez: member of Qubbet el-Hawa Project, University Of Jaén. Orcid: 0000-0003-0112-5596.

their support, it would not have been possible to publish this work. We also wish to thank the entire team; this project could not have succeeded without their work, their passion, their commitment and their perseverance. And of course we wish to thank the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Egypt, who are always willing to cooperate with the team, and to Ms. Sarah Griffiths for her efforts in proofreading and polishing the English. This book would never have been published without her tremendous assistance. Thank you so much. It is a pleasure to work side by side with you.

The 2020 campaign, the twelfth of the project, in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), was carried out from 20<sup>th</sup> February to 14<sup>th</sup> March under the direction of Prof. Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano and Dr. José Manuel Alba Gómez. Due to the difficult circumstances, and issues beyond the control of the mission, this was a far shorter mission than we originally expected.

In general terms, we are pleased with the results and the complete success of the work, even if this finished earlier than planned. The season involved a smaller than usual number of researchers; only ten<sup>1</sup> participated, as the work was more focused on the study of artefacts. Conservation and site management works were carried out, which were necessary to promote site conservation, dissemination and enhancement.

Two archaeological interventions were made: in tombs QH32 (Aku) and QH34g (Ankheseni, wife of Khunes) (the excavation was carried out to create a small path at the entrance of tomb QH34g to facilitate access to tourists visiting the site). The season also included work for the temporary exhibition “A Decade of Archaeological Excavations in Qubbet el-Hawa. The results of the University of Jaen” at the Nubian Museum.

Scientific aims pursued by the interdisciplinary team involved archaeometric methods, such as studies related to chemical analyses (including Raman Spectroscopy). Surveying and cartographic works were carried out to update the cartography of the hill. Also, ceramological studies were made on the pottery from the tomb QH35p.

Local scientific cooperation was essential to the team, and much of this success is thanks to the inspectors of the Ministry of Antiquities in the field and in the Aswan office<sup>2</sup>. Without them, the advances made this season in our understanding of the past would not have been possible.

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1. Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. José Manuel Alba Gómez, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. José Luis Pérez García, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. Antonio Mozas Calvache, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Martina Bardoňová, Miss. Ana Díaz, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Miss. Patricia Mora Riudavets, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, Miss. Rebeca Hernández, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. Ana Domínguez, Universidad de Jaén and Dr. María José Ayora, Universidad de Jaén

2. This interdisciplinary team was assisted by three inspectors of the Ministry of Antiquities: Mr. Ahmed



The following campaign, the thirteenth, took place from 6<sup>th</sup> November to 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021. This was an intense season, with new researchers joining the team. Dr. Lola Joyanes, architect and researcher at the University of Málaga (Spain), has been dedicated to the study of the ancient landscape and its relation with the architecture of the necropolis. Dr. Joyanes is the main researcher of the project “Landscape as a source of knowledge, research and transfer of heritage values of the necropolis of Qubbet el Hawa, Aswan, Egypt”. We also welcomed Dr. José Antonio Peláez, a professor at the University of Jaén; Dr. Juan Luis Soler Llorens, Associate Professor at the University of Alicante; and Mr. Rashad Fewriz Zaky Sawires, a Professor at the University of Assiut. They began the analysis of a ground survey with appropriate devices, over an area of more than 30,000m<sup>2</sup>. This area extends from tomb QH23 (re-discovered in the 2019 season<sup>3</sup>) to 300m to the South. Thanks to their work, we are close to obtaining a preliminary picture of the organization of this part of the necropolis before excavations begin, which will allow us to design a scientific strategy for future campaigns. A further 15 researchers from different universities and multiple specialties were involved on this campaign<sup>4</sup>.

During the 2021 season, archaeological work was carried out in four hypogea: QH31 (Sarenput II); QH32 (Ankhu); QH36 (Sarenput I); and QH23 (unknown). All these tombs were excavated in the last century, but only partially. This work was carried out in parallel with the study of the material culture found in several tombs: QH32, QH33, QH35p, and QH36. Major progress was made in the studies of physical anthropology, the ceramic repertoires, and the architecture and landscape, as well as the interpretation of the epigraphic texts. No less important is the work carried out by the restorers. With their help, the materials in the worst condition have been stabilized, restored and preliminarily conserved<sup>5</sup>.

Conservation and site management works were also carried out. A project management approach is extremely valuable in planning and carrying out a successful archaeological project to foster understanding of past and present cultures.

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Awad-Allah Selim, Mm. Azahar Mohamed Saleh, Mm. Manal Mohamed Monager Hessem.

3. For more information about QH23 see JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, Alejandro; ALBA GÓMEZ, José Manuel, TOOLEY, Angela M. J. and LECHUGA IBÁÑEZ, Cristina (2021): *Results of the 2019 research season at Qubbet el-Hawa*. 1.<sup>a</sup> ed. Jaén, Editorial UJA.

4. Dr. Alejandro Jiménez Serrano, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. José Manuel Alba Gómez, Universidad de Jaén, Mr. Juan Luis Martínez de Dios, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Luisa García González, Universidad de Jaén, Mr. Antonio Caño Dorte, Universidad de Jaén, Dr. Miguel C. Botella, Universidad de Granada, Miss. Rosario Guimarey, Universidad de Granada, Miss. Cristina Lechuga Ibáñez, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Dámaris López Muñoz, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Ana Díaz Blanco, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Desirée Pérez Navazo, Universidad de Jaén, Miss. Ana Belén Jiménez, Universidad de Lyon, Miss. Regina de Luca, Freelancer, Miss. Teresa López Obregón-Silvestre, Freelancer and Miss. Rebeca Hernández, Universidad de Jaén.

5. This interdisciplinary team was assisted by three inspectors of the Ministry of Antiquities: Mr. Ahmed Awad-Allah Selim, Mr. Ahmed Fouad Tawfik, and Azhar Mohamed Saleh.

Finally, on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at the Nubia Museum, we opened the temporary exhibition “A Decade of Archaeological Excavations in Qubbet el-Hawa. The results of the University of Jaén”.<sup>6</sup> We hope it will be a success, and be well received by visitors.

Without further ado, we present the advances of the Qubbet el-Hawa Project and hope you enjoy reading this work as much as we have enjoyed writing it.

Jaén, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

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6. For more information about this exhibition see DE LA TORRE ROBLES, Yolanda and JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, Alejandro (eds.) (2022): *A Decade of Excavations in Qubbet el-Hawa: The Results of the University of Jaén: Catalogue of the Exhibition*. 1.<sup>a</sup> ed. Jaén, Editorial UJA.

## 2. SEASON 2020



# 2.1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AT TOMB QH32, SEASON 2020

JOSÉ MANUEL ALBA GÓMEZ\*

During the 2020 campaign we continued with cleaning and documentation in the funerary complex QH32. The objectives were to work in two burial chambers and two shafts located in the pillar room of the tomb; these had not been excavated or documented previously. After cleaning, two new burial chambers were discovered. Study of the materials found is expected to be carried out in future campaigns.

Keywords: Qubbet el-Hawa, QH32, Middle Kingdom, reuse, New Kingdom, Late Period, Aku.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The archaeological works at the funerary complex QH32 have focused on the two shafts, P1 (Figures 2.1.1 in red and 2.1.13) and P3 (Figures 2.1.1 in green and 2.1.13); their respective funerary chambers (P2 and P5); and on one funerary niche (P4, Figures 2.1.1 in purple and 2.1.13). The funerary niche P6 (Figures 2.1.1 in blue and 2.1.13) had already been excavated and was empty. The works were carried out from 29<sup>th</sup> February to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

\* Co-director of Qubbet el-Hawa Project. ORCID: 0000-0003-4692-5327.

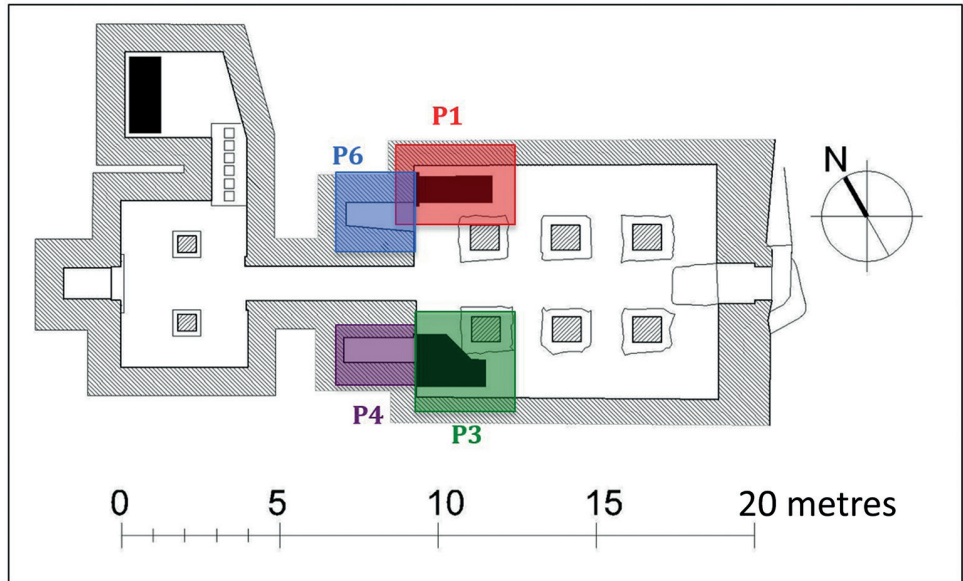


Figure 2.1.1. Plan of the tomb QH32. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Plan by Juan Antonio Martínez Hermoso.

The tomb construction and first use date back to the Middle Kingdom, during the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This could indicate that it was built during the reign of Amenemhat II (c. 1878-1843 BC) (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2017; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2019; ALBA GÓMEZ, *et al.*, 2020; ALBA GÓMEZ, 2020). As with many of the tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa, QH32 was reused in the New Kingdom (at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, or during a period of transition between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), and additionally at the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, or beginning of the Third Intermediate Period. The tomb was plundered several times in antiquity, possibly shortly after the burials were made (JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2017; JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, *et al.*, 2019; ALBA GÓMEZ, *et al.*, 2020; ALBA GÓMEZ, 2020).

Both shafts are situated in the pillared hall at the rear of the northwest wall and flank the corridor which leads to the tomb chapel. The chronology of these shafts was uncertain, and information about them scarce, as they were not depicted in plans or mentioned in previous publications of the tomb (BUDGE, 1887; De MORGAN, *et al.*, 1894; MÜLLER, 1940), and because they were partially hidden by material from earlier excavations in the pillared hall. The current excavation work has brought to light materials that help us to date the tomb, and to learn a little more about the people buried there, their funerary goods, and the offerings they were given.

The tomb was discovered and excavated during the campaigns of General Sir John Grenfell (in 1885), and under the supervision of Wallis Budge (between 1886 and 1887) (BUDGE, 1886 and 1887). However, the information about the shafts and the burial chambers given in their reports was inadequate. In 1888, the French Egyptologist Urbain Bouriant published (BOURIANT, 1888) some hieroglyphic texts from the tombs excavated by Grenfell, including inscriptions from the niche of tomb QH32. At that time, the tomb had already been labelled number 32, but in Bouriant's publication, there is no information about the architecture or plan of the tomb. Several years later, in 1894, Jacques de Morgan, (De MORGAN, *et al.*, 1894) published further plans, drawings and hieroglyphic inscriptions, but these lacked the detail of Bouriant's work. Later, in 1940, H.W. Müller published (MÜLLER, 1940) an exhaustive study of the tomb, including architectural and layout plans; yet, the plans of the shafts and funerary chambers were based on only a brief exploration and missed a great deal of information.

The inadequate documentation of these shafts, and the fact that they were filled with sand, meant that it would be necessary to excavate them in order to update the plans of the tomb.

## 2. THE SHAFT P1 AND CONNECTED BURIAL CHAMBER P2

### 2.1. THE SHAFT P1

Shaft P1 is a small, rectangular shaft 227 cm long, 87.5 cm wide and 93 cm high. On its south wall there is a small irregular niche 61.5 cm long and 55 cm high. The shaft gives access to an irregular, shortened burial chamber (P2), which was sealed by a slab of stone (now lost), but with a small gap carved at each side. The shaft infill lay in six stratigraphic units: SU18, SU19, SU22, SU23, SU24, and SU25.

SU18 (Figure 2.1.2a): This was a layer of superficial, clean yellow sand, containing only a scarce amount of material which dated to the time when the tomb was used as a magazine and laboratory by Elmar Edel's German mission. Material discovered included some old match boxes, dates, palm seeds, and small sherds of Middle Kingdom pottery.

SU19 (Figure 2.1.2b): This layer was a darker yellow sand layer with more abundant material compared to the overlying SU18 layer. Within this layer were the remains of stones, probably from the *redim* (debris), burnt bones, wrappings, burnt wood from Middle Kingdom coffins, pottery from the New Kingdom, and some textiles including fine linen that stands out because of the green-coloured stripes around the edges.



Figures 2.1.2a-b. Shaft P1. a) layer SU18; b) layer SU19. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Images by José Manuel Alba Gómez.

SU22 (Figure 2.1.3a): A blackish and greyish sand layer lying under SU19, with charred/burnt bones mixed with other materials, such as burnt wood. The remains of materials such as wood and bone appear to have been destroyed by fire, and there are very few ceramics, with bones remains being the most abundant. It is difficult to account for this level of ash and fire, as the walls of the shaft are not black and neither is the ceiling of the tomb. The only explanation is that the shafts were filled with remains of sand from the exterior and interior of another nearby tomb, such as QH33. The shape of this SU was a slope, from the southeast wall to the burial chamber doorjamb. Among the findings of this SU were fragments of cartonnage and polychrome coffin pieces from the Middle Kingdom, as well as several stone remains from what appears to be a painted stela, although there were no hieroglyphs apparent. While ceramics were not very abundant, there were a few hemispherical cups with red rims from the Middle Kingdom.

SU23 (Figure 2.1.3b): This SU was made up of clean yellow sand but contained little material compared to SU22 – just stones and mudbricks. It was again in the form of a slope from the niche to the entrance to the burial chamber. Near the doorway of the burial chamber, a large fragment of a Middle Kingdom coffin was discovered,





Figures 2.1.3a-b. Shaft P1. a) layer SU22; b) layer SU23. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Images by José Manuel Alba Gómez.

painted on both sides. Sadly the inscription giving the owner's name was damaged. The quality of this coffin piece, and the pictorial details, were excellent and exceptional. Ceramic finds include fragments of a soul house, and fragments such as a carinated bowl with serrated rim, which have been preliminarily dated at the end of the Second Intermediate Period, or beginning of the New Kingdom.

SU24 (Figure 2.1.4a): This was a stratigraphic unit of stones and mudbrick from the nearby funerary chamber P2, at the northwest end of the shaft. This layer probably resulted from the first incidence of looting in the tomb. It could also be fill-material from the shaft seal, but because the remains of ceramics date to the Middle and New Kingdom, it is more logical to think they were present because of looting. Small fragments from Middle Kingdom polychrome coffins were also found.

SU25 (Figure 2.1.4b): This was a *redim* level of small stones and diverse mudbrick fragments under SU24. The sand had a grayish colour and was very compact. It can be seen how the accumulation of material is always on the opposite side of the chamber



Figures 2.1.4a-b. Shaft P1. a) layer SU24; b) layer SU25. ©University of Jaén, Project Qubbet el-Hawa. Images by José Manuel Alba Gómez.

entrance, as a hole was made in the entrance to access it. The bone remains which predominated in the area were mostly fragmented skulls.

SU3 (Figures 2.1.5a and 2.1.6): Bed rock.

## 2.2. THE BURIAL CHAMBER P2

The burial chamber is irregular, measuring 397 cm by 221 cm, with a height of 87 cm. Unlike other burial chambers in Qubbet el-Hawa, its height is diminutive, but it is wide and spacious: there was enough room for the coffins and funeral offerings, but it is impossible for a person to stand inside. The size suggests this chamber was not for a single burial, but for several family members. On the other hand, it may have been planned for a single burial that had abundant grave goods. Both theories are conceivable. Also, the presence of New Kingdom pottery clearly shows that the burial chamber was re-opened and reused during this period.