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Review of : Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan. I. Abteilung. (Band 1-3, Pläne und Tafeln). Architektur, Darstellungen, Texte, archäologischer Befund und Funde der Gräber QH 24-QH 34p,, Edel E., Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008.

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EDEL, E. — Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan. I. Abteilung. (Band 1-3, Pläne und Tafeln). Architektur, Darstellungen, Texte, archäologischer Befund und Funde der Gräber QH 24-QH 34p. Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, 2008. (Band 1-3: 30cm, CXLIV, 2072; Pläne und Tafeln: 43cm, 88 Taf. 38 Pläne). ISBN 978-3-506-76343-3. € 414,-.

At Qubbet el-Hawa one finds the rock-cut tombs of prominent inhabitants of Elephantine Island on Egypt's southern border, located on the west bank in full view of that city across the Nile. These tombs date predominantly to the Old Kingdom but include also those of the Middle and New Kingdom. The current and long awaited publication constitutes the final report on the excavations carried out by Elmar Edel (1914-1997) in the years 1958-1984. Preliminary reports have appeared previously on a regular basis in *Orientalia*, *ASAE*, and *ZÄS*. This publication is presented as volume I and as such postdates volume II by at least 28 years.¹⁾ It

¹⁾ E. Edel, *Die Felsgräber der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan. II. Abteilung. Die althieratischen Topfaufschriften* (Opladen, 1967-1980; 5 volumes).

includes also unpublished material of Labib Habachi (1906-1984) who had been active in the same area from 1948-51. Edel and Habachi already discussed the possibility of jointly publishing their findings probably in 1979-80.

A significant asset of this publication is that all excavation data relating to one, complete necropolis are contained in a single publication, wherein every tomb is systematically presented and discussed according to a uniform layout. Karl-Joachim Seyfried and Gerd Vieler were commissioned with the massive task of working through material collected by both Edel and Habachi over the course of more than half a century: a task they have accomplished satisfactorily. Both authors were very well qualified for taking the responsibility of publishing the work of Edel. They have been involved with the excavation project since the 1970's: Seyfried as an archaeologist and Vieler as a surveyor. Occasionally, however, Seyfried familiarized himself with a tomb only during a single "tourist visit" (*i.e.* QH 35d, p. 733, n. 1).

After his retirement, Edel moved his archive to his house in Bonn and upon his death on 25 April 1997, according to his will, this archive was allocated to the *Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* in Düsseldorf. The foundation was made inheritor to his capital. These funds were allocated to the authors in order to realise the current publication. Upon completion, the archive has been transferred to the *Ägyptologischen Seminar* of the University of Bonn. It must be added that part of the Edel archive relating to Qubbet el-Hawa may have escaped the authors: already during his life Edel sold his library, and upon his death these books were removed from his house even before the authors had been able to check their contents for possible notes. The Edel library is currently part of the Egyptological archives of the University of Milan.²⁾

The publication under review consists of three heavy volumes (2226 pages) and contains the impressive number of 2680 figures, 815 illustrations (photographs), and 24 colour plates. A separate A3 sized folder contains 88 folding plates and 43 ditto plans. The catalogue of tombs is divided over three volumes, ordered according to their QH-number: Volume 1, QH 24-QH 34p (pp. 1-666); Volume 2, QH 35- QH 101 (pp. 667-1386), and Volume 3, QH 102- QH 209 (pp. 1387-2072). Their numbering corresponds to their physical distribution over the necropolis where they are divided over three "rows": upper, QH 24-36; middle, QH 86-110; lower, QH 206-210.

Volume 1 starts with a preface (pp. VII-VIII) written by the authors Seyfried and Vieler. This is followed by a Table of Contents (pp. IX-XV) and Introductory Remarks (pp. XVII-XXVI), including (1) an account of the earliest exploration of the Qubbet el-Hawa necropolis by Francis Grenfell in 1886 –later assisted by E.A. Budge of the British Museum—who discovered the tombs of 'Mehu, Ben and Se-Renpu' (*Mḥw, S3bnī, and S3-rn-pwt*), (2) a summary discussion on the Bonn-expedition, and (3) a note on the catalogue of tombs.

What follows is the 117 page "Introduction" (pp. XXVII-CXLIV): a detailed guide to the format of the catalogue, in which each chapter, divided over five paragraphs, is dedicated to one tomb: §1 Position and Type (*Lage/Typ*); §2 Architecture (*Architektur*); §3 Epi- and iconographical results (*Epi- und ikonographischer Befund*); §4 Archaeological Results and Finds (*Archäologischer Befund und Funde*); and §5 Interpretation (*Auswertung*). Occasionally a §0 is added. Vieler has been responsible for §1-2 and Seyfried for §3-5. Excerpts from Edel's notes or manuscripts are indicated with his initials: E.E. The Coptic and Greek texts have been edited by Sebastian Richter.

The Introduction elucidates on these paragraphs and is supplemented with (6) a report on the scientific analyses of wood (analysis of samples by B. Schröder), fauna, flora, and minerals, and (7) contains several indices; pp. XCI-CI: objects excavated and subsequently assigned to the Bonn-expedition during the division of the finds (currently in the collection of the *Ägyptologischen Seminar* in Bonn), pp. CI-CXXVI: personal names, late OK to NK (total number of 584 individuals, with pp. CII-CXXI, alphabetically ordered, and pp. CXXI-CXXV ordered according to individuals' numbers), pp. CXXV-CXLII: titles (in alphabetical order), and a list of publications of Edel relating to Qubbet el-Hawa (pp. CXLIII-CXLIV).

While called the *Einleitung*, the authors use this section to draw tentative conclusions and to contextualise the incredible amount of data. The introduction's subdivision into paragraphs is not indicated in the table of contents 'due to space limitations' (p. IX, n. 7).

Paragraph 1 (pp. XXVII-XLI) presents a survey of tomb types discernible at Qubbet el-Hawa and delineates their developmental stages towards the large complexes of e.g. Mehu and Sabni (pp. XXVII-XLI). Due to an exactly dateable inscription, QH 34 can be designated the oldest tomb. While the tombs are characterized by their diversity in form, QH 35f appears to form the basis of all other tombs (*Prototyp*). The courtyards were accessible from the Nile via a causeway. Those of QH 25-6 (70m) and QH 34h (130m) most notably dominate the current appearance of the necropolis. The authors postulate that the stout form of the obelisks –sometimes placed on either side of the entrance doorway to a tomb– may have been derivative of the massive, "compressed" shaped obelisks dominating the sun-temples at Abu Gorab and Abusir. After all, the Userkaf-dynasty probably originates from Elephantine (p. XXXVII). Paired obelisks in private tombs in general are known from the Old Kingdom only at Giza, Saqqara, Matariya and Dendera (p. 20). On p. XXXVIII the authors emphasize the resemblance of the layout of the cult chamber (*Kultkammer*) to the form of the hieroglyph *pr* (Gardiner O1), usually interpreted as a house plan.

In paragraph 2 (pp. XLII-XLV), the method applied for documenting tomb architecture is illustrated.

Paragraph 3 (pp. XLVIXLVII) reveals that during the first years of the Qubbet el-Hawa expedition there was no permission to excavate. Thus, work in the early days (until 1967) concentrated initially on epigraphy (the primary interest of the linguist Edel), cleaning of the accessible tombs and identifying their owners, and verifying the earlier works of Budge and De Morgan. The epigraphic and iconographic documentation methods are briefly illustrated.

Paragraph 4 (pp. XLVIII-L) recounts the formation of the Qubbet el-Hawa project. During the early years without permission to excavate, only chance finds were recorded.

²⁾ See P. Piacentini (ed.) *Gli archive egittologici dell'Università degli Studi di Milano: 1. Il fondo Elmar Edel*. Università degli Studi di Milano, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofica (Milan, 2006).

From 1967 onwards, registration and detailed documentation of finds became an integral part of the work. While a number of tombs had been “excavated” by the likes of Grenfell as early as the 1880’s, tombs such as those of Mehu and Sabni still proved to contain many *in situ* archaeological finds. The authors point at the inevitable *Stilpluralismus* due to the large number of people who, over the years, have been working on the material. For a while (1970-9) Edgar Pusch had been a constant factor in recording the pottery, objects, coffins, etc., while Angelika Edel has been responsible largely for the descriptions of objects. The photographs that are published present just a selection of their total availability: A. Edel produced approximately 21.000 negatives.

Paragraph 5 (pp. LI-LVII) presents a summary conclusion. Some statistics are presented (pp. LI-II: distribution of males/females buried in Qubbet el-Hawa compared to the cemetery at Elephantine, and an estimate of population numbers of that city), and an overview of titles (pp. LII-LVI; table p. LVII, divided into five categories with their number of attestations (however, with some reservations: see n. 222)) is presented and interpreted. Certain expedition-related titles such as *jmj-jrtj* (Captain) occur often, while those of e.g. *jmj-r3 mšc* (Commander of the troops) has remarkably few attestations (3x). A study of the preserved and legible epigraphic evidence identifies a number of 144 individuals who had been officially occupied with the QH funerary cults.

Volume 1 proceeds with the actual catalogue of tombs and sequentially continues to volumes 2 and 3. Figures (*Figuren*) are distributed over the text and b/w photographs (*Abbildungen*) are included at the end of each chapter. The text furthermore contains references to the plans (*Pläne*) and plates (*Tafeln*) in the separate, elegant cardboard folder. At the back of Volume 3 are included a number of colour plates (p. 2045 *ff.*, pls. I-XXVI; a selection of drawings of reliefs and scene details).

The length of each tomb chapter is subject to the tombs’ preservation, size, complexity, epigraphic and iconographic remains and the number of objects. Thus, the anonymous tomb QH 24 is allocated just four pages, while the double funerary monument QH 25-26 (Mehu and Sabni, father and son) accounts for 260 pages.

The authors do not only consider the tombs’ original inhabitants, but also elaborate on the later reuse of the structures. This includes material dating up to the Coptic period (e.g. QH 34e, §2.4, pp. 462-5, 474-6, figs. 4-5 and *Abb.* 2 on p. 505). Tomb QH 35m (pp. 935-60) proved to have been constructed during the late Old Kingdom, but remained unfinished. It was not until the 18th Dynasty (temp. Hatshepsut-Thutmose III) that the structure was equipped with a burial for *Ipw-ms(jj)*, attached to the temple of Satet at Elephantine. Late Period burials can be found e.g. in tomb QH 207 (pp. 1978-9, *Abb.* 6-32).

While the name of *Hk3-ib* occurs multiple times (*cf.* table pp. CXII-CXIII), the authors by means of a detailed discussion of the archaeological finds, convincingly identify QH 35d as the tomb of expedition leader and governor Pepi-ankh-Heqaib who acquired a deified status and became the focus of a cult on Elephantine (pp. 733-802).³⁾ Posthumous

attention for this official is illustrated by the large number of individuals that are represented in his tomb (96+): larger than in any other tomb in this necropolis (p. 779 *ff.*).

With consideration to the decoration (§3), it is remarkable that all over Qubbet el-Hawa wall surfaces were levelled in anticipation of the application of decoration, but were ultimately left undecorated. In relation to tomb decoration at Qubbet el-Hawa, one may refer to the PhD thesis of D. Vischak, *Locality and Community in Old Kingdom Provincial Tombs: The Cemetery of Qubbet el Hawa* (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2006).

Tomb-inscriptions are generally provided with a transliteration, followed by a translation and annotations per sentence (with few external references). Historical inscriptions, such as the narrative of the expedition on the façade (pp. 50-3, pl. IX; no photograph) of tomb QH 26 (Sabni), with annotations on the inscription (pp. 53-8) also features a more substantive commentary (*Inhaltlicher Kommentar*, pp. 58-60). Others, such as the autobiographical text in tomb QH 34n of Harkhuf (*Hrw-hwj.f*) –describing the quest for a dwarf commissioned by Pepy II (façade, north side, pl. XXVIII, *Abb.* 8, pp. 626-8)– is provided only with a transliteration and translation without commentary (but with sufficient references).

Ancient graffiti are indicated on the line drawings of the original decoration (e.g. QH 35e, pp. 816-9, *Abb.* 10 on p. 859 and pl. LV). This is an excellent deliberation, since the scholar interested in ancient graffiti is often confronted with publications omitting these “unattractive scribbles defacing a monument”.

The finds from each tomb (§4) include detailed descriptions only of those finds with a secure provenance. These descriptions are preceded by a general delineation of the find-context. The corresponding plans are especially explanatory when referring to *in situ* burials, such as illustrated by fig. 23 on p. 74 (QH 25/26), but also disturbed burials, such as fig. 5 on p. 305 (QH 29) or ceramic deposits (e.g. QH 88, p. 992, fig. 19, *Abb.* 11 on p. 1061, courtyard; QH 207, pp. 1944 *ff.*, figs. 193-4, *Abb.* 42-3). Finds are discussed per location inside the tomb and are not listed separately according to the object categories. This approach provides a clear overview of the distribution of finds over the total area of the funerary complexes. Each find is allocated a number consisting of the QH code followed by a serial number (e.g. 25/184).

Pages 877-903 present the finds derived from tombs QH 35 to QH 35f, excavated by Habachi, and include excerpts from his notebooks (pp. 887-9; 894-7).

Paragraph 5 of each chapter includes a proposed date for the tomb. The discussion can be further expanded to include an account on the tomb-owner(s) and his/their family. The tombs of Mehu and Sabni not only include a genealogy of the tomb owners (p. 212), but also of the funerary priests associated with their tombs (pp. 213-4) and a treatise on the itineraries these priests would have taken inside the tombs when performing their priestly duties (pp. 226-9, and colour plate II on p. 2048).

The reader interested in the tomb of Sarenput I (QH 36) will have to be disappointed. Since others had already been working in this tomb before him (see bibliographical references on p. 967), Edel repeatedly postponed working there. While Edel did propose some corrections on the reading of the texts published by others, the current authors chose not to include these in the present publication. Instead, they propose to include his notes in an eventual final publication of

³⁾ L. Habachi, *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib*. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, 33 (Mainz am Rhein, 1985).

that tomb. In this regard it is worth noting that an expedition of the University of Jaén is currently undertaking renewed archaeological research at Qubbet el-Hawa, focusing primarily on the Middle Kingdom tombs (*i.e.* QH 33, Edel p. 429).⁴⁾

Some minor remarks:

- Not all tables are provided with a caption, which often complicates their comprehensibility (e.g. table on pp. LXIV-LXV).
- Many figures of tomb-sections etc. are represented without a scale, or indicate only an approximate, such as: *c.* 1:7 (pl. I).
- The necessity to repeatedly consulting the loose folding plans and plates contained in a separate folder is somewhat impractical. They are furthermore difficult to browse (one needs to take them all out of the folder) and do not easily slide back (frequent use may easily cause damage).
- The finds (*Funde*) are discussed per individual tomb, while no complete overview of all finds ordered according to object-categories is offered. Thus, someone interested in pottery needs to browse each chapter. The single list of objects that *is* given, contains only those transferred to the collection in Bonn. However, as indicated above, this contextual approach may likewise be advantageous for those interested in e.g. the distribution of finds in funerary contexts.
- Line drawings are generally difficult to verify, because not all reliefs are rendered photographically (e.g. QH 26, scene 18 and text 60-4, pl. VIII), or photographs are too bright, pale (no shadow) or reproduced too small (e.g. QH 25/26, p. 236, fig. 16), which complicates comparing line drawings with the original decoration or texts.
- While the presence of colour is usually indicated in the line drawings, it is regrettable that no colour photographs are included, for instance on a separate CD-Rom. Colour is an important aspect of (tomb) decoration. Also, the present state of preservation of the tombs may deteriorate in the future and colours may disappear without having received proper photographic documentation. The authors' consideration is obviously due to the fact that they publish only (archive) material at their disposal.
- The placement of scene-details and their corresponding overviews (photographs) is not always equally convenient, *cf.* QH 25/26, scene 7, *Abb.* 19, 20, 23, 24, 25 (pp. 237-40). The overview (divided in south and north end of wall: *Abb.* 19, 20) is printed on two separate pages, while details of the south end are placed adjacent to the non-corresponding overview of the north end.
- The table of contents does not mention the names of tomb owners: unless one knows the corresponding QH number, it is difficult to find a particular tomb owner.
- The paragraph below the bibliographical references on p. 967 (QH 36) seems to be missing part of the text.

These minor remarks aside, one can only applaud the publication under review. The authors should be congratulated for having managed to comprehensively and systematically render an enormous amount of data collected over a period of more than half a century. It goes without saying that the material published here is of prime importance for a number of disciplines within Egyptology. Well-known texts such as the autobiography of Harkhuf and the tombs of famous men such as Heqaib can be finally studied in their archaeological context. This is certainly a publication that should be available in every Egyptological library.

Macquarie University, Sydney,
May 2013

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⁴⁾ The project started in 2008 and is directed by A. Jiménez Serrano. See e.g. A. Jiménez Serrano, 'Das Projekt der Universidad de Jaén auf der Qubbet el-Hawa: neue Ansätze zum Totenkult im Alten Ägypten / The Universidad de Jaén project in Qubbet el-Hawa: new approaches to the Egyptian funerary past', in L.D. Morenz, M. Höveler-Müller, and A. el Hawary (eds.) *Zwischen den Welten: Grabfunde von Ägyptens Südgrenze* (Rahden, 2011) 182-205.