



Birmingham Egyptology Journal

Review by Gabrielle Heffernan

M. Raven, V. Verschoor, M. Vugts and R. Walsem. *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb. Commander in Chief of Tutankhamun. V: The forecourt and the area south of the tomb with some notes on the tomb of Tia*. Brepols 2011. ISBN 9782503531106. €85. 403 pages, 451 photos (64 accompanied by line drawings), 17 plans, 3 graphs, 807 line drawings (64 accompanied by photos) and 63 tables.

This book is the fifth volume in this series on the Memphite tomb of Horemheb, and focuses on two areas: the forecourt of the tomb and the area to the south which includes the tomb of Tia. While the previous four editions have been the joint work of the EES and Leiden under the direction of Geoffrey Thorndike Martin, this volume is the sole work of the Leiden Excavation. The first two volumes set out the reliefs, inscriptions and finds of the early fieldwork and the third and fourth volumes focused on a specific type of artefact, namely pottery (vol. 3) and human remains (vol. 4). This volume, in contrast to the previous two, focuses on a variety of objects which have been uncovered at two specific geographical areas, of the site. As such it provides a well-rounded view of the areas in question (the forecourt of the tomb and the area to the south), but consequently cannot provide as much detailed information on any one class of find. As a result it is of less use to those whose interests lie with a specific type of object and is more relevant to those wishing to understand better the site in its full archaeological context.

The book is separated into nine sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the excavations. The first part sums up, albeit very briefly, the history of excavations at the site beginning with its rediscovery in 1975 and describing the work both of the Anglo-Dutch mission and the current Leiden Expedition. This part then discusses in more detail the two areas of the tomb on which the rest of the book will focus: the eastern approach (including the forecourt) and the area south of the tomb. Accompanied by detailed plans and photographs it provides a more than satisfactory introduction both to the history of the site and to the areas focused on in this book. As such it may be used as a stand-alone volume whilst also acting as a valuable addition to the previous four studies in this series.

The second chapter examines a selection of the 142 architectural and relief fragments found by the expedition. The objects range in date from the Old Kingdom to the Coptic Period and consist primarily of inscribed blocks (both texts and scenes) although it also includes some architectural fragments such as a false door panel (p. 50) and a pyramidion (p. 58). The finds are organised chronologically with bibliographical references and photographs or line drawings for each item. Each set of fragments is preceded by a short introduction

relating to previous excavations, which allows the reader to contextualise the pieces more fully. A similar pattern is followed by chapter three, which catalogues the objects found by the expedition, again organised in chronological order. It should be noted that this chapter represents only a small percentage of the objects found by the expedition and should not be seen as a full catalogue of finds, but as one which 'present[s] a minimum amount of interest from the point of view of typology, epigraphy, relative completeness, or rarity' (p. 71). In both chapters two and three the discussion, photographs and drawings of the objects provide a clear description of the nature of each object, although the reader is left searching the book for a related map on which the locations noted in the descriptions can be pinpointed so as to fully understand the contexts.

In chapter four the author discusses the 'Saqqara-2000 hoard of coins', a specific find of Ptolemaic coins made, as the name suggests, in the year 2000. This 'hoard' was found in a shaft complex (99/1) which is located in the south-west corner of Horemheb's tomb and consists of 246 silver coins which, although no packaging was found, were likely to have been originally held in a linen bag (p. 141). Van de Vin, the author of this chapter, dates the coins to the reigns of Ptolemy VI – Ptolemy XII (p. 142). The description of the hoard preceding the catalogue, which makes up the majority of the chapter, includes a discussion of the dating of the coins and the history of the Ptolemaic Period so as to properly orient the reader. This makes the chapter an interesting read for those who are unfamiliar with the period in question, although the catalogue itself, which provides information in tabular form on each coin and its current condition, is only of use to those who wish to research the hoard in greater detail. The chapter is accompanied by some photographs which, although not exhaustive, are enough to satisfy the reader as Van der Vin notes that all of the coins carry the same design both on the obverse and the reverse (p. 141).

Raven and Vugts introduce 'new evidence on the tomb of Tia' in chapter five and, again, give an introduction to the archaeological context accompanied by plans, cross-sections and photographs, which precedes a catalogue of reliefs and finds with high-quality photographs and line drawings. The pattern of an introduction to the archaeological context followed by a detailed catalogue is replicated again in chapter seven, written by Barbara Aston, this time looking at pottery. The pots are divided by location which gives a good sense of the variety of ceramic forms which occur all around the excavation, and are accompanied by detailed drawings of each pot as well as comparative references. The items are further organised chronologically and by fabric, with a description of each fabric and commonly used ceramics shapes to begin the catalogue, so as to allow the reader easy access to the material. These descriptions are not only relevant in the context of Aston's study, but provide a good general introduction to the various clays, both Egyptian and imported.

Chapters seven and eight focus on skeletal remains, both human (chapter seven) and animal (chapter eight). In chapter seven Strouhal and Horácková present a detailed discussion of the remains which were found both in the north-east corner of Horemheb's forecourt and in the area to the south of his tomb; these were related to 'pit graves, poor quality surface burials and burial mounds' as well as, in some cases, a 'robbers' dumping ground' (p. 305). As with the rest of the book they begin with a general introduction to previous excavations of human remains at the site, before introducing their methodology which focuses on the partly preserved skeletons both in- and ex-situ, analysing sex and age and attempting to determine the number of male and female individuals. The remainder of the chapter provides an 'anthropological and paleodemographical' as well as a 'paleopathological' review of the evidence (p. 306) ordered by location. Numerous tables and graphs help to elucidate key points in the discussion as do photographs of many of the finds. The chapter provides a good introduction to the finds but, as the

authors themselves note, more detailed future publications are needed to fully discuss their palaeopathology.

Ikram's discussion in chapter eight is somewhat shorter than that of chapter seven and focuses on the animal bones found in the north-east corner of the forecourt of Horemheb alongside the human remains discussed in chapter seven and a range of artefacts noted in chapter five. Ikram speculates that they were originally buried in the tomb of Tia and were removed and dumped here by tomb robbers (p. 365). She divides her evidence by species and restricts herself to a brief analysis of the finds, although not without worthwhile discussion of the 385 bones and their contexts. Again, this chapter provides an introduction to the finds but photographs are sparse and so more detailed understanding of the evidence is not possible. One is left feeling that a later, more detailed, publication may be needed for the reader to fully appreciate the evidence.

The final chapter briefly looks at statuary from the tomb of Horemheb, which relates to a list of items from the tomb compiled by Hans Schneider as part of the 1975-1979 excavations (p. 375). Unlike previous chapters, authors Van Walsem and Raven analyse a small number of objects, rather than focusing on providing a catalogue of evidence. They purport to identify a selection of unprovenanced statues in museums with those recorded by the earlier excavation. The arguments presented in this chapter are mostly convincing although, as Van Walsem and Raven themselves admit, the identification of items with the tomb of Horemheb is, at times, a 'subjective matter' (p. 380); for example a double statue (Leiden AST 4) is ascribed to the tomb of Horemheb on the basis of style, its unfinished state, and intentional damage to the object, although the authors admit that the chair on which the couple are seated potentially contradicts this conclusion (p. 378). This discussion brings to the fore issues faced by modern scholars across the field relating to the uncertain identification of so many objects and the large numbers of unprovenanced objects; in doing so, it provides a stimulating, if unexpected, end to what is fundamentally a catalogue of finds.

An index at the end of the book allows the reader to access the items through both excavation and catalogue number, while a second index orders the finds from chapters two (architectural and relief fragments), three (objects) and five (the tomb of Tia) by location. This second index is particularly helpful as it allows the reader to contextualise the finds more fully, allowing study of more than one type of object in a specific area. Of course, a full index by location incorporating all chapters would have been even more appreciated so as to provide a complete overview of the site and its finds. That is not to criticise the volume or its contributors, who have created a detailed and analytical catalogue; the consistent style of presentation and the thematic introductions and analyses throughout the book make this volume highly accessible to scholars and a valuable contribution to the study of this mortuary monument.