

JARCE 43 (2007) - Abstracts

Martyn Smith, Pyramids in the Medieval Islamic Landscape: Perceptions and Narratives

Abstract: Contrary to the expectations of contemporary visitors who perceive Cairo through the lens of the 19th century divisions of the city into modern, medieval, and Pharaonic sites, in the medieval period (9th-15th centuries A.D.) the pyramids were an integrated part of the Islamic landscape. This paper examines the strategies by which the pyramids were incorporated into that landscape. The physical layout of the city was one contributor to this integration. The 13th century writer al-Idrisi describes in great detail the road from Bab Zuwayla to the pyramids, demonstrating that the pyramids were not part of any other cultural zone, but were a unified part of the landscape. Two popular stories about the pyramids (the visit of al-Ma'mun to the pyramids and the construction of the pyramids by the antediluvian king Surid) point to the conceptual integration of the pyramids within the medieval frame of reference. Previous interest in these stories has tended to focus on discovering their historical origins, but the contention here is that they are most interesting for the cultural work they do in establishing a conceptual frame for the medieval understanding of the pyramids.

Aleksandra Hallmann, The "Kushite Cloak" of Pekartror and Iriketakana: Novelty or Tradition?

Abstract: Cloaks and kilts are two elements of garments frequently seen in the art of Ancient Egypt. Many variations of cloaks exist, but there is little agreement on which part of a costume should be called a "cloak." The same name for different articles of clothing is used by scholars since there is no general conformity on the nomenclature of costume. Because ancient Egyptian garments are so different from contemporary dress, the major problems are of perception and the danger of over-interpretation. The Late Period, when many styles were mingled, is especially interesting. From the 25th Dynasty on, various types of cloaks are noted, among which is the intriguing example of one knotted on the shoulder. This very rare instance occurs on a stela of Pekartror (Chicago OIM 6408), and a statue of Iriketakana (Cairo, JE38018), two officials from the 25th Dynasty. Considering the available evidence, we can conclude that this garment has a Kushite origin.

Robert Steven Bianchi, The Nahman Alexander

Abstract: The marble Nahman (private Swiss Collection) and red granite Alexandria (inv. no. 3242) portraits of Alexander the Great, both created in Egypt during the first half of the Ptolemaic Period, have been virtually ignored in the literature. Nevertheless their shared characteristics, including the presence of inlaid eyes, invite discussion about the interaction of Hellenistic Greek and pharaonic Egyptian ateliers and, in so doing, call into question concepts of both a mixed as well as regional artistic styles. Their stylistic dependence on a putative common prototype underscores the liminal nature of Ptolemaic culture whereby Hellenistic and Egyptian elites could seamlessly navigate between both spheres and commission works of art which retained the integrity of the artistic tenets germane to the particular sphere in which the work of art was both

created and received. Both portraits serve to define the nature of ephobic representations of Alexander the Great which then may have served as models for other Ptolemaic royal images.

Aikaterini Koltsida, A Dark Spot in Ancient Egyptian Architecture: The Temple of Malkata

Abstract: This paper presents the archival material of the Metropolitan Museum of Art concerning the temple of Malkata, a monument virtually unknown to Egyptologists, as it has never been published. Besides the detailed description of its individual rooms, this study focuses upon the architectural form and use of space of this temple in order to argue that the officials/architects of Amenhotep III studied the Old Kingdom texts and/or monuments, in order to properly organize the Pharaoh's 2nd jubilee, and hence created a specific architectural design style that closely resembles its Old Kingdom predecessors.

Rogério Sousa, The Meaning of the Heart Amulets in Egyptian Art

Abstract: Notwithstanding the fact that the heart amulet stands amongst the most important items of magical protection in Ancient Egypt, little attention has been dedicated to the study of its symbolism. Although the heart amulets may seem quite simple in shape, its real complexity became evident when we see the formal diversity of this object that in fact was shaped according to different types and styles of depiction. It is also true that the heart amulet was perhaps one of the most frequently depicted amulets in Egyptian Art, being a common iconographic feature in some well defined pictorial contexts where it appears as a distinctive attribute of gods or humans. Given the wide diversity of shapes and contexts in which the heart amulet is depicted, we cannot expect to find only one meaning attributed to it, nor that its meaning stayed unchangeable. In this study, our aim is to point out the main symbolic uses of the heart amulet through the analysis of its artistic rendering and also to suggest its variations throughout the Egyptian history.

Mariam F. Ayad, The Pyramid Texts Of Amenirdis I: Selection And Layout

Abstract: Although long recognized to include selections from the Pyramid Texts, not since their original publication in 1901 have the texts inscribed on the walls of the funerary chapel of Amenirdis I been adequately examined. Work on the funerary texts of Amenirdis has revealed her selections from the Pyramid Texts to be both unique and concise. The texts, which were meticulously arranged along a North-South axis, include several allusions and references to elements of the Egyptian cosmos, and served to equip Amenirdis for her ascension to the northern sky, thereby helping her achieve a resurrection and an afterlife. This paper relates the textual content of Amenirdis's selections from the Pyramid Texts to their physical placement along the walls of her funerary chapel and argues that the particular arrangement of the texts was intended to guide Amenirdis out of her funerary chapel and to lead her toward the North sky.

Joshua Roberson, An Enigmatic Wall from the Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos, Re-Considered

Abstract: A group of previously unidentified cryptographic texts from the west wall of the so-called “sarcophagus hall” of Seti I’s Cenotaph at Abydos are translated and analyzed in terms of the broader corpus of Underworld Books. The content of these texts as well as their placement on the walls are shown to parallel annotations from the Book of the Earth, which occur later in the tombs of Ramesses VI and IX. Finally, a possible precursor from the second gilded shrine of Tutankhamun is considered. The status of the Book of the Earth as a supposedly unified composition is then re-evaluated in light of these findings.

Paul H. Chapman and Rajiv Gupta, Reinvestigation of a Middle Kingdom Head Provides New Insights Concerning Mummification and its Relationship to Contemporary Anatomic Knowledge and Funerary Ritual

Abstract: In 1915 the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition undertook excavations at Deir el Bersha. The most notable result was the unearthing of Tomb 10A and its contents. These included a disarticulated mummified head of the nomarch or his wife. Previous radiographs of the head detected indirect evidence of ethmoidal excerebration with partial destruction of the maxillary bones. We have reexamined the head with ultra-high resolution CT scans and found other remarkable post-mortem mutilations that were previously unrecognized. In addition to an ethmoid opening there is a defect in the occipital skull base that was also used for excerebration. It had previously been assumed that the maxillary disruption was related to brain removal. Our findings contradict this. There are also mutilations of the facial bones and mandible unrelated to excerebration. These were done with exceptional skill, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of anatomy. Contemporary medical terminology supports this. We conclude that the object was to mobilize the lower jaw, perhaps related to mortuary ritual. The psS kf and nTrwy blades are prominent in Pyramid Text passages relating to the Opening of the Mouth. Such observations lend themselves to speculation regarding an association between the observed mutilations and the role of cutting tools in the Opening of the Mouth ritual.

Tomasz Herbich, Darlene Brooks Hedstrom, and Stephen J. Davis, A Geophysical Survey of Ancient Pherme: Magnetic Prospection at an Early Christian Monastic Site in the Egyptian Delta

Abstract: In May of 2006, the Egyptian Delta Monastic Archaeology Project (EDMAP) conducted a season of geophysical surveys at the early Christian monastic site of Pherme in the Egyptian Delta. These surveys utilized the method of magnetic prospection, which enabled the EDMAP team to map architectural remains beneath the surface with greater precision and detail than previously possible. This article reports on the results of their work.

Mary-Ann Pouls Wegner, Wepwawet in Context: A Reconsideration of the Jackal Deity and Its Role in the Spatial Organization of the North Abydos Landscape

Abstract: An analysis of representations of Egyptian canid deities which is informed by current research on the ecology and behavior patterns of wild canids on the African subcontinent provides significant insight into the multifaceted levels of meaning associated with them in the context of the semiotic systems within which such representations functioned. The material culture of Egypt reflects previously unrecognized aspects of canid behavior, which were expressed in mortuary artefacts that make use of jackals as powerful symbols associated with the annihilation of the deceased's enemies and his or her successful post-mortem transformation. In this sense, depictions of jackals mediate between the deceased and potential enemies. However the representation of jackal deities on offering stelae and the evidence for votive behavior associated in particular with Wepwawet indicate apotropaic functions in the earthly realm as well. Patterning evident in the representation of canid deities on artefactual material from North Abydos further suggests that such depictions also relate directly to the built environment that formed their setting. The iconographic and inscriptional programs of the monuments reflect aspects of the ritual landscape of North Abydos in which Wepwawet and other jackal deities played a major role.

Wendy A. Cheshire, Aphrodite Cleopatra

Abstract: Typological variants of a nude Aphrodite adorned with an Egyptian headdress appear frequently among the small bronzes of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt as well as in Syria. Bronze "Aphrodite" statuettes wearing a vulture's scalp as an independent diadem or in combination with a crown of feathers and a sun disc framed by cow's horns repeat a type made popular by Ptolemaic queens, whose assimilation to Nechbet, the divine mother and protector of the Pharaoh, became increasingly commonplace. In particular, Cleopatra III showed a close link to the vulture goddess of El-Kab (Eileithyopolis) in Upper Egypt, where a sanctuary was decorated during her reign with scenes representing her eldest son and co-ruler, Ptolemy IX Soter II, in adoration of "his mother, Nechbet," presenting the vulture goddess as a divine counterpart to the queen.

The Greco-Egyptian syncretistic form illustrated by a statuette of the Greek Aphrodite wearing an Egyptian headdress was brought to Syria evidently in the mid- to late second century B.C. via the Seleucid queens. Beginning in 145 B.C. with the marriage of the daughter of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, Cleopatra Thea, to Alexander Balas, the Seleucid queens were consistently imported from the Ptolemaic royal family, who were, in any case, by that time their close blood relatives. In certain regions of the Seleucid realm, i.e. Phoenicia and Syria, the Egyptian attributes would already have been familiar to the native populace on representations of the goddess Astarte or Ba'alat. A bronze statuette "from Syria" in the Louvre may probably be regarded as the initial iconographical type of a former Ptolemaic royal lady turned Seleucid queen, in an apotheosized representational form as "Aphrodite/Nechbet" or "Aphrodite/Astarte." The vulture scalp may well have been interpreted on some occasions in the Seleucid realm as a dove, the most characteristic bird found with Aphrodite.

In Roman times, this syncretistic goddess, represented in several draped types, was used to express the apotheosis of Drusilla, the beloved sister of the Emperor Caligula, again in the

medium of small bronzes. One bronze statuette of Faustina the Younger as Venus with Egyptian provenance and the diadem of an Egyptian queen or the divine mother of the pharaoh, Isis/Hathor, represents the Empress in native Egyptian terms as mother of the heir to power, the agent of the continuation of the dynastic line. A second bronze Venus with distinct portrait features of Faustina minor wears the crown of Isis flanked by ears of corn, a Hellenistic addition that makes reference to Egypt's role – under the auspices of the Empress, or possibly posthumously the *Diva Faustina* – in supplying the Mediterranean world with grain in times of need.

Carolyn Routledge, The Royal Title nb irt-xt

Abstract: Egyptologists have found the royal title nb irt-xt difficult to interpret. While the title literally means “lord of doing things,” most scholars prefer to interpret the title as referring to either the king as chief cultic officiant (lord of performing cultic rites) or the king as a powerful ruler (lord of action). From a lexical perspective, both interpretations of nb irt-xt are possible. Through a contextual analysis of over 400 occurrences of the title, this study concludes that the title cannot be limited to a reference to the king in his cultic role. Further, the results of the study indicate that nb irt-xt has more specific connotations than to simply signify the power of the king. The title has strong connections to the king's role in creating order (maaat). This paper therefore concludes that nb irt-xt refers to the physical actions the king performs in order to create and maintain maaat in the world.

Nicholas S. Picardo, “Semantic Homicide” and the So-called Reserve Heads: The Theme of Decapitation in Egyptian Funerary Religion and Some Implications for the Old Kingdom

Abstract: Funerary texts of Pharaonic times indicate clearly that decapitation was one of the ancient Egyptians' most feared dangers during the post-mortem transition from earthly life to the afterlife. This theme is surveyed briefly to determine if similar concerns were held prior to the appearance of such religious literature. The result is a reconsideration of a unique corpus of Old Kingdom statuary: the reserve heads. Proceeding from a review of past interpretive studies, this article posits that several anomalous and oft-debated characteristics of the reserve heads are best understood by considering them in light of the theme of decapitation. Moreover, a reexamination of some fundamental assumptions about Old Kingdom religious beliefs, the disparities between royal and non-royal views of the hereafter, and the so-called “democratization of the afterlife” supports the hypothesis that the reserve heads reflect an emergent conception of a non-royal *ba*-concept.

John Gee, The Origin of the Imperfect Converter

Abstract: This study examines the origins of the grammatical form known as the imperfect converter. Well known from Demotic and Coptic, it is clear that the imperfect converter existed in earlier stages of the language with select usage found as far back as Old Egyptian.