

Images, Perceptions and Productions in and of Antiquity

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	viii
CHAPTER ONE: ANCIENT EGYPT	
Ancient Egypt: An Overview	2
Maria Helena Trindade Lopes	
SECTION 1. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN STUDIES	
The Presence of the Lithic Industry in Wadi C2 at West Thebes	20
Juan Candelas Fisac	
Statues with a Falcon on the King's Back in the Old Kingdom. Some Semiotic Readings	37
Francisco L. Borrego Gallardo	
On the Beginning of Monumental Stone Building in Ancient Egyptian Provincial Temples	52
Arkadiy E. Demidchik	
A Brand-New Cult in a Traditional People: What is the Role of “Antiquity” During the Amarna Age?	62
Valentina Santini	
When the Producer is the Product: The Demiurge's Self-Genesis in the Egyptian New Kingdom's Religious Hymns (ca. 1539–1077 BC)	74
Guilherme Borges Pires	
The Embracing Mountain: The Latest Research in the Royal Cachette <i>wadi</i> , Luxor West Bank	100
José Ramón Pérez-Accino Picatoste, Inmaculada Vivas Sainz and Antonio Muñoz Herrera	

An Approach to the Ancient Egyptian Social Imaginary: The Figure of the Dog as Guardian and Shepherd	115
Beatriz Jiménez Meroño	
On the Egyptian Diplomatic Ties with the Aegean During the Reign of Necho II (610–595 BC).....	130
Ronaldo G. Gurgel Pereira	
CHAPTER II: ANCIENT NEAR AND THE MIDDLE EAST	
The Mesopotamian Civilisation: An Overview	138
Isabel Gomes de Almeida and Maria de Fátima Rosa	
SECTION 1. ANCIENT NEAR AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES	
The Divine Feminine in Mesopotamia: The Rosette/Star and the Reed Bundle Symbols in Early Diyala’s Glyptic (c. 3100–2600 BC).....	156
Vera Gonçalves and Isabel Gomes de Almeida	
Building Identities in the Neo-Assyrian Period.....	178
Beatriz Catarina Tralhão Freitas	
SECTION 2. PHOENICIAN STUDY	
Changing Perspectives on the Phoenician Presence in the Mediterranean: Past, Present, and Future.....	190
Francisco B. Gomes, Elisa de Sousa and Ana Margarida Arruda	
CHAPTER III: CLASSICAL WORLD	
Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome: An Overview	202
Leonor Santa Bárbara	
SECTION 1. ROMAN AND GREEK STUDIES	
Cicero’s Personal Omens: <i>Pater Patriae</i> and <i>Electus Diuorum</i>	212
Rúben de Castro	
<i>Caesar</i> and the Ocean.....	223
Adrien Coignoux	

Pan-Mediterranean Dressel 2–4 Wine Amphorae in Rome and Ostia During the Middle Imperial Age (2 nd –early 3 rd Century AD): Reflections Derived from the Ceramic Contexts at the “Terme di Elagabalo” in Rome.....	233
Edoardo Radaelli	
Sparta, Thera, Cyrene. Myth and Cult of Theras, the Founder of a Lacedaemonian Colony	248
Kerasia A. Stratiki	
CHAPTER IV: THE RECEPTION OF ANTIQUITY	
Reception of Antiquity	260
Maria Helena Trindade Lopes, Isabel Gomes de Almeida and Maria de Fátima Rosa	
SECTION 1. ANCIENT EGYPT RECEPTION STUDIES	
Mummies and Moonlight at Karnak. On José-Maria de Heredia’s Egyptianising Poem.....	276
Åke Engsheden	
The Café Oriental: Egypt in Portugal at the Beginning of the XXth Century	289
André Patrício and Marcus Carvalho Pinto	
SECTION 2. CLASSICAL RECEPTION STUDIES	
Ciceronian Portraits in Oliveira Martins and António Roma Torres	306
João Paulo Simões Valério	
The Reception of Classical Myths in Alciato’s <i>Emblemata</i> : An Inspiring Contribution to Portuguese Modern Art?	316
Filipa Araújo	
SECTION 3. BIBLICAL RECEPTION STUDY	
Reception of the Biblical and Eastern Antiquity in Early Modern Records: Travellers and Pilgrims from Portugal to the Holy Land (16 th –17 th centuries)	334
Carolina Subtil Pereira	
CONTRIBUTORS	347

PREFACE

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”
—William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

“It may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity.”
—Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*

“The past is the present, isn’t it? It’s the future too.”
—Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*

This work is comprised of a large ensemble of geographic, temporal, and thematic reflections that intend to discuss the forms, topics, paradigms, and narratives of civilisations, both Ancient and those that structure the so-called Occidental Civilisation.

During the 19th and part of the 20th centuries, these civilisations—those considered the cradle of civilisation—constructed the field known as Ancient History and connected it to Greco-Roman Antiquity based on classical texts.

The origins of civilisation in Africa and Asia broke the construction of Egyptology and Assyriology. Still, some authors, who acted as defenders of an overly consecrated past, quickly created an “Ancient Oriental Age” or some “Pre-Classic Civilisations” given the status of a sort of antechamber for the birth of civilisation traits “par excellence”. And so, Antiquity and the idea of Antiquity was kept a prisoner of a vision that served the European criteria for civilisation.

To counter this reality, several authors who had been profoundly inspired by cultural studies restored Ancient History via the deconstruction of its hypotheses and traditional themes. Many linguistic and literary studies contributed to this, which led to greater attention being paid to the language and a new wave of questioning of its fonts, which resulted in an investigation into Antiquity that was profoundly more informed about the limits of its assumptions and generalisations.

Other significant contributions to this change were the intensification and ampliation of the “scope” of archaeological studies about Antiquity in the second half of the 20th century. Classical archaeology and the archaeologic branches of Assyriology and Egyptology led to a discussion regarding material culture in Antiquity and a new threshold being marked. Finally, by the end of the 20th century, with the emergence of the field of study focussing the reception of the “classics” and the use of the past in the contemporary world, the final blow was given to the reports that nationalised origins and legacies. The Eurocentric character of Ancient History fell for good. The world grew, widened, and Africa and Asia emerged and constructed the so-called Occidental Civilisation.

—Maria Helena Trindade Lopes

CHAPTER ONE
ANCIENT EGYPT

ANCIENT EGYPT: AN OVERVIEW

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The next chapter addresses a set of studies about themes of archaeology, philology, religion, and Egyptian culture, all from different historical times. Still, the unity and coherence of the work reside in the fact that all of them give body and expression to one of the oldest, most prosperous, and emblematic civilisations of antiquity—the Egyptian civilisation. This civilisation emerged and developed throughout the Valley of the Nile, and it had a truly impressive temporal span. This longevity is, in the first place, justified by its geography.² Egypt, contrary to other contemporary civilisations or cultures, benefited from natural frontiers that assured its stability and gave way to the development of a particular form of being and ways of relating with space. In the East and the West, it was defended by two deserts—Libyan and Arabic. In the South, the Nubian desert and the Nile cataracts were gradually “conquered”, closed, and used to protect the land. In the North, it opened up to the world through the Great Sea—the Mediterranean. These coordinates were enabled the maintenance of a civilisation that lasted for more than 3000 years.

On the other hand, it benefited from a river, the Nile³ (*itrw*) which, by crossing the territory from the South to the North, assured not only the fertility and productivity of the “desertic lands” but also the circulation of men and goods.⁴ The regularity of its floods determined the counting of

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² Vd. Kees, (1961)

³ Butzer 2001, 543-551. About the significance of this river, vd. the even more recent, Willems and Dahms (eds.) 2017 and Bunbury 2019.

⁴ Tallet; Argemi (ed.) 2015: 1-29.

time, the agricultural cycle and its three seasons—Akhet, Peret e Shemu—and the civil and administrative calendar.⁵

The understanding and apprehension of the surrounding spaces, such as deserts and rivers, led to a dual vision of reality that expanded beyond desert-river/death-life to the differences inside their own territory from Upper Egypt-Lower Egypt and African Egypt-Mediterranean Egypt. Geographically, climatically, and even politically, the South was always rather distinct from the North. Therefore, the Egyptians referred to their territory as the “The Two Lands” (*t3wy*). The political unity was reflected in the geographic duality in emblematic terms by the red crown and papyrus, symbols of the North and the white crown and the Lotus symbols of the South, as well as in the divine with the cobra-goddess Uadjit for the North and the vulture goddess Nekhbet for the South.

The installation and settlement of populations in this territory would have started around 5000 BCE, and was mainly expressed in the cultures of Merimde, el-Omari, Maadi, and Tell el-Farkha in the North. In the South, the cultures of Badari, Nagada I ou Amratense, Nagada II, Guerezense, and Nagada III dominated. This phase corresponds to the pre-dynasty period (5000–3200 BCE).⁶

At the end of Naqada III’s reign we finally witness the emergence of the pharaonic regime, which was consecrated in a unified state that emerged during the 0 Dynasty (3200–3000 BCE).⁷ Memphis, Ineb-Hedj, and “The White Wall” was founded, consecrating the union of Upper and Lower Egypt under the domain of a single pharaoh, a divine king, whose power was legitimised by being the double of Horus, the sacred falcon and son of Osiris, the founding hero of this civilisation. The first urban settlements⁸ and the first royal burials in Abydos occurred, as well as the emergence of writing with the first graphic narratives in palettes.

The deepening of the process of building a State was ended by the Archaic Period, also called the Thinite Period (3000–2686 BCE), which covers the

⁵ Vd. the classic Parker 1950 and Clagett 1989. A recent revision about this question by Martin 2015: 15-27.

⁶ Cf. Stevenson 2016: 421–468; Andelković 2011, 25–32 and Baines 1995, 95–156. However, we cannot forget the presence of populations (=cultures) all over the Sahara area, during pre-history, which is already attested to through the surviving testimonies its presence, namely through lithic tools.

⁷ Vd. Brewer 2014, 109 ss.

⁸ Moeller 2016.

two first dynasties.⁹ In this phase, the centralised state was consolidated in the figure of the pharaoh, who presented himself via the three names that constituted the basis of the royal title: the Horus name, representative of the divine falcon, Horus, the dynastic god of Egypt; the name of the Two Ladies, which established a union between the king and the two titular goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nekhebet e Uadjit; and the coronation name, also called the royal pre-name, introduced by the title “king of Upper and Lower Egypt”. Alongside this further development in royal ideology, the dynastic and the funerary cults, and the royal necropolis in Abydos and Sakkara, the creation of an administration occurred with the natural development and diffusion of writing, the establishment of the Calendar, and the first punitive and exploratory expeditions in Nubia and the Eastern Desert. At the artistic level, the appearance of royal statuary and private statuary in wood and stone should be mentioned.

The Old Kingdom¹⁰ (2686–2160 BCE), also called the Memphite Period or the Pyramids Period, which took place over four dynasties, and had its capital in Memphis correspond to the consolidation and centralisation of the Pharaonic State. This political model was mainly based on two assumptions of pharaonic ideology: the first confirmed the king as the rightful owner of all land and resources and, the second, affirmed that Egypt was the centre of the Universe. In this way, the policy carried out by the different royals of this period must be understood in the light of these fundamental dogmas. On the one hand, we are witnessing the appearance of broader and more specialised functionalism, necessary for the administration of the territory, which is named by and rewarded by the pharaoh. On the other, we come across a strategy of aggregation and exploration of the surrounding areas,¹¹ because the natural borders of Egypt did not, of course, coincide with the boundaries of the Universe. So, the Dakhla oasis is integrated into the country’s economic and social fabric, the Sinai Peninsula is regularly explored for economic rather than military purposes,¹² and Lower Nubia is subjected. Contact with the Northeast was also deepened, and Byblos and the Lebanese coast became indispensable financial partners. With regard to Asia and the western desert, there was no expansion policy, apart from sporadic policing operations to control Bedouins and Libyans.

⁹ Wilkinson 2001 and Wenke 2001, 413-418.

¹⁰ Der Manuelian, Schneider, 2015; Moreno Garcia, 2004 and Verner 2001, 585-591.

¹¹ Valbelle 1990.

¹² Because of the copper mines.

In political terms, during the IV Dynasty, the king assumed a new divine legitimation that was expressed through the title “son of Re”, which was conferred by the clergy of Heliopolis. This new title reinforced the royal connection to the solar clergy, whose power and wealth increased proportionally with in the reigns of various pharaohs.

In parallel, there were significant changes in the economic and social fabric resulting from the accumulation of functions in the administration by some families. Thus, in the VI Dynasty, the Empire was faced with an economically devalued and weakened royalty that was strengthened to the point of beginning to assert its independence as a result of the consecutive payments made by the king to his officials and the power of local governors. This situation led to the breakdown of the administration and the automation of the nomarchs, who announced the fall of the Empire.

Culturally speaking, the Old Kingdom is considered to be the golden age of Egyptian civilisation. Notable progress occurred in the field of construction, as well as with regard to artistic techniques and representations:¹³ such as the funerary complex of Djoser (III Dynasty); the Pyramids of Giza (IV Dynasty); the development of mastabas; and the constructions of the first solar temples (V Dynasty), sculptures, and bas-reliefs that reveal a mastery unparalleled in history, jewellery, and furniture. The first funerary texts in history also appear in the Pyramids Texts.¹⁴

The First Intermediate Period¹⁵ (c. 2160–2055 BCE), which corresponds to the VII, VIII, IX, X, and the first part of the XI Dynasties, occurred after the death of Pepi II. The progressive weakening of Pharaonic power and the affirmation of local separatism, further aggravated by climate change with inevitable consequences for the economy as stated by J. Vercoutter,¹⁶ led to the dismemberment of the unity of the Two Lands. The monarchs became transformed into real “warlords”, who fought among themselves and established alliances to increase their territorial control. Deaths, epidemics, and hunger increased.

It was a period of profound political, economic, social, and mental crises and its consequences at an intellectual and ideological level were remarkable. On the one hand, a pessimistic view of the world is developed¹⁷ that will

¹³ Vd. Kanawati; Woods 2009 and Lehner 1997.

¹⁴ Vd. Allen 2015 and Allen 2001, 95–98.

¹⁵ Willems 2010, 81–100.

¹⁶ Vercoutter 1992.

¹⁷ Grimal 1988, 194–199.

have literary expression¹⁸ while, on the other, there is a “democratisation” of the funerary beliefs that extends the *post-mortem* solar destiny, until then known as royal privilege, to all individuals. This was confirmed in the “Texts of the Sarcophagus”.¹⁹ However, little by little, as P. Vernus and J. Yoyotte state,²⁰ local antagonisms polarised around two “dynasties”: the heracleopolitan, which controlled the Delta and part of Middle Egypt, and the Theban which, with the help of Copts, had subdued all of Upper Egypt. It was the Thebans, the men of the South, who were able to impose their power and authority on the whole country, thereby restoring the unity of the state and initiating a new phase of cyclical time: The Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BCE).²¹

This new phase of history, which comprised the second part of XI Dynasty, the XII Dynasty, and part of the XIII and XIV Dynasties, corresponds to the reunification of the Egyptian State under Montuhotep II; to its administrative reorganisation,²² which goes through the reform of state apparatus; and to the centralisation of real authority, which was supported by a stable economy and legitimised by ideology and literature that calls for fidelity.²³ In this way, the different kings of this period took steps to consolidate Egypt’s internal and foreign policies.

Thebes become the capital and the number of its temples increased, as well as the prestige of its tutelary god, Amon, who was elevated to the category of national divinity. Abydos, the sacred city of Osiris, also became a great religious metropolis and a place for pilgrimages.

The prestige and political weight achieved by these two cities make it possible to counter hegemonic trends in the great centres of the past, such as those of Memphis and Heliopolis. At the same time, the restoration of “abandoned” temples during the First Intermediate Period occurred, as well as an extension of the literate elite and the appearance of a “petty bourgeoisie”.²⁴

¹⁸ A pessimistic literature emerges: “The Admonitions of Ipuwer” and the “The Dispute between a Man and is Ba” in Lichtheim 1975, 149–163 and 163–169.

¹⁹ Vd. Dunand; Zivie-Coche, 1991, 190–192 and Faulkner 2004.

²⁰ Vernus; Yoyotte 1996, 125.

²¹ For this period vd. Grajetzki, 2006 and Oppenheim; Arnold; Yamamoto 2015.

²² Grajetzki 2013, 215–257.

²³ Vd. Posener 1969 and Pinto 2016.

²⁴ Vernus; Yoyotte 1996, 94.

Egypt's foreign policy gained a new lease of life at this stage: Lower Nubia was integrated into the Egyptian territory (XII Dynasty, Sesostrius II),²⁵ the relations with Byblos were intensified, and contact with the Siro-Palestinian region strengthened, reign after reign, to the point that, in XII Dynasty, there was a massive flow of immigrants.

Economic expeditions to Punt, as well as to the eastern and western desert, were facilitated by Sesostrius I.²⁶ To the north, Egypt opened up the Mediterranean, establishing relations with Cyprus and the Aegean. The high point of the Empire was reached with Sesostrius III,²⁷ the true precursor of the imperialist pharaohs of the New Kingdom.

In cultural terms, the Middle Kingdom asserted itself as the founder of a new "classicism", which was essentially characterised by the search for harmony and perfection.²⁸ Its remains are not as impressive as those found in the Old Kingdom, but the funerary temple of Mentuhotep II²⁹ deserves a mention as it inspired Hatshepsut centuries later. There were some innovations in sculpture and the treatment of figures. It appears that, for the first time, a sense of individualisation was transmitted. In the field of literature, Egypt reached its highest expression, producing some of its masterpieces. It renewed an old genre, the wisdom teachings, placing them at the service of politics.³⁰ It also produced poems, short stories, narrative fiction, and novels.³¹ This portrait of the Middle Kingdom, however, only lasts until the end of the XII Dynasty.³²

Much of the XIII Dynasty, until the taking of Memphis by the "Asians", and the XIV Dynasty, which ran simultaneously with the previous one, with two reigning monarchies covering different areas of Lower Egypt, still belong to the Middle Kingdom.

However, this resurgence of "dynasties" or local powers indicated the weakening of the monarchy and announced a new phase of disintegration

²⁵ Vandersleyen 1995, 61-64.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 64-67.

²⁷ Tallet 2015.

²⁸ Franke 2001, 393-400.

²⁹ Arnold 1979.

³⁰ One of the most striking expressions of this kind is "Loyalist Teaching" (Posener 1976).

³¹ *The Tale of Sinuhe* is one of the masterpieces of universal literature (Parkinson 1997).

³² Cf. Vandersleyen 1995, 115-117.

that found its expression in the Second Intermediate Period³³ (1650–1550 BCE), which comprises part of the XIII, XV, XVI, and XVII Dynasties.³⁴

The succession of pharaohs, each reigning for a very short time, led to the decay of the royal power and the erosion of the administration, which gradually lost control over the territories. This weakening of the State allowed the weathering of the country. Egyptian power cantons in Thebes in the South gave rise to the XVII Dynasty.³⁵ The eastern Delta was absolutely controlled by the Hyksos, who reigned during the XV and XVI Dynasties.³⁶ Everything else in Lower Egypt was “abandoned” at the hands of the Asian communities’ vessels from Hyksos. The Egyptians became these foreigners’ collaborators in Middle Egypt until Cusae.

These Hyksos³⁷ (ḥkA-ḥAswt, in Egyptian) constitute an Asian population, originating from the Levant, which, having gradually installed itself in Egyptian territory, submitted to the kingdom of the eastern Delta founded by Nehesy (XIV Dynasty) and already densely populated with Asians.³⁸ Thus, from Avaris, the capital, they advanced to Memphis, where the first Hyksos king, Salitis, was crowned.

This sharp division of the country and the powers, despite the supremacy of the Hyksos,³⁹ led to the militarisation of a society that was, repeatedly, at war. Meanwhile, Nubia, taking advantage of the fragility of Egyptian power in the South, regained its autonomy. In the Northeast, the Hyksos kings, who adopted the traditional titles and apparatus of the pharaohs, plundered necropolises and cities, while imposing some traces of their civilisation. They introduced the donkey sacrifice, the cults of Canaanite deities, new weapons, and, probably, the horse.

This culture, which was integral in the Middle Kingdom, loses expression. Hieroglyphic writing, for example, as well as monumental art, slowly

³³ Ilin-Tomich 2016 and Popko 2013.

³⁴ The XIII Dynasty extends until the Hyksos took over Memphis, which was then supplanted in Thebes by dynasty XVII Dynasty. The XIV, which ran parallel with the first part of the XIII, ended with Hyksos.

³⁵ Vd. Valbelle 1998, 187-191.

³⁶ Vd. Vandersleyen, 1995, 168-178.

³⁷ Mourad 2015; Bietak 2001, 136-143.

³⁸ Regarding the progressive installation of Hyksos in the territory, vd. Vandersleyen, 1995, 204-206.

³⁹ It should be remembered that all territories were subject to the payment of tribute to the Hyksos kings.

disappeared due to the lack of teaching on a national scale, as highlighted by P. Vernus and J. Yoyotte.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, in the South, the Theban dynasty, after more than one hundred years of Hyksos rule, started the real war of liberation⁴¹ with the support of recruited mercenaries known as the *Medjay*.⁴² The final expulsion of the Hyksos and the unification of the territory became the responsibility of Amosis, the founder of the New Kingdom⁴³ (1550–1069 BCE) in the XVIII, XIX, and XX Dynasties.

The recent past profoundly influences this new phase in Egyptian history. The domination of Egypt by a foreign force, combined with the new material conditions (more sophisticated weaponry) led the kings of this period to a policy that was basically based on two complementary vectors: the construction of an Empire on a “universal scale” (ideological dogma) and its political-religious legitimation through the phenomenon of royal propaganda⁴⁴ and the affirmation of “divine causality”⁴⁵ that enshrined the actions of the gods on history.

The construction of a real empire will translate into a markedly expansionist policy, which begins with Amenofis I (XVIII Dynasty, 1525–1504 BCE) reaching its maximum expression in the reigns of Tutmosis III (XVIII Dynasty, 1479–1425 BCE) and Ramses II (XIX Dynasty, 1279–1213 BCE).⁴⁶ Tutmosis III,⁴⁷ with his policy of aggression in Asia, the emerging strength of the Mitanni, and the dominance and control of Nubia, transformed Egypt into an actual imperialist state. The hegemony achieved during his reign remained until the reign of Amenophis III (XVIII Dynasty, 1390–1352 BCE).

Ramses II⁴⁸ had to defend the Empire from the Hittite expansionist pretensions, which had extended its hegemony to the peoples of Asia Minor and North Syria, further jeopardising Egyptian supremacy in the Mediterranean. The

⁴⁰ Vernus; Yoyotte, 1996, 54.

⁴¹ Valbelle 1990, 123-125.

⁴² Liszka 2012 <https://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations/AAI3509198>

⁴³ Vd. Murname 2001, 519-525 and Grandet 2018.

⁴⁴ Vernus 1995, 163-165.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 135-137.

⁴⁶ Vd. Valbelle 1990, 137-148.

⁴⁷ About this royal figure vd. Cline; O'Connor 2006.

⁴⁸ Kitchen 1985

Egyptian-Hittite confrontation in Kadesh,⁴⁹ which was “understood” differently by the two players, did restore national pride and reaffirm Egyptian demands in Asia.

A few years later, and in the face of the emergence of a third force in the eastern world, that of Assyria, Ramses II finally secured a “peace treaty” with the Hittites, thus diplomatically guaranteeing the Empire’s borders. He then survived the first attack from the “peoples of the sea”, during the reign of Merenptah (XIX Dynasty, 1213–1203 BCE), and their coalition with the Libyans, during the government of Ramses III (XX Dynasty, 1184–1153 BCE). However, in the following reigns, the “imperial dream” was gradually lost.

The State that supported this political ideal was, of course, strong and centralised, both at the level of the royal figure and in the domain of its organisation. It had a solid economy, due looting and taxes paid as well as via the control of the main commercial routes.

Interestingly, in this context of the imperial dream, a revolutionary figure emerged in political, ideological, and religious terms: Amenofis IV (XVIII Dynasty, 1352–1336 BCE), the “heretic king”.⁵⁰ The change of name, from Amenofis IV to Akhenaton, and the construction of new capital, Amarna, outline Akhenaton’s political-religious project.⁵¹ This was based on: maintaining the hegemony of the Empire through an innovative universal belief: Atenism.

Atenism consisted of a new religious formulation that replaced the vast Egyptian pantheon with a single god, creator, father and mother of humanity, driver of the physical world, and the providence of all living beings, Aton, the solar disk. An ecumenical god, he was able to bring “all peoples” together under the same belief.

The influence of this “heresy” had repercussions on art,⁵² literature,⁵³ and the behaviour and feelings of Egyptian men. The peace of the Empire was assured, as Amarna’s abundant correspondence proves. However, neither

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 81-91.

⁵⁰ Vd. Laboury, 2010.

⁵¹ Regarding Akhenaton’s ideology, vd. Allen, 1989, 89-101.

⁵² Laboury 2011. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0n21d4bm>

⁵³ Grandet 1998, 61-64.

the military nor the priestly castes supported Akhenaton's political-religious project, which did not survive his death.

It is also essential to highlight the cultural development that took place in the New Kingdom to close this period of Egyptian history. In art, monumentality and gigantism became visible both at the level of architecture with its exquisite divine and funerary temples, and at the level of sculpture, which was punctuated by colossi. In literature, some genres from the past remained, such as the wisdoms, the novels, and popular tales, and biographies and epic texts emerged. The appearance of the Love Poetry stands out and, in the funerary texts, the composition of the Book of the Dead occurred.

The expansionist policy of the New Kingdom had allowed Egypt to have contact with other spaces, peoples, cultures, and religions. However, this contributed to a profound change within Empire: the installation of foreign colonies in its territory. Customs and traditions became adulterated, and even the language changed. At the same time, the scandals and corruption that spread in Egypt, especially after the XX Dynasty⁵⁴ inevitably led the Egyptian man to have a sceptical and critical attitude toward institutions. This led them away from the belief in the intrinsic excellence of the established order (Maat) and its great capacity for self-regulation. As a consequence of this rejection, the phenomenon of "religion" or "personal piety"⁵⁵ was supported by a new channel of communication with the divine: the oracle.⁵⁶ The Empire toppled as its support gradually collapsed. The beginning of the end had begun and so it entered the Third Intermediate Period⁵⁷ (1069–664 BCE).

This new cycle of the history of Egypt, which comprises the XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, and XXV Dynasties, was characterised by a marked weakness of "central power", which allowed the progressive installation of "indigenous" forces. According to P. Vernus and J. Yoyotte,⁵⁸ this period corresponds to four distinct phases.

The first comprises the time of the "kings of Tanis" and the "kings-priests" (XXI Dynasty, 1069–945 BCE). Effectively, after the fall of the New Empire, Egypt started to be "governed" simultaneously by two rival forces:

⁵⁴ Vd. Vernus, 1993.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 172 ss.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 193 ss.

⁵⁷ Dodson 2001, 388–394 and Kitchen 1996.

⁵⁸ Vernus; Yoyotte, 1996, 179-181.

in the North by a pharaoh, with the capital in Tanis; in the South by the high priests of Amon, centred in Thebes.⁵⁹ This accentuated division of territory and powers (political and religious) inevitably led to the decline of the monarchy's unifying and centralising functions, as well as decreasing Egyptian prestige abroad.

Meanwhile, the Libyans, who had been progressively undermining Lower and Middle Egypt, settled permanently in power, thus giving rise to the second phase (XXII Dynasty, 945–715 BCE). This corresponds to the “apogee of the Libyan kings”, whose capital was fixed at Bubastis. In this period, Egypt regained some of its international prestige,⁶⁰ Palestine was invaded, and Solomon's temple ransacked. The Phoenician cities again swore fidelity, and the old commercial circuits were resumed. However, at the death of Osorkon II, a succession crisis ensued that deteriorated into civil war, and Egypt thus entered the third phase: the period of “Libyan anarchy” (XXIII Dynasty, 818–715 BCE).⁶¹ Internal wars between the different princes first led to a bipolarisation of power (two pharaohs reigning simultaneously) and, second, to the definitive division of their territory. The last phase of this journey corresponds to the “conflict for reunification” (XXIV and XXV Dynasties, 727–656 BCE). The South succumbed to the Nubian Dynasty⁶² (XXV) that intended to extend its dominion to the entire territory. However, in the North, the princes of Sais (XXIV Dynasty) disputed its power. The pacification of the conflict ended up being determined by the Assyrians who precipitated the fall of the Nubian dynasty, thus opening the way to “reunification”. This enshrined a new stage in the history of Egypt: The Late Period⁶³ (664–332 BCE).

This period, which comprises the XXVI, XVII, XVIII, XXIX, XXX, and XXXI Dynasties, corresponds to a phase of alternation between Egyptian dynasties, which tried to reaffirm the dogmas of royalty without much success, and foreign dynasties, which precipitated the fall of an entire civilisation.

The reunification of the territory, after the Nubian rule, was due to Psametic I,⁶⁴ founder of the XXVI Dynasty (664-525 BC). For a century, Egypt

⁵⁹ Vd. Dodson 2001, 388-394.

⁶⁰ Vd. *Ibidem*, 390-392.

⁶¹ Vernus, Yoyotte 1996, 180.

⁶² Morkot 2000.

⁶³ Vd. Ladynin 2013. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zg136m8> and Lloyd 2000, 369-94.

⁶⁴ Spalinger 1976, 133–147.

recovered the climate of peace and economic prosperity and re-established contact with Phoenicia, Syria, and the Greek colonies. Egypt watched the fall of the Assyrian empire but failed, nevertheless, to face the mighty army of Cambyses, which subdued Egypt in 525 BCE, giving rise to the first Persian rule⁶⁵ (XXVII Dynasty, 525–404 BCE). This period lasts for one hundred years and profoundly marks the Egyptian imaginary that witnesses the progressive process of the “Asianization” of its civilisation. The following dynasties (XXVIII, XXIX, and XXX, 404–343 BCE) fail to stop this “process” and sink again under the second Persian domination (XXXI Dynasty, 343–332 BCE). Therefore, when Alexander the Great, a Macedonian, enters Egypt, in 332 BCE, he is received as the liberator and the Hellenistic period (332–30 BCE), with the Macedonian dynasty of the Ptolemies, signalled the last phase of Egypt’s political history.

After the death of Cleopatra VII, Egypt lost its independence forever at the hands of Rome (30 A.C.–395 AD).

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⁶⁵ Vd. Wilkinson 2010, 577–578.

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SECTION 1.
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN STUDIES

THE PRESENCE OF THE LITHIC INDUSTRY IN WADI C2 AT WEST THEBES

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C2 PROJECT ROYAL CACHE WADI SURVEY

Abstract

Due to the last two campaigns by the Complutense team in the wadi C2 located on the west bank of Luxor and, as a result of the works carried out there in 2017 and 2019, it has been possible to prove the presence of the lithic industry within the site. The prolific material found within the wadi mainly comprises nodules and retouched flakes of flint but also bifacial tools which, in their archaeological context, indicate that these were most likely tools used to carve the vast amount of graffiti that covers the wadi's walls. The relevance of this find underpins its impact on the chronology of the site since, although this type of material is problematic in terms of dating, it uses the Levallois technique. Therefore, this material would allow us to place the site chronologically into prehistoric frameworks and give this spectacular place even more relevance within the Theban necropolis. It also created a new approach in the interpretation of this unique landscape.

Keywords: flint; lithic industry; wadi; Royal Cache; prehistory.

The find

As a result of the last campaign that took place in February of 2019, the C2 Project Royal Cache Wadi Survey team at Luxor found evidence of the lithic industry within the C2 wadi located to the south of Deir el-Bahri temple (Figure 1). The pieces were found during the inspection of the site in the first days of the campaign, and then they were subsequently documented and analysed. These pieces formed only a small portion of the lithic presence within the wadi as this material can also be found scattered all over the site's surface, although it is slightly more concentrated in some

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