

**PRELIMINARY REPORT OF SPANISH ARCHEOLOGICAL MISSION IN
HERAKLEOPOLIS MAGNA. IHNASYA EL MEDINA, BENI SUEF).**

2019 SEASON



BY Maria Carmen Pérez-Die, Director of the Mission and Antonio Gómez, Jose Javier Martinez, Antonio Guio, Antonia Moreno y Bettina Bader.



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SPANISH ARCHEOLOGICAL MISSION IN HERAKLEOPOLIS MAGNA (IHNASYA EL MEDINA, BENI SUEF). 2019 SEASON

The 2019 campaign in Herakleopolis Magna took place during the month of November. The Project is under the supervision of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid and has been carried out with the help of the Ministry of Egyptian Antiquities and its office in Beni Suef. This year the sponsors have been: Palarq Foundation, Construcciones Lozoya and Hamdi Zaki

The team was composed of:

M. Carmen Pérez Die, Director. Antonio Gómez and José Javier Martínez, Archaeologists. Antonia Moreno Restorer, Bettina Bader, Ceramologist. Antonio Guio, Draughtsman, Sayed Ali Ghassab, Arabic-Spanish translator.

On behalf of the Antiques Service in Beni Suef the group was composed of Sayed Kamal Nadi, Mohamed Ibrahim Mohamed y Walid Mohamedin.

In agreement with the permission of the Ministry of Egyptian Antiquities we have carried out the following works:

I.- HERYSHEF TEMPLE: CLEANING, EXCAVATION, and DOCUMENTATION¹

The Temple was discovered by Naville in the late 19th century and excavated by Petrie in the early 20th century. The Spanish Archaeological Mission continued the work in the sanctuary from 2004 until 2019.

¹.-Excavated by Antonio Gómez y José Javier Martínez. Documentation. Fotographer, fotogrametric work : Antonio Gómez and Antonio Guio

1.CLEANING.- During the first days of this campaign we have carried out general cleaning of the temple eliminating the vegetation and weeds that have grown throughout the year.

Also we had obtain permission from the Permanent Comitee to use two shovel excavators (Hafar and Lodar) to remove the modern rubble and debris (Radim) on the south-west profiles of the Temple.

The accumulation of debris (Radim) around the Temple, resulting from the excavations by Petrie, prevents us from extending our investigation of the surface area of the temple.

1.- a Backhoe (Hafar) to remove only the top metres of the debris material (Radim) on the different profiles which has been completely confirmed as modern fill, with no stratigraphy and of no archaeological interest

2.- b.- Pay loader to take out this debris material (Radim), before remouvt ; then it will then be possible to excavate extensive new areas not excavated by Petrie or Naville, to reveal the continuation and size of the building.

We use this two machines with very goods results.



Zone of Radim to be remouved by the machine



Results of the work

2.-EXCAVATIONS

I.-The excavation campaign of 2019, has been developed in several areas of the Temple:

A.- In the corner southwest of the First Patio, near the Pylon

The Pylon. The purpose was removed; the ground of the excavation made for F. Petrie from the beginning of the 20th century, and to prepare the area for the extraction of the blocks of red granite with decoration, located in the trench of the pylon.



Area around the pylon

With the help of Reis Gamal Team from Luxor, we made the extraction of two big granite stone discovered in 2018 near the stone pylons, and they were placed over a “mastaba” of brick, like the others sculptures of the Temple. Is not the first time that the Reis Gamal come to Ehnasya to help us, with excellent results. Now we have in the Temple a little Museum of Open Air that could be visited by the people interested on it.

1.-One of the these stone was an **architrave of granito.**

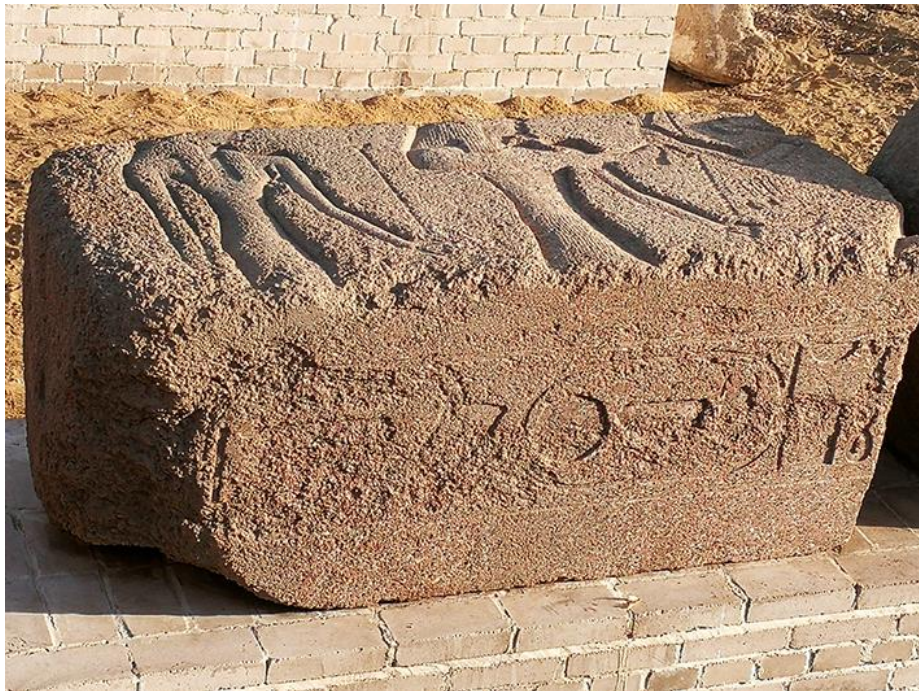
The underwater was always a problem, but with the help of the dewatering project it was possible to take off.



Architave in situ



Works of extraction of architrave



The architrave belongs originally to Senusret II of the Middle Kingdom, but it was reused by Ramesses II inscribing an scene of offerings.

The other bis stone is in granite, more than 8 tones weitgt, and it belongs perhaps to a basa of the colossus, now in the corner of the patio outside of his original place.



It was a very big work to take out because it was pleist in a place very deep.





But with the help of Reis Gamal Team we could place in his base



Big stone relocated

B. Peristyle Court North Side.

We made a stratigraphic sounding in the gate of the portico, looking for the foundations of the columns. One meter deep it appears some stone, perhaps the foundations of one column which has now disappeared.



Sondage in the North of Peristyle Courtyard

C. Peristile Courtyard. East Side

This area has been excavated, cleaning around the bases of the columns of the peristyle courtyard.



And also we excavated under the foundation stone of the floor in order to look others stones and to understand the construction of the patio. We found the second rang of stone and. They were separated by a preparation of desert sand



Second row of the stones

The pottery found between the stones give late Roman chronologies of the different uses and transformations carried out in different periods until even Roman times.



A large container was found. With the help of Bettina Bader we could take out and it will be kept in the magazine for future studies.



Ceramics found between stone foundations.

D.-OTHER FINDINGS

Out of the context, in the *Radim*, they appear two fragments of Stone. One of them is a fragment of a basa of columns and the other one is a fragment of relief decorated in both sides



One side shows a figure that only conserves the head and a shoulder



In the other side, the King offering the *heb sed* to a goddesses

3.-DOCUMENTATION.

We continuos work at the Temple preparing related documentation (photos, topography and drawings) to determine its history, to know the different levels of constructions and to understand more about this sacred building and the deity Heryshef.

A.- High-resolution digital **photogrammetry** system has been used to generate the planimetry and altimetry of the excavated areas.



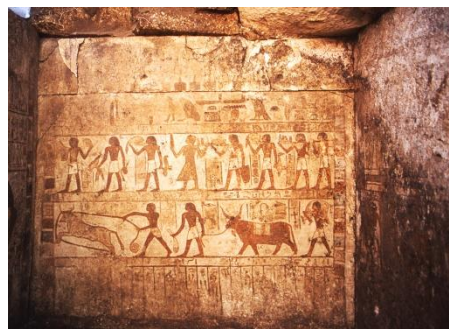
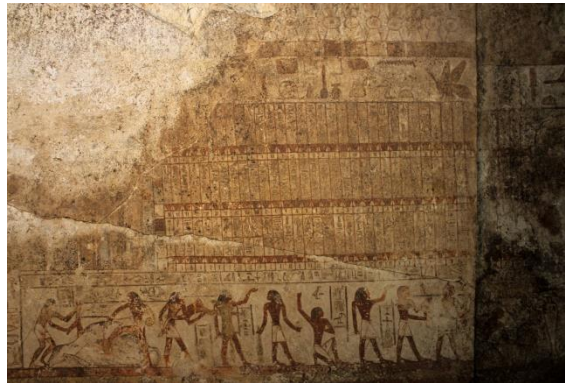
B.- We use also a **kit**, to take aerial photography's that provides very good images .





Aereal foto taking with a kit

II-PROJECT OF THE SALVAGE TOMB OF HOTEPUADJET. EXTRACTION OF THE PINTED WALLS OF THE TOMB AND RELOCATION IN ANOTHER PLACE, AFTER RESTORATION².



Tomb of Hotep-Uadjet. East and South wall

The tomb of Hotep-uadjet is the most important tomb found by Spanish Archaeological Mission in the Cemetery of the First Intermediate Period in Herakleopolis Magna. Dimensions: East wall: Two dallages In total 272 cms.long; 122cms. High. South wall: Two dallages: 150 cms. Long: 119 cms, high

The Supreme Council agrees to change this tomb from his actual position to the Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo **after the restoration**, because his actual conservation it is very bad and we have afraid that it could be destroyed.

The procesus is very long and we need at least three campaigns to finish our work. !

- 1.- Extraction of the tomb
- 2.- Restoration
- 3.- to reconstruct in Museum of Egyptian Civilisation

².- Responsable del Proyecto de Restauración:. Maria Antonia Moreno

1.-The First campaign (2019) has been to take off the tomb of this actual place. The tombs have 5 slabs and we decided to put it in our Magazines to prepare it for restoration next Campaign.

The Works in the Campaign 2019 with the help of the Egyptian Chief of Restauration in Beni Suef, Korani, has been:

-Initial cleaning of the adjacent and surrounding areas of the Tomb of Hotep-uadjet. The cleaning was done to delimit and recognize the slabs that form the burial, prior to its disassembly.



The tomb in situ

A total of five limestone blocks of the walls have been removed. The process has been as follows:

-Mechanical and surface cleaning of each of the slabs. Provisional consolidation of cracks and fissures. Reinforcement and preparation of provisional support on the back side to avoid possible breakage. For this, acrylic resins, Japanese paper, cotton gauze and plaster have been used.



Works on the walls

Before taking off we made a Protection with special packing material on the front and back with foam rubber sheets and polystyrene. Placement of wooden plates and Aerolam F-Board to give rigidity and solidity to each block.



Later, we transfer to the warehouse with mechanical means and help from workers.





Now, all the walls are placed in the Spanish Magazine in Ehnasya el Medina site

The restoration of the paintings wall will be made next Sseason in the Laboratory, before to transfer the tomb to the Museum.

4.- Pottery Analysis³

The main objective in this season was to fulfil the demand of the Committee for the magazines to remove studied material from the site magazine of Ehnasya el Medina for the material of the Spanish mission. This demand has been met by removing considerable amounts of ceramic material studied previously in close co-operation with the local inspectorate from Ehnasya el-Medina. This material is mainly derived from the Heryshef Temple from the years 2009, 2013, 2014, 2018. What is now left inside the magazine is still pending study and needs to be kept including pottery from the Necropolis of the First Intermediate Period, which still needs to be recorded for final publication. As pottery is the only find group in this necropolis it is of immense importance for the better understanding, in which sequence the tombs were laid out.

³ Works done by Bettina Bader

The analysis of the ceramic material from the Heryshef temple excavated 2018 has been finalised with concentrating on the important contexts from the foundation trenches of the temple and some soundings (i.e. 208, 223, 224, 227, 229). The oldest material dates to the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period, probably including the early New Kingdom. There was no material in the lower stratigraphic units that could be dated later than the New Kingdom. The stratigraphy above these lower units were disturbed heavily by Roman trenches robbing the stones and the excavation of Petrie in the early 20th century. This is very obvious by looking at the pottery, which is dominated by Late Antique pottery vessels such as Late Roman amphorae 7 and Egyptian Red slip, Aswan Red slip and some African Red slip wares to name but a few.

Also studied was some back log from the temple excavations of the years 2013 and 2014. Interestingly in some areas old pottery from the First Intermediate Period to the entire Middle Kingdom was mixed in with the meanwhile well-known Late Antique mixture (as Petrie excavated the temple in the early 20th century he disturbed the stratigraphy of Late Antiquity severely and thus, none of this material is in situ anymore). Dominant is always Late Roman Amphora 7 in several variations suggesting a longer activity at the site. This season strategic pieces for recording have been chosen, but recording itself needs to be done in the future.

This years' ceramic material was collected only in connection with the excavation of the two large pottery vessels in Square 45, which were situated below the lime stone blocks forming a floor. These two very large vessels (pot 1 had a maximum diameter of 88 cm, pot 2 of 48 cm) were made of a very rough Nile C2 fabric. Their rims were cut off by the stone floor but fragments of the rims have been found inside the fill of the pots. The bases are remarkable because they end in a 'cup' attached – making it impossible for the vessel to stand up on a flat surface. Such vessels are known in the mid-eight to the seventh century BC, for example from Elephantine (Aston, Elephantine XIX, cat.no. 1853). Additionally there also was a ridge around that 'cup' on the exterior. Such a feature is known from Late Antique Amphorae although in much smaller scale. The search for exact parallels continues, as the date of these vessels is very important for the dating of the features connected to the stone floor. However, in the Middle and New Kingdoms such base features are entirely unknown (Photos 1-4).

Some pottery from Sector 16 in the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom Necropolis, excavated in 2006 was recorded, which fills important gaps in the knowledge of this part of the site. Due to the high amount of material found, analysis still has a large backlog.

