

Researchers discover new ancient tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa in Aswan

December 22 2016



Credit: University of Birmingham

Archaeologists from the University of Birmingham have found "compelling evidence" of new Pharaonic tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa in Aswan, Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities has revealed.

A two-metre high ancient encroachment wall has been discovered below a visitors' pathway in the northern part of the West Aswan cemetery at Qubbet el-Hawa.

It follows an archaeological mission by the University of Birmingham and the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) Qubbet el-Hawa Research Project Group (QHRP), directed by Dr Martin Bommas of the University of Birmingham.

The newly discovered wall is thought to indicate the architectural support for the known [tombs](#) of the first upper terrace, including those of Harkhuf and Heqaib, who were governors of Elephantine Island during the Old Kingdom.

Owing to the landscape of Qubbet el-Hawa, the support wall helped to secure the hillside, and thus lower lying tombs, which were accessible by a causeway leading to a second terrace.

Carl Graves, a PhD student who worked alongside Dr Bommas on the project, said: "The findings are dramatically altering our understanding of the funerary landscape in this area during the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period in 2278-2184BC. I don't think anyone yet knows who the tombs might have belonged to."

Nasr Salama, General Director of Aswan and Nubia Antiquities, describes the discovery as "stunning" telling the Egypt Independent that it is now only a matter of time until new tombs are uncovered within the important cemetery.

Eman Khalifa, director of the pottery project within the QHRP, told the paper that the stone wall was dated by the pottery shreds embedded within the mortar used to build it. She said that the crushed pieces include parts of carinated bowls, executed in a style typical of the reign

of King Pepi II from the Sixth Dynasty (circa 2278-2184 BCE).

The find was part of the project's successful first field season, which included the recent discovery of the long sought causeway of Sarenput I, thought to have been the first governor of the area at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

Provided by University of Birmingham

Citation: Researchers discover new ancient tombs at Qubbet el-Hawa in Aswan (2016, December 22) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-ancient-tombs-qubbet-el-hawa-aswan.html>

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