

## Quarry epigraphy at Hatnub

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### *General presentation of site*

Hatnub is a region of the Eastern Desert spreading over several square kilometres, the core of which is approximately 16.4km south-east of Amarna (Kom el-Nana). The modern toponym 'Hatnub' is an early Egyptological rendering of its ancient toponym, *ḥwt-nbw* 'Mansion of Gold'.<sup>1</sup> The Hatnub region was considered by the Ancient Egyptians to be the most prestigious source of the milky-white translucent stone *bjt* or *šs(t)*, rendered variously in contemporary research literature as 'Egyptian alabaster', 'calcite', and 'travertine'.<sup>2</sup> In the Hatnub region, several discrete ancient quarries for this stone are visible,<sup>3</sup> though to date only three of them (Quarries P, R, and T)<sup>4</sup> have preserved epigraphy. The Hatnub region also contains the relatively well-preserved traces of a network of ancient roads connecting the quarries with the Nile Valley.<sup>5</sup> Around the quarries, and along the main road, there are also extensive remains of cairns, and dry-stone huts and windbreaks used by the ancient population working around the quarries.<sup>6</sup>

The first modern Egyptologists to visit Hatnub were Percy Newberry and Howard Carter in 1891,<sup>7</sup> with the first informal publication of epigraphy from the site being circulated by Marcus Blackden and George Willoughby Fraser.<sup>8</sup> Further in-situ work on Hatnub epigraphy was published by Flinders Petrie,<sup>9</sup> and Newberry.<sup>10</sup> Georg Möller worked at Hatnub in 1907,<sup>11</sup> and his research was eventually published by Rudolf Anthes in 1928.<sup>12</sup> This constituted the most recent in-situ epigraphic work on this corpus,<sup>13</sup> until the commencement in 2012 of the ongoing *Hatnub Mission*, co-directed by Yannis Gourdon and Roland Enmarch.<sup>14</sup> Non-epigraphic archaeological features of Hatnub have also been studied by Ian Shaw.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The toponym is frequent in texts from Hatnub; see SHAW 2010, p. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion in SHAW 2010; also KLEMM, KLEMM 1991; KLEMM, KLEMM, 2008, p. 147-167.

<sup>3</sup> For an overall survey of quarries in the region, see TIMME 1917, pls 7 and 8.

<sup>4</sup> For the designations, see PETRIE 1894, pl. 34.

<sup>5</sup> SHAW 2006, p. 254-255; SHAW 2013.

<sup>6</sup> SHAW 2010.

<sup>7</sup> JAMES 1991.

<sup>8</sup> BLACKDEN, FRASER [1894]. See also FRASER 1893-1894.

<sup>9</sup> PETRIE 1894, pl. 42.

<sup>10</sup> NEWBERRY 1895, pl. 22 and 23.

<sup>11</sup> MÖLLER 1908. See also MÖLLER 1909a, pl. 1; MÖLLER 1909b, p. 11 pl. 3.

<sup>12</sup> ANTHES 1928. Some reflections on the corpus already in ANTHES 1924; English translations of the ANTHES 1928 corpus of texts were included in SHAW 2010.

<sup>13</sup> The Hatnub material has been discussed extensively in research literature, focusing primarily on historical reconstruction of events, but all studies prior to 2012 were based on ANTHES 1928. Select examples: FAULKNER 1944; STOCK 1949, p. 62-69; SCHENKEL 1962; BLUMENTHAL 1976; BROVARSKI 1981; WILLEMS 1983-1984; HAFEMANN 1985; MODE 1985; GESTERMANN 1987, p. 173-179; EICHLER 1993, p. 38-45, 133-135; COULON 1997, p. 7, 14, 21, 35, 79; PEDEN 2001, p. 32-34; GOMAÀ 2002; GESTERMANN 2008; WILLEMS 2007, p. 84-110; WILLEMS 2008, p. 67-103; FAVRY 2009, p. 107-109; BROVARSKI 2010; BROVARSKI 2016. Palaeographical study: GOEDICKE 1988.

<sup>14</sup> GOURDON 2014.

<sup>15</sup> SHAW 2010. See also SHAW 1986; SHAW 1987. A brief report on a visit to the epigraphy in the Hatnub quarries is also found in CRUZ-URIBE 2004, p. 13-14, p. 33-36.

Rudolf Anthes' *Die Felseninschriften von Hatnub* reproduces c. 82 epigraphic features from Hatnub.<sup>16</sup> The current *Hatnub Mission* has to date catalogued more than 200 epigraphic features across all the Hatnub quarries, aided by modern visualisation technologies such as DStretch, RTI, and high-resolution photogrammetry. No epigraphy survives from the desert surface or from the dry stone huts in the Hatnub region,<sup>17</sup> which generally lacks suitable rock outcrops for the purpose. Epigraphy is found in only three quarries in the region, labelled P, R, and T:

- The largest single quarry is Quarry P, from which the large majority of Hatnub's surviving epigraphy comes, and with which this paper is principally concerned. This takes the form of a large open-cast oval pit (approximately 76 x 50m, maximum depth 28m from current ground level), into which a rock-cut ramp (c. 100m in length) descends from the north-west.
- Quarry R took the form of an L-shaped horizontal covered gallery (c. 55m long) cut into the side of a small wadi. It contained 28 epigraphic features,<sup>18</sup> all of which appear to be broadly datable to the Middle Kingdom (or possibly Second Intermediate Period, in one case). These features occur above the entrance to the quarry gallery, and also within the gallery itself. Extensive damage to Quarry R since its first discovery means that most of these texts are no longer extant.
- Quarry T is also no longer extant, but Petrie recorded that it contained a tableau portraying a pharaoh offering to a triad of deities, in Graeco-Roman era Egyptian style.<sup>19</sup> Traces of a single line of inscription survived, but only the name of Ashmunein was preserved.
- Three unprovenanced loose rough-stone stelae have emerged over the years, bearing representations and texts which strongly suggest they were found in either Quarry P or Quarry R.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Chronological distribution in Quarry P*

The oldest datable features are two texts from the reign of Khufu,<sup>21</sup> although one undated text simply commemorating a 'stoneworker Zebi' may be slightly older to judge from its palaeography.<sup>22</sup> The presence of two Khufu inscriptions inside the entry ramp provides a terminus ante quem for work at the quarry, and a significant period of prior use is also supported by the alabaster vessels from beneath the Step Pyramid complex which are inscribed and indicate Hatnub as their source.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 14 'inscriptions' and 51 'graffiti', though some of these entries represented multiple discrete epigraphic features (Anthes' Inscription XI = 6 items; Inscription XII = 8 items; Graffito 48a = 6 items).

<sup>17</sup> Other than the as yet unpublished discovery of 'pilgrim feet' at a hilltop cairn in the vicinity.

<sup>18</sup> According to BLACKDEN, FRASER [1894], p. 77. ANTHES 1928 published only 11 epigraphic features from Quarry R.

<sup>19</sup> TIMME 1917, 46 pl. 49.

<sup>20</sup> GRDSELOFF 1951; SIMPSON 1958; GOEDICKE 1959; SIMPSON 1961; POSENER 1968.

<sup>21</sup> ANTHES 1928, pl. 4.

<sup>22</sup> CNW 9; GOURDON 2018.

<sup>23</sup> AUFRERE 2003.

After Khufu, there is a hiatus in datable texts in Quarry P until the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty, which is well attested by 23 compositions (3 x Teti, 4 x Pepy I, 4 x Merenre I, and 12 x Pepy II). Another 13 possible compositions, which are not closely datable to a particular king, can be added to this Dynasty. Two compositions are clearly datable to the Herakleopolitan First Intermediate Period (1 x Mery[ibre?], and 1 x [Khet]y?), and another two conceivably might be contemporary with these. The largest concentration of texts in Quarry P is datable to the Hare nome nomarchs Ahanakht I (5 compositions), Djehutinakht IV (1 composition), Neheri I (16 compositions), and Djehutinakht V (2 compositions) and their families and courtiers (46 compositions not explicitly naming a nomarch); many of the additional 90 or so undated simple images of standing or seated men may be approximately datable to this period also, based on their similar manner of execution to the ‘nomarchal’ era compositions. The dating of these nomarchs remains a matter of contention, but Harco Willems plausibly suggests that the majority date to the post-unification Eleventh Dynasty and very beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty.<sup>24</sup> These compositions were probably all left within the space of three or four generations. After a small hiatus, one further text is clearly dated to the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Senwosret I, after which datable epigraphic activity at Quarry P largely ceases, with only one further text inscribed in the mid-late Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>25</sup> The overall impression is that epigraphic activity at Hatnub Quarry P was concentrated in the late Old Kingdom to early Middle Kingdom, after which the alabaster deposit seems to have been largely exhausted. Archaeological evidence also shows a similar time range of concentration, though it also shows some evidence for early Old Kingdom and New Kingdom activity on the nearby plateau, and for New Kingdom activity within the ramp area of Quarry P itself.

#### *Spatial distribution in Quarry P*

Epigraphic features are concentrated on both lateral walls of the rock-cut ramp that descends into the open-cast pit, and in three clusters at discrete points on the walls within the oval pit itself (see fig. 1). The spatial distribution of compositions correlates to some degree with their chronological distribution, in that Old Kingdom compositions predominate along the entry ramp, and in the north-west part of the open-cast pit, whereas ‘nomarchal’ graffiti of Ahanakht I and Neheri I predominate on the south wall of the open-cast pit:

- *north and south lateral walls of rock-cut ramp* (DN north side 9 compositions; DS south side 23 compositions)

Descending into the quarry along the ramp, there are a series of rock-cut recessed rectangular ‘panels’ which catch the eye. There are distributed roughly in horizontal ‘rows’ on each side of the ramp, with these rows abruptly descending in step form occasionally, as the ramp itself descends towards the open-cast pit. The majority of these panels contain Old Kingdom compositions (Fourth and Sixth Dynasties), usually of the ‘royal name tableau’ type (see below). 7 of these are carved in sunk relief with hieroglyphs (in two cases with red and blue pigment surviving), but 17 are executed solely in red pigment (see below); 4 are incised, and 4 are in high relief. In the present state of excavation, the original height of these panels above the floor of the ramp is not always clear; in some cases the panels are at head height or even below, whereas one of Khufu’s compositions<sup>26</sup> is elevated about 3.50m above the ancient ramp

<sup>24</sup> WILLEMS 1983-1984.

<sup>25</sup> CNW 3 = Anthes Inschrift XIV; ENMARCH, GOURDON 2018.

<sup>26</sup> DS 11 = Anthes Inschrift I.

surface. On the southern wall, 2 anonymous standing male figures carved in high relief might pre-date the Khufu's compositions on the same wall.<sup>27</sup> One of the Sixth Dynasty compositions mentions the 'Northern Hatnub of the Hare nome', which might have been the ancient name of Quarry P. Amid the Old Kingdom compositions on the southern wall are a few chronological outliers, such as an incised hieratic text with raised relief of seated man, possibly First Intermediate Period,<sup>28</sup> and a panel with a stylistically Middle Kingdom scene of red pigment man in gesture of adoration, with no surviving text traces.<sup>29</sup> The northern wall only contains Sixth Dynasties compositions, the majority being from the time of Pepy II. One of them records an expedition sent with 4 000 men coming from 4 different nomes (including the Hare and Gazelle, as the only two remaining legible names).<sup>30</sup> Another composition is left by the 'physician of the palace' Merpepy, who is already known in the rock-cut tomb of Ankhpepy the Black at Meir.<sup>31</sup> This is also reminiscent of a text left on the southern wall by Ankhmeryre, who is possibly the future nomarch of Meir, Ankhpepy the Middle,<sup>32</sup> showing the relationships between Hatnub quarries and the 14<sup>th</sup> nome of Upper Egypt.

- *north-west wall of open-cast pit* (CNW; 12 compositions)

Entering the open-cast oval pit of the quarry along the entrance ramp, a little to the left, there is a concentration of epigraphy in a small space of the north-west wall of the open-cast pit (5m wide 3m high). At the top, well above the current ground level lies the short incised text simply commemorating a *hmwty zbj* 'stoneworker Zebi',<sup>33</sup> its physical location high above the later compositions, and its palaeography, suggest it may pre-date the compositions left in the quarry ramp area by Khufu. Beneath this is a series of 6 or 7 red-pigment Sixth Dynasty compositions, mostly of the 'royal name tableau' sort (royal names plus first-person narratives by expedition members).<sup>34</sup> 2 or 3 compositions were added in a later date, during the very early First Intermediate Period.<sup>35</sup> Carved amid all these compositions is a two-line textual composition by a mid-late Eighteenth Dynasty individual, a 'Chief of Sculptors of the Lord of the Two Lands Any'.<sup>36</sup>

- *north wall of open-cast pit* (CN; 1 composition)

In the deepest part of the quarry, Möller recorded a single large composition commemorating the Hare nome nomarch Amenemhat, and dated to year 31 of Senwosret I.<sup>37</sup> This area of the quarry is currently deeply buried under very large mounds of loose scree, and has not been located by the current *Hatnub Mission*.

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<sup>27</sup> DS 6-7 unpublished.

<sup>28</sup> DS 14 unpublished.

<sup>29</sup> DS 4 unpublished.

<sup>30</sup> DN 1 unpublished.

<sup>31</sup> DN 2 unpublished.

<sup>32</sup> DS 17, see ENMARCH, GOURDON 2017, p. 238-239.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 23.

<sup>34</sup> CNW 1, 4-8 = Anthes Graffiti 3-8; CNW 11 unpublished.

<sup>35</sup> CNW 2 = Anthes Graffito 9; CNW 10 and 12 unpublished.

<sup>36</sup> See n. 26.

<sup>37</sup> CN 1 = Anthes Graffito 49.

- *'little man boulder'* (LMB; 43 compositions)

Entering the open-cast oval pit of the quarry along the entrance ramp, a little to the right, there is an outcrop of limestone riddled with thin veins of alabaster. While unsuitable for quarrying, the blank natural 'panels' of limestone, often fringed by natural alabaster 'borders', constitute a visually appealing space for commemoration. This area also lies directly next to the main footpath leading from the entrance ramp to the south wall of the open-cast pit (see below). Beside an isolated royal name tableau of Pepy I,<sup>38</sup> there are two incised Herakleopolitan hieroglyphic compositions, mentioning respectively a) King Mery[ibre?] accompanied by Hare nomarch Djehutinakht's son Djehutinakht,<sup>39</sup> and b) King [Khet]y? accompanied by a Hare nomarch Khuu's son Djehutinakht,<sup>40</sup> with biographical-style virtues being extolled. A third, probably roughly contemporary, composition occurs directly underneath Khuu's son Djehutinakht's text;<sup>41</sup> it is in incised hieratic, and the few legible signs suggest it comprised a list of expedition participants. Apart from these compositions, the 'little man boulder' is covered with another 39 images of men (most of them badly preserved), occasionally standing and more frequently sitting, usually holding long staffs indicating authority, usually facing to the right (which is towards the quarry entry ramp). These 'little men' are executed in a wide range of styles (incised, raised relief, pigment, and combinations of these), and the majority have no surviving traces of accompanying text; it is quite likely that they never did. The range of styles suggests they were not all created at the same time (though some of them do seem to sit in coherent 'rows'), but it is not possible to date them more closely based on their crude style. Carved in high relief amid these figures, 2 anonymous men closely associated might pre-date the Khufu's compositions.<sup>42</sup>

- *south wall of the open-cast pit* (CS; 100 compositions, including 19 free-standing stelae)

The densest concentration of compositions in Hatnub Quarry P occurs on the south wall of the open-cast oval pit, sheltered beneath a slight overhang in the rock. This dense concentration occurs on a space of vertical rock wall approximately 7m wide, and 3-4 m in height. Georg Möller noted in 1907 that this space appeared to be bounded by two natural rock boulders, and that there was a row of free-standing rough stone stelae running along the quarry floor between these boulders, propped up against the quarry wall.<sup>43</sup> At the bottom of the vertical rock-face, just above the

<sup>38</sup> LMB 37 = Anthes Inschrift III (now almost completely destroyed).

<sup>39</sup> LMB 40 = Anthes Inschrift IX.

<sup>40</sup> LMB 38 = Anthes Inschrift Xa (now destroyed) and Xb (king's name missing).

<sup>41</sup> LMB 35 = Anthes Inschrift XI zeta.

<sup>42</sup> LMB 4-5 unpublished.

<sup>43</sup> Möller took 11 of the free-standing stelae to Berlin, labelled in ANTHES 1928 as Graffiti 37, 39-41, 44-48, and 48a (48a comprises multiple stelae). The remainder Möller reburied in situ, and the current *Hatnub Mission* has discovered 8 such stelae (HP 1-4, 7-9, 11), and a fragment from the decorated wall (HP 8), in the vicinity of this part of the quarry; the likelihood is that some, or perhaps all, of these are the ones that Möller reburied. These 'stelae' are for the most part quite roughly shaped irregular pieces of limestone, on which red pigment images of standing or seated men have been executed (in two cases, they are incised *and* painted in red). Many of these stelae have surviving legible text traces, comprising titles, names, and occasional claims to moral probity. In terms of their general style and palaeography, they appear to be closely contemporary with the compositions on the vertical rock wall directly above them, from the times of Ahanakht I and Neheri I.

natural surface of the quarry floor, are two monumental red hieratic Sixth Dynasty compositions from the reign of Teti, of the 'royal name tableau' type<sup>44</sup>, and one composition of the same king with only his remaining serekh<sup>45</sup>. The average width of a wide hieroglyphic sign in these inscriptions is c. 5cm. Above and around these Teti compositions, there are 81 further red pigmented compositions (mostly standing or seated man in front of offering table plus hieratic text) datable to the times of Hare nome nomarchs Ahanakht I and Neheri I, and their close relatives and contemporaries. Most of these are applied directly onto the untreated stone surface, though 10 are inscribed on a smoothed-off or recessed 'panel' of rock wall (sometimes a natural niche), while one is actually incised and then painted red.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Graphic registers and text types represented in Quarry P*

While the majority of ancient epigraphy at Hatnub comprises combinations of text and image, there are 47 compositions which are text only, and there are 70 images with no obvious accompanying text. In some cases it is not clear whether the accompanying image has been destroyed; in other places it seems likely that the surviving images were never accompanied by text. A wide range of different types of work are found across Quarry P: 16 are in sunk relief, 14 are in raised relief, 20 are incised, while 138 are executed solely in red pigment (ochre) directly onto the rock surface (which in some cases was smoothed into a more or less rectangular flat 'panel' prior to being decorated). In several examples, a combination of incised/carved decoration plus red pigment is observable.<sup>47</sup> A notable feature of the site is the almost total absence of surviving black pigment.

Anthes' 1928 publication divided the epigraphic features into *Inschriften* (carved, hieroglyphic) and *Graffiti* (red pigment, largely hieratic). This division is not wholly satisfactory, since several of the composition types found in the quarry occur in multiple formats (carved and painted), and the current mission has identified examples of red-pigment hieroglyphic texts,<sup>48</sup> as well as carved hieratic (or hieraticising) texts.<sup>49</sup> We accordingly propose to use the more neutral term 'composition' to refer to all discrete epigraphic features at Hatnub. In some parts of the quarry (particularly the south wall of the open-cast oval), activity is so densely attested that it is not always obvious which may be considered 'discrete' compositions. In some cases, our analysis of discrete groups differs from that made by previous scholars.<sup>50</sup>

Most of the Old Kingdom compositions are arranged as royal name tableaux, in other words visual compositions featuring *serekh* and cartouche, often supplemented by the image of the king seated on a throne, surrounded by protective decorative elements.<sup>51</sup> The Sixth Dynasty

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<sup>44</sup> CS 11 = Anthes Graffito 1; CS 32 = Anthes Graffito 2.

<sup>45</sup> CS 68 unpublished.

<sup>46</sup> CS 58 = Anthes Graffito 12a.

<sup>47</sup> DS 10 = Anthes Inschrift VI, a sunk relief panel of Merenre I, preserves traces of blue pigment in the Horus falcon above the serekh.

<sup>48</sup> DS 12 of Pepy II; unpublished.

<sup>49</sup> DS 14; unpublished.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. CS 41 = Anthes Graffiti 29, 29a and 30. This comprises a large composition with multiple seated men in rows in discrete registers. The registers are treated separately in Anthes.

<sup>51</sup> See e.g. EICHLER 1993, 40.

examples begin to supplement this basic royal name tableau with texts giving lists of participants, and first-person narratives of the expedition in the voice of the expedition leader. These Old Kingdom compositions are executed in quite different fashion: Khufu, Pepy I and some examples of Merenre I and Pepy II are cut into the rock, whereas the other Sixth Dynasty examples are executed solely in red pigment in a rectangular cut or smoothed panel in the rock surface. The rock-cut examples have hieroglyphs, while the majority of the red pigment examples are in hieratic, with only the royal name element in hieroglyphs. Notwithstanding the different levels of formality of execution, they are clearly partaking of the same tradition of monument-making, focused on the royal name. Some of the later Sixth Dynasty examples lack a royal name, and instead focus in more detail on the achievements of the expedition leader. They often list the number of people under their command (this can be thousands of people), the number of pieces of alabaster mined (ranges from ‘four *htp*-altars’<sup>52</sup> to hundreds of blocks per expedition), and the number of boats needed to transport them.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, the later ‘nomarchal’ group of compositions (datable to the Hare nomarchs Ahanakht I and Neheri I and their families) do not name any particular king (though there are references to ‘the king’ (*nsw*) in general terms, and to the ‘King’s House’), with the focus instead being on the nomarchs, who appear to have ordered the expeditions to the quarry at this period. A large number of these compositions are explicitly dated by the regnal years of the nomarchs in question, and in their captions and titularies they arrogate royal trappings such as *ꜥnh dt r nhh*.<sup>54</sup> Individual compositions are often arranged in groups and were clearly created at the same time (to portray, for example, nomarch Neheri I and his sons).<sup>55</sup> The most basic element common to all texts in these compositions is the title string and name of the person commemorated; they often contain moral-biographical claims,<sup>56</sup> and expedition reports (though these are usually less detailed than the ones from the Old Kingdom).<sup>57</sup> Some texts also contain lengthy allusions to the cultic activities of this elite nomarchal family in Hermopolis.<sup>58</sup> Amid the moral claims, some of the texts from the time of Neheri I allude to politically unsettled conditions in Egypt,<sup>59</sup> and have been pivotal to reconstructions of the history of the late First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom. Many of the texts end with a type of ‘appeal to the living’ promising blessings for future visitors who will ‘raise the

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<sup>52</sup> CNW 8 = Anthes Graffito 3.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. CNW 1 = Anthes Graffito 6 (Pepy II, name of expedition leader lost) mentions coming to Hatnub with 1600 men, extracting 300 stones, and loading them into 2 boats.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. CS 18 = Anthes Graffito 23, where this formula is appended to the name of the nomarch Neheri I’s son Djehutinakht.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. CS 16-18 = Anthes Graffiti 23-25, dated to year 7 of Neheri I, commemorating the nomarch himself, as well as his sons Kay and Djehutinakht.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. CS 50 = Anthes Graffito 12, ‘I did what all men favour, wise and ignorant alike, and I did not distinguish ... I helped the hungry, anointed the unanointed, gave clothes to the naked’.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. CS 46 = Anthes Graffito 14, ‘I came forth to Hatnub as a man of 73 years’. For the textual genre, see BLUMENTHAL 1977.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. CS 39 = Anthes Graffito 17, which seems to allude to the daily temple cult ritual of ‘opening the face’ (*wn-hr*).

<sup>59</sup> E.g. CS 16 = Anthes Graffito 25, which describes fighting in the marshes, and says Neheri I was ‘like Sakhmet on the day of conflict’.

hand' to the 'image' (*twt* or *hntj*);<sup>60</sup> conversely, there are also curses for potential future destroyers of the images, where the wrath of Thoth and the gods of the Hare nome is invoked.<sup>61</sup> Occasionally, at the end of a composition honouring a senior member of the elite (e.g. nomarch or nomarch's son), there is an 'authorship' note indicating the actual official who created the composition on the rock wall.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes, particularly on the free-standing stelae, a dedication formula (*ir.n n=f X*) makes it clear that the monument was dedicated on behalf of the person commemorated by another person, often their 'brother' (*sn*).<sup>63</sup>

#### *Identities of individuals commemorated*

From the Sixth Dynasty the compositions begin to give details of expedition leaders, and list other participants in the expedition. For example, the Old Kingdom compositions on the north-west wall of the open-cast all probably date to the reign of Pepy II (three of them make this explicit). Various expedition members at Hatnub left compositions on this wall; for instance, 2 are god's sealbearers, another is a sealbearer of the *bity*-king; one is a director of boats; one is a 'pilot' (*jmj-jrtj*),<sup>64</sup> and another is rather more senior, being the 'Sole Companion of the Palace, overseer of royal settlers, lector priest and overseer of prophets Khnumankh whose beautiful name is Ankhy'.<sup>65</sup> Unlike in the First Intermediate Period texts, no Hare nomarch is, so far, attested in any of these Sixth Dynasty compositions or anywhere else in the quarry.<sup>66</sup>

The families of the Hare nome rulers Ahanakht I and Neheri I feature very prominently in the later group of compositions, particularly Neheri I's sons Kay and Djehutynakht (V). Several compositions were clearly sometimes executed on a single expedition, with the nomarch, and his sons, each receiving a composition side by side. Less senior officials on site are often sealbearers (*htmw* or *htmw-bjtj* are frequent), or overseer of ships (*mr h<sup>c</sup>w*).<sup>67</sup> Several of the compositions, often presumably memorialising those who actually created them, present the primary person commemorated as a simple 'scribe' (*sš*), or 'scribe of the portal' (*sš r<sup>c</sup>rrjtt*).<sup>68</sup> Some expedition members foreground their knowledge as physicians, with one being left by a 'wab-priest of Sakhmet' (*w<sup>c</sup>b shmt*).<sup>69</sup> Some of the monuments are not left by high expedition members, but rather by lower ranking administrators working on-site during the

<sup>60</sup> E.g. CS 51 = Graffito 32 (year 20 of nomarch Djehutinakht V): 'Now as for anyone who comes thus, not fetching what he is allotted(?): as for one who will raise his arm to this image (*twt*), he will <reach> his home well'.

<sup>61</sup> CS 64 = Anthes Graffito 19: 'As for him who would destroy these images (*hntjw*), it is the gods of the Hare Nome who will punish him'.

<sup>62</sup> CS 35 = Anthes 21, where it is 'the scribe of the portal, and wab-priest of Sakhmet Nakht's son Ahanakht who made this monument (*w<sup>d</sup>*) for' nomarch Neheri I; this composition is claiming authorship of CS 34 = Anthes Graffito 20, which commemorates the nomarch.

<sup>63</sup> Berlin 18556 = Anthes Graffito 40: 'Sealbearer Iaib born of Inet, which his brother Ipi made for him'.

<sup>64</sup> God's sealbearer CNW 2 and CNW 8 = Anthes Graffiti 9 and 3; sealbearer of the *bjtj*-king CNW 4 = Anthes Graffito 5; director of boats CNW 5 = Anthes Graffito 4; pilot CNW 7 = Anthes Graffito 8.

<sup>65</sup> CNW 6 = Anthes Graffito 7.

<sup>66</sup> Iha I (CNW 2 = Anthes Graffiti 9) is sometimes wrongly regarded as a Hare nomarch from the time of Pepy II, but the presence of the epithet *anx wDA snb* shows that he can't be dated back to the Sixth Dynasty. He is now attested in another nearby short composition (CNW 10 unpublished), dated to the year 4 (of his 'reign').

<sup>67</sup> CS 46 = Anthes Graffito 14 combines in one title string sealbearer, herald, and overseer of ships, as well as including other titles perhaps less specifically relevant to work at Hatnub, including 'warden of linens', 'overseer of the *šn<sup>c</sup>*-store' and 'overseer of the lake'.

<sup>68</sup> GOURDON, ENMARCH 2017, p. 239-241.

<sup>69</sup> CS 61 = Anthes Graffito 15.



expedition; one is left, for example, by a simple ‘*wab*-priest’ called Renu.<sup>70</sup> It is tempting to speculate that the large number of textless men on the ‘little man boulder’ may also have been left by more lowly expedition members.

### *Core issues*

Texts and images left in quarrying contexts stretch the boundary of the concept of ‘secondary epigraphy’. They are clearly secondary in the sense that stone extraction was the primary reason the site was being visited, but they are primary in the sense that they are conscious adornment to what would otherwise be blank rock surfaces produced by the quarrying activity. At Hatnub, the intention of nearly all identified epigraphy was to commemorate those who sent the expeditions to the quarry (king or Hare nomarch family), and to commemorate the actual expedition leaders and other administrators who came on site; the more modest memorials could well commemorate slightly lower ranking expedition participants. All the compositions would have been fairly easily visible to quarry visitors in antiquity when fresh, though in some cases they would have been a little too far above head height to be easily legible. Generally, later compositions avoid encroaching over older ones; one of the two identified cases of overlapping may simply have been an oversight by a later scribe, since the red pigment fades over time, and an Old Kingdom Teti graffito may after a couple of centuries no longer have been so easy to make out. In the area of the ramp leading into the open-cast pit, some of the red-pigment Old Kingdom compositions were applied onto sunken panels whose surfaces were already very uneven;<sup>71</sup> conceivably this represented a re-use of already existing, badly weathered panels for new compositions. The latest inscription in Quarry P, the outlier from the Eighteenth Dynasty Chief of Sculptors Any, is created physically amid (but not overlying) a slew of Sixth Dynasty compositions, and it is hard not to see this choice of location as indicating that Any wished to insert himself into an already ancient tradition of work in the quarry.

The south wall of the open-cast quarry pit, with two boulders delimiting a space of intense stela and rock-wall commemoration, suggests that this area of the quarry was imbued with particular significance. It is clear that the alabaster was worked out in this area of the quarry at an early stage, and, being on the south side of the open-cast pit under an overhang, it would always have been a pleasant shady spot to rest in, and watch work ongoing in lower, deeper parts of the open-cast quarry. The texts in this area from the time of Ahanakht I and Neheri I and their relatives show considerable concern with both the past and the future: their placement, directly above two monumental hieratic compositions from the reign of Teti may be deliberate – potentially an attempt to associate themselves with the glories of the Old Kingdom. Certainly, many of the texts extol the antiquity of the line of Hare nome nomarchs.<sup>72</sup> Looking into the future, a number of compositions actually address themselves to future visitors who will extract alabaster in the quarry, and enjoin them to make (invocation) offerings on their behalf in the future in return for a safe trip home; these texts are formally similar to the ‘appeals to the living’ found in tombs, but are also found in other expeditionary contexts elsewhere.<sup>73</sup> At Hatnub, they give the impression of creating a dialogue over time, creating a temporally distanced community of different generations of quarrymen, all coming

<sup>70</sup> Anthes Graffito 27; no longer extant.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. DS 12 of Pepy II; unpublished.

<sup>72</sup> FRANKE 1998.

<sup>73</sup> ENMARCH 2011, p. 98.

to this site for the same purpose, and with the same aspirations. The compositions are thus left with an eye to post-mortem social status, and ongoing interaction with living society, as is also apparent from the typical depiction of the individuals commemorated, standing holding staffs and sceptres of authority, in front of tables piled with offerings, often with servants proffering these offerings. Captions mentioning '1000 of bread and beer' are ubiquitous. The pseudo-funerary nature of the compositions in this part of the quarry is also enhanced by the presence of two carved eyes on the rock wall, amid the other compositions already described. These eyes do not form a pair, and they are carved in different levels of care suggesting they may have been created at different times.

A striking feature of the Hatnub inscriptions is the lack of a sense that the quarries are particularly sacred to any particular deity (unlike e.g. the Sinai turquoise mines being strongly associated with Hathor). This is perhaps less surprising for the Old Kingdom, where inscriptions typically preserve a strong focus on royalty, regularly stating that the work is carried out *n špss b3w* 'because of the splendour of the might of' one of the Sixth Dynasty monarchs.<sup>74</sup> For the early Middle Kingdom compositions, gods (particularly Thoth and the Hare nome deities) are frequently discussed, both as potential punishers for those who damage the compositions, and also in terms of cultic activity undertaken by the elite nomarchal family in Hermopolis, the nome capital. However, there is little sense that these deities have any particularly close association with the Hatnub quarries. An interesting point of comparison might be with the late 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty stela of Harwerre from Serabit el-Khadim, which urges readers to trust in Hathor to solve expedition difficulties;<sup>75</sup> the equivalent in the early Middle Kingdom Hatnub corpus is where an official whose name is now lost urges future workers at the quarry to offer to the image on the wall to guarantee a safe return.<sup>76</sup> The emphasis would thus appear to be on posthumous human, rather than divine, agency.<sup>77</sup>

Compared to other Middle Kingdom expeditionary inscriptions at more remote sites of mineral extraction, the overall tenor of the early Middle Kingdom corpus at Hatnub Quarry P does generally seem to more closely reflect contemporary uses of writing in tombs back in the Nile Valley, including at Deir el-Bersheh.<sup>78</sup> This is perhaps a reflection of the quarries' 'near desert' physical location, only a few hours walk from the Nile Valley; this contrasts sharply with the distant remoteness of e.g. Sinai. More distant regions were prone to be places where non-royal individuals interacted with the gods; it seems likely that Hatnub itself was not considered sufficiently remote to be treated in this manner. Instead, one wonders whether the name *hwt-nbw* 'Hatnub', a term which can also apply to a temple workshop fashioning statues,<sup>79</sup> belies a more quotidian view of the alabaster quarries as a workspace, albeit one that provided religiously important materials.

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<sup>74</sup> Two examples: CS 11 = Anthes Graffito 1 (Teti); CNW 1 = Anthes Graffito 6 (Pepy II).

<sup>75</sup> ENMARCH 2011, p. 104-105.

<sup>76</sup> See n. 62.

<sup>77</sup> See also EICHLER 1994.

<sup>78</sup> For example, the tomb of the official Djehutinakht (not a nomarch) at Deir el-Bersheh contains extensive parallels in phraseology to CS 50 = Anthes Graffito 12; see WILLEMS 2007, p. 43-58.

<sup>79</sup> See discussion in SHAW 2010, p. 6-7.

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