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# AN UNUSUAL SCENE OF BOATMEN FIGHTING IN HARWA'S TOMB DECORATION (TT37)

Loredana Sist  
(Sapienza University of Rome)

## ABSTRACT

*The Theban tomb of Harwa at the Asasif (TT37), dating back to the beginning of the twenty-fifth dynasty, was decorated with high quality reliefs that are now, unfortunately, very fragmentary. The porticoed south wall of the courtyard that precedes the funeral apartment presents a long, carved sequence of boats depicted in the middle of a papyrus thicket. Some boatmen are engaged in a fight as can be inferred from the position of the poles raised in the air. This iconography was mainly used in the Old Kingdom tombs of the Memphite area. Harwa's artists have therefore adopted a very ancient pattern unusual in later times, reinterpreting and innovating it with a creative spirit that is a precursor to the so-called Saitic archaism.*

## KEYWORDS

*TT37, Twenty-fifth dynasty, Marshlands scene, Fighting boatmen.*

## RESUMEN

*La tumba tebana de Harwa en Asasif (TT37), que data de principios de la dinastía XXV, fue decorada con relieves de alta calidad que, por desgracia, actualmente son muy fragmentarios. La pared porticada sur del patio que precede a las estancias funerarias presenta una larga secuencia tallada de barcos representados en medio de una espesura de papiros. Algunos barqueros se dedican a luchar, como se puede inferir de la posición de los palos levantados en el aire. Esta iconografía se utilizó principalmente en las tumbas del Reino Antiguo de la zona de Menfis. Por lo tanto, los artistas de Harwa adoptaron un patrón muy antiguo e inusual en tiempos posteriores, reinterpretándolo e innovándolo con un espíritu creativo que es un precursor del llamado arcaísmo saíta.*

## PALABRAS CLAVE

*TT37, Dinastía XXV, escenas de marismas, barqueros de combate.*

It is my privilege to offer the present study in tribute to Maria Giovanna Biga, with affection to an esteemed colleague and a treasured friend for over fifty years.

In 2018, I was officially invited by the Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Luxor to join the team that was then working in Harwa's tomb (TT37) in the Asasif.

I was asked to work alongside the Egyptian restorers who were carrying out the anastylosis of the figurative repertoire of the porticoed south wall of the court and who, in 2018, were working on the marsh scene.

Only a few traces of this scene located at the initial part of the third register from below are left *in situ*, while numerous fallen fragments were recovered in the debris that filled the court. In previous campaigns, several blocks were repositioned and reattached. Some reconstructions have inconsistencies that must be reviewed, while other fragments deposited in the warehouse, which was not accessible during my stay in Thebes, require adequate study for possible relocation within the scene in question before a future complete restoration of the wall.

Unfortunately, the south wall is in a disastrous state and only a few groups of very battered scenes survive from the immense figurative repertoire distributed over nine (?)

registers<sup>1</sup>. There is only an imprecise and not updated digital drawing with no detailed preliminary analysis or specific drawings. The most beautiful figurations have been published several times, especially by Tiradritti<sup>2</sup> in the course of general descriptions of the tomb. They are examples of the extraordinary quality that characterizes Harwa's tomb decoration and, in particular, the back walls of the porticoed court that precedes the immense subterranean funerary apartment<sup>3</sup>.

Both back walls, the northern and the southern, were completely decorated with an extremely low relief whose high quality has already been highlighted by Edna Russmann<sup>4</sup>, who visited the tomb some decades ago, before the beginning of the excavations. The edges of the carving are smooth and the details are characterized by simplicity and elegance<sup>5</sup>.

The extraordinary height and length of the porticos allowed the ancient Egyptian artists to carve long, multiple, superimposing registers with different groups of images. The decoration of the northern wall appears to have been devoted to illustrating offerings and moments of the festival with music and dance organized for the deceased. The southern wall presents scenes from daily life, especially food production activities taking place in the Egyptian landscape.

The southern portico completely collapsed in ancient times and the back wall presents devastating fire damage, especially towards the S-W corner. Although natural stones are non-combustible materials, fire and heat can cause irreversible changes in their structure. The typical forms of alteration of stones exposed to fire are: changes of colour, rounding of corners, spalling and cracking. Exposure to elevated temperature caused the stone to develop colour variations, hairline cracks and loss of strength<sup>6</sup>.

The courtyard was almost completely filled up with debris and eolian layers and needed excavations that lasted for several years. During the work, hundreds of fragments and blocks belonging to the courtyard wall decoration were collected. Anastylosis was only possible for a few of them. Scattered fragments of the surface decoration were found in the debris between the wall and the pillars and it was possible to identify the original location for some. The collocation of fragments which have no exact correspondence on the wall is more difficult. This will be possible only after a preliminary analysis and comprehension of the whole composition.

Another problem is the identification and virtual relocation of blocks no longer in situ: in ancient times, a lot of scenes were cut off the walls, as happened also in Montuemhat's

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<sup>1</sup> Above an undecorated baseboard 89 cm high there are several decorated registers that reach the portico ceiling. There should be nine registers, but because their height is not precise, it is currently difficult to determine the exact number.

<sup>2</sup> Tiradritti 2000: 10-33; Tiradritti 2004: 167-209; Tiradritti 2009: 25-40; Tiradritti 2016: 40-55.

<sup>3</sup> For Harwa's tomb architectural details Eigner 1984: 178-180, 182-185; for more recent interpretations Einaudi 2021: 32-40.

<sup>4</sup> Russmann 1983: 137-146.

<sup>5</sup> On the fragment MFA 72.692, preserved in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, attributed to Harwa's tomb, Russmann 1983: 139 writes "The relief is very low, its delicacy increased by the way in which the edges are rounded down toward the background. There is a good deal of softly modeled detail in such features as the muscles of men and the heads of animals; but there is a notable absence of incised detail where one might expect it, as, for example, in papyrus umbels. Though certain subjects and details may be taken from the New Kingdom, the figures derive their cropped, round heads, their physiognomies and proportions from Old Kingdom models. Compared to most Old Kingdom versions of these scenes, however, they seem less vigorous and more elegant. Indeed - whatever their actual sources of inspiration - the delicacy of these reliefs, the understatement of their modulated detail, the harmonious but somewhat spare balance of what can still be judged of their composition (as in the wide spacing of the papyrus stems) are curiously reminiscent of certain fine low reliefs of the early Twelfth Dynasty."

<sup>6</sup> Several traces of lime kilns and small local fires have been found in the court during excavations: see the pictures in Tiradritti 2020.

tomb, and they were dispersed in private and museum collections. A piece coming from the marshland scene has been identified by Russmann and is now preserved in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA 72.692)<sup>7</sup>.

### 1. The marshland scene composition

The long representation is located at eye level in the third register from the bottom (about 27 cm high)<sup>8</sup> and consists of a group of papyrus boats sailing towards the owner of the tomb, Harwa, represented in large size, at the West end of the wall. He is the focal point towards whom the various activities illustrated on the wall converge. What remains of the whole scene is about 2.50 m long (fig. 1)<sup>9</sup>. At present, only five fragmentary boats survive, but the vacant spaces before and after the scene, support the theory that originally there were more boats, perhaps seven<sup>10</sup>. They are represented in the middle of a typical swamp landscape consisting of plants, animals and water.



Fig. 1. Digital photographic reconstruction of the whole swamp scene, by M. Necci.

#### 1. 1. The paratactic papyrus thicket backdrop

The setting is provided by a background of unconnected, vertical and spaced apart papyrus stalks, rising far above the water and topped by rows of umbels. The papyrus umbels are gently arched at the top with five straw spikes at the base, realized in low relief with no engraved detail. The papyrus thicket motif was frequently used in marsh scenes dating from the Old Kingdom onwards, but the rigid and static image of the stalks was usually balanced by the irregular movement of the umbels, which differ in size and position. As Kantor has observed<sup>11</sup>, “the feeling for the massive, overshadowing character of the papyrus swamps, which produced the tremendous background of sedges used in Ti’s tomb, appears to be characteristic chiefly of the Old Kingdom. In later times, there was a continuous tendency to diminish the size and rigidity of the swamp landscape, until in many New Kingdom scenes it has become nothing more than a graceful clump of papyrus”.

In Harwa’s tomb, the papyrus thicket returns as a massive uninterrupted backdrop for the whole length of the scene, as in the Memphite tradition, but the result is quite different due to some peculiarities. The stalks are massive but spaced apart and not too high, so the effect is not overshadowing. The umbels instead, are all the same and are repeated in a paratactic order, as a frieze<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Russmann 1983: 140: “Assembled from three smaller chips, and somewhat broken along the internal joins, covered on much of its surface with a brownish incrustation, the relief is nonetheless easily recognizable as part of a scene in a marsh. Six stalks of papyrus, with one preserved umbel, make a backdrop for the figures of three men who, to judge from their poses, must have been in a boat.”

<sup>8</sup> The wall is bumpy and has partly slipped. The height of the register varies from 25 to 28 cm.

<sup>9</sup> All photos are by the Author. The digital reconstruction of the whole scene is due to the courtesy of Dr. Maurizio Necci.

<sup>10</sup> Forty-eight boatmen fighting scenes have been attested so far, including only one with six boats which are located in two superimposing registers (Azzam 2007: 3, tab. 1/1-1/9).

<sup>11</sup> Kantor, 1990: 7-11.

<sup>12</sup> For Old Kingdom examples, see Woods 2015: 1901-1902. In the Late Period, carved friezes of papyri become very common in the lower part of temple walls and also in funerary contexts: see for example the swamp scene in Petosiris’ tomb, northern wall dedicated to Djethotiuankh (Cherpion 2007: fig. 78).



## 1. 2. The birds

The depiction of papyrus thickets in Ancient Egyptian scenes is usually enriched with animal figures: the papyrus umbrellas in reality provide a natural habitat for birds, insects, and small carnivores that flock there. This decorative motif is also present in the Harwa's tomb swamp theme: in the space between the second and third boat, a large fragmentary image of a nesting heron survives, with its wings extended in front to protect its brood (fig. 2)<sup>13</sup>. The basket-shaped nest is placed among the papyri, as traditionally depicted in funerary scenes since the Old Kingdom. The plumage of the wings is extremely detailed as is the head with ornamental crest protruding from behind, supported by a long flexuous neck folded back on itself. The inclusion of this image in the context of the procession of boats not only underlines the fauna richness of the marshland areas and their wild character, but also serves to break the repetitiveness of the same patterns of rowboats and papyrus and to avoid monotony. The novelty of this representation lies in the size of the heron that occupies the entire central space of the register and constitutes a hiatus in the procession of boats. This heron is not the only bird present. The rear terminal part of another heron, characterized by the crest on its head, can be seen on a block that has been repositioned on the wall to complete the upper part of the register. This heron is smaller than the previous one, because it is confined in a narrower space (fig. 2A). Traces of two bird claws on top of two papyrus umbels can also be seen (fig. 2B).



Fig. 2. The heron in the papyrus thicket (L. Sist).

<sup>13</sup> See Houlihan 1992: 13-16; Schindler von Wallestern 2011: 325-328. On bird's parental behaviour, see Evans 2012: 94. Evans noted that the representation of birds crouching on the nest with wings outstretched forward does not correspond to the behaviour observed in real life. According to Evans, the unusual position of the wings was due to the rules of the Egyptian two-dimensional figurative representation. On the position of the wings deployed in an attitude of defense and protection, see Shonkwiler 2012: 49-52.

The entire scene is rich in wildlife details and reveals an accurate re-proposal and reinterpretation of older models by the artists who created it. However, the general perspective and articulation of the figurative space has changed: the narrative pacing feels looser and the landscape notation is predominant.

In addition to the thematic and stylistic observations, one wonders whether the choice to depict a heron in an attitude of defense and protection, is entirely accidental or whether it hides a religious meaning, especially considering that it is present in a typically funerary context. Why was a heron chosen for this scene among the many species of birds known in Ancient Egypt?

The heron was identified by the Egyptians with the phoenix/*benu* and was closely linked to the path of transformation and rebirth of the deceased. Chapters 83 and 84 of the Book of the Dead, titled *Spell for being transformed into a phoenix*, are dedicated to this fundamental passage of the rebirth of the dead to new life. The fact that the enlarged image of the heron occupies the central point of all the rowboats and that the bird is facing the image of the tomb's owner at the end of the register, suggests the existence of a hidden funerary meaning of this image in Harwa's path of rebirth.

### 1. 3. The water

The lower part of the papyrus thicket scene is occupied by the depiction of water, which is represented as a low-relief rectangle, probably painted with vertical waves that are no longer visible. Oars and poles sunk in water are carved below the boats.

### 1. 4. Boats and boatmen

Today only five boats are still visible on the south wall, looking towards the S-W corner. They are depicted one after the other, but are not in line and do not seem to be all of the same length. They are built with bundles of papyrus tied together by ropes<sup>14</sup>. The central part is the thickest while the ends taper and gradually rise without any distinction between bow and stern. The bow of the fifth boat is exceptionally bent to touch the surface of the water. For navigation, boatmen used oars and poles with points ending in a dovetail. The fragmentary conditions of the scene do not allow us to understand if a load was carried in the boats, as often documented in similar scenes<sup>15</sup>, but the uninterrupted presence of the papyrus thicket in the background seems to exclude it.

In each boat, there are three boatmen placed respectively in the bow, middle and stern, generally facing the bow. They are depicted standing, sitting or crouching, the rower being either sitting or crouching, while the pole attendant is generally represented standing. The standing boatmen are depicted naked with just a cloth belt tied around the waist<sup>16</sup>, while the seated figures wear a simple kilt.

### 1. 5. The boats procession

X – The first visible boat was probably preceded by other boats that were destroyed in the collapse that reaches up to the standing image of Harwa carved at the western end of the wall. Some fragments of decoration placed in the lower part, survived destruction and in particular papyrus stems and the wide band that depicts the water, testify that the marshland scene was much wider and extended westward (fig. 3).

<sup>14</sup> On the shape of the papyrus boat see Woods 2015: 1902-1904, fig. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Azzam 2007: 23-24.

<sup>16</sup> Asher-Greve and Sweeney 2006: 120, fig. E2.





Fig. 3. From right to left: fragments of papyrus stems in front of the first boat and a male figure standing on the stern, turned westward (L. Sist).

X+1 – A small fragment of the prow and, after a large gap, the terminal part of the stern survive from the first boat. The legs of a male figure standing on the stern and facing west are still visible. No pole is depicted in the lower part of the scene, so we must suppose that the boatman was raising his pole or oar in the air (fig. 3).

X+2 – The front of the second boat, slightly lower than the rear of the previous boat (see fig. 3), shows signs of a crouching and rowing boatman facing west. In the middle of the papyrus boat, there is another rower squatting and wearing a kilt. The shoulders are represented in profile. Finally, on the stern, the third seated rower was depicted. Only the left hand holding the oar remains (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. The second boat with three rowers squatting and facing west (L. Sist).

X+3 – The third boat is depicted after the heron image (fig. 5). The entire front of the boat is destroyed. However, the upper part of the wall still preserves traces of a male figure standing on the prow.





Fig. 5. The third boat with two standing figures facing east (L. Sist).

Unlike the crews of the preceding boats, this man is facing in the opposite direction, that is, towards the stern. He wears a cloth belt and raises his arms to hold the long pole that is not directed down into the water but towards the crew of the next boat (fig. 6). The same position can also be seen in the figure standing on the stern (fig. 7). The central figure, presumably a seated rower, is lost<sup>17</sup>.



Fig. 6. Detail of the boatman standing on the bow (L. Sist).



Fig. 7. Detail of the boatman standing on the stern (L. Sist).

<sup>17</sup> The upper part of the scene is completely destroyed and all the boatmen's heads are missing.



X+4 – The fourth boat was almost completely destroyed (fig.8): a thin sheet on the surface of the wall was blown off at this point due to the high temperature caused by the fire, but leaving a “footprint” of the original scene on the wall. The first man on the bow is depicted in attack position with his right leg forward and in the act of lifting the long pole to defend himself from the attack of the boatman of the previous boat. The second figure wearing a kilt is crouching in the middle of the boat and holds the handle of an oar. The third figure placed on the stern is lost, but must have been standing and holding a long pole, a fragment of which is visible near the oar of the second boatman.



Fig. 8. The fourth boat with three figures facing west (L. Sist).

X+5 – It should be noted that by virtually reconstructing the lost part of the stern of the fourth boat, it would overlap the bow of the fifth boat which, in fact, is unusually lowered so as to touch the surface of the water. A fragmentary image of a boatman standing on the prow with raised right heel, is the only figure left of the fifth boat crew (fig. 9). He is facing east, and must have been holding the pole upright, as there is no trace of it in the water below. The distribution and direction of the figures of this boat seems to follow that of the third boat and suggests that the fifth was followed by another boat with a fighting scene.

The Boston limestone fragment, MFA 72.692 (fig. 10) may belong to this hypothetical sixth boat as Russmann argues<sup>18</sup>: “Since the Boston fragment does not directly join any of the remains in situ, we are not further enlightened as to the specific activities of the boatmen; but the addition of another boat to this scene confirms one’s impression of its original richness and variety.”

The fragment in question (fig. 10) depicts the crew of a papyrus boat which is now lost, composed of three men all facing right: a central man crouching with an oar and two figures standing on prow and stern<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> See note 7.

<sup>19</sup> See the detailed description in Russmann 1983: 140-141; Russmann 2004: 74-75.





Fig. 9. From right to left: the rower sitting at the center of the fourth boat and the bow of the fifth boat with a man standing facing east (L. Sist).



Fig. 10. Fragment belonging to Harwa's tomb, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, n° 72.692 (after Russmann 2004: 75).

The first man was leaning forward over the bow of the boat, as is indicated by the still visible leg posture. This pose is consistent with that of a warrior attacking the crew of the previous boat, as shown in several parallel scenes. However, there are discrepancies. First, the boat is a little smaller in size than the previous ones and the crew is limited within a

narrow space. The posture of the last man standing on the stern with his shoulders in profile is unclear. He is making an effort by extending his hands downwards. Whether he is using a short pole or an oar, in any case, no handle is visible. The left hand of the seated middle figure is shown in reverse. The papyrus thicket backdrop is composed only by six papyrus stacks just behind the central figure. This is a very strange detail suggesting that the last boat was approaching the papyrus thicket but not yet inside. We must assume that probably the Boston fragment belongs to the marsh scene, but not exactly to the boat procession, which was perhaps followed by representations of swamp activities such as papyrus collection as Russmann supposes<sup>20</sup>.

## 2. Conclusions

In summary, we are faced with a long scene that included at least seven boats. The whole representation is organized around the great image of the heron. This scheme is analogous to that of well-known scenes of fowling or spearing fish in the marshes the central point of which is the representation of a lush papyrus thicket, rich in fauna details (birds, insects and small mammals) or the detailed depiction of fishes skewered by the harpoon<sup>21</sup>. The iconographic origin is northern, having been introduced in the wall decoration of the Memphite necropolis during the Old Kingdom, but it was widely adopted also in later times, especially in Upper Egyptian funerary contexts, without any geographical implication<sup>22</sup>. Swampy areas rich in papyri and birds, were not only in the Delta: small areas of this type, close to the Nile and the irrigation canals, were scattered throughout Egypt and were exceptional wildlife oases<sup>23</sup>.

Memphite is the fighting boatmen scene present mainly in the graves of Giza and Saqqara of the Old Kingdom<sup>24</sup>. This iconography is attested, but with few examples also during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. With the exception of one extremely incomplete example dating back to the New Kingdom and located in the Theban necropolis, no other parallels dating back to that period or later are known. The meaning of this representation has been the subject of long debate<sup>25</sup>. Was it a game, a mock combat or a real clash? Herb has focused attention on *pṛt*, the verb meaning “coming out” (of the marshes), with which the short inscriptions that frequently accompany the scene begins, and assumes that this event must be related to activities carried out in the swamp during specific seasons of the year<sup>26</sup>. In all the depictions of fighting boatmen the backdrop is devoid of decoration: the environmental connotations are usually given by the water rich in fish and flowers and sometimes by a few tufts of papyri scattered among the boats. The artists who worked on decorating the tomb of Harwa introduced the papyrus thicket background, which was previously mainly reserved for scenes of pleasure cruises, or fishing and hunting in the swamps. In the creation of Harwa's reliefs, there was thus a choice and a fusion with the subsequent reworking of various iconographic motifs from similar but not equal figurative contexts.

In the New Kingdom, the papyrus thicket theme was certainly widespread in Thebes and often used in the tombs of nobles and sometimes in royal burials such as the tombs belonging to Ay (KV23) and Horemheb (KV57). There is also an older example dating from the 11th dynasty, in the Mentuhotep funerary temple in Deir el-Bahari, a few hundred meters

<sup>20</sup> Russmann 1983: 141, note 29.

<sup>21</sup> Harpur 1987: 140-141; Woods 2011: 314-316.

<sup>22</sup> Different perhaps from the case of the ceremony called *zšš w3ḏ* dedicated to Hathor that could have had a geographical location, see Woods 2011: 316.

<sup>23</sup> Moreno García 2010: 50-54.

<sup>24</sup> See list in Bolshakov 1993: 31-34; Azzam 2007: 14-22; Oxford Expedition to Egypt: Scene-details Database.

<sup>25</sup> For the synthesis of the various interpretations and bibliography see Azzam 2007: 23-25.

<sup>26</sup> Herb 2001: 257-258.



from Harwa's tomb. Still vividly painted fragments in raised relief belonging to this now destroyed scene are preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum and in the Metropolitan Museum of Art<sup>27</sup>. The artists who worked on the decorative project of Harwa's tomb thus used the papyrus thicket theme that was well known in the Theban area from the beginning of the Middle Kingdom and mixed it with the iconography of fighting boatmen dating back to 1,500 years before, that had become obsolete. Why and how? These two questions are the focus of an articulated recent debate on *productivity* and *reproductivity* traditions<sup>28</sup>. When asked why Egyptian artists often adopted ancient decorative models, it can be answered that it is primarily necessary to balance the importance between iconic and symbolic aspects in the meaning of the decoration itself: images that were originally distributed for a particular purpose could be received and repurposed according to the different needs of the owner of the tomb<sup>29</sup>.

How could Egyptian artists access forgotten figurative traditions? They probably used a *Musterbuch* system rather than direct copies<sup>30</sup>, but to all this they added a completely new interpretative character<sup>31</sup>. For example, the representation of fighting boatmen is substantially different from the examples so far known: in ancient compositions the excitement of the fight is supplied by the tangle of bodies and sticks that dominates the entire representation. In the scene at Harwa's tomb, the compositional atmosphere is significantly different: a slow and relaxed rhythm is felt not only in the gestures of the boatmen, but also in the background punctuated by the regular and airy sequence of papyrus stems. We are far from the dominant and oppressive atmosphere created by the dense and majestic background of the papyrus thicket of the ancient scenes. In the tomb of Harwa, the whole figurative system is less complicated and articulated than the oldest models, but, at the same time, it is harmonious and elegant thanks to the wise use of a soft and bright relief of great quality.

This implies not only the intervention of highly skilled workers who have sculpted the scene, but also of master designers who have been able to choose from the complex figurative traditions of the past, to better represent the culture and personality of the occupant of the tomb. Their creativity is expressed in the re-interpretation of the figurative traditions of the past as Laboury has observed<sup>32</sup>.

The depiction of fighting boatmen in the figurative repertoire of Harwa's tomb is not an impromptu representation; in the known parallels, this type of subject is inserted in a wider context of scenes concerned not only with activities carried out directly in the marshlands (fishing, fowling, collection of papyrus stems) but also with driving herds (cattle, donkeys,

<sup>27</sup> Oppenheim 2015: 213–15, no. 152.

<sup>28</sup> Gillen 2017: 7–8, 11–13.

<sup>29</sup> Doncker 2017: 334–335: "...who ordered the copy and why; and what does it mean (if it does indeed mean anything significant)?".

<sup>30</sup> Der Manuelian 1985: 108: "One must differentiate between the different systems for the transmission of earlier scenes and texts to later Saite monuments. The first, of course, is the direct copy. The second is the *Musterbuch* system, i.e. a catalogue or collection of scenes, figures, texts, etc., from which the decoration of a specific (Saite) tomb could have been chosen. A further intermediary stage was most likely present in each of these two systems: a finished 'plan', intended for reproduction in a specific Saite tomb, would have served as prototype or pattern (*Vorlage*) between the original source (whatever it was) and the Saite 'copy'."

<sup>31</sup> For recent research on the development of archaism see Kahl 2010: 1–9; Morkot 2014: 379–380; Einaudi 2014: 335; Einaudi 2021: 32–40.

<sup>32</sup> Laboury 2017: 238: "All together, these picture units form a-virtual-common iconographical thesaurus, which is never attested as a whole, nor closed to modifications and additions ... On the contrary, it is systematically reinterpreted by each artist, who makes his own selection within this - open - range of possibilities and gives his personal interpretation of it. And, hence, it is clearly within this process of re-composition, or formal interpretation of a corpus inherited from the tradition(s), that the artist's creativity operates and is therefore to be sought and analysed."

goats) and craft activities. Fragments of the previous listed scenes are still visible in the carved reliefs of the south wall of Harwa's *Lichthof* and, once restored and studied in detail, it will be possible, I believe, to draw the grid of interconnections with ancient patterns. It could be a good example of intericonicity applied to a twenty-fifth dynasty relief<sup>33</sup>. In any case, the scene presented in this study is a good example of how artists, at the beginning of the twenty-fifth dynasty, were already skilled in finding, interpreting and mixing different subjects and patterns: the innovation that lies at the basis of the so-called Saitic Renaissance certainly started long before<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Laboury 2017: 247-251.

<sup>34</sup> Pischikova 2009: 18-20; Morkot 2014: 379-380.



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