

Undoubtedly, its broad, often daring interpretations will give specialists much to ponder about. The more general reader, however, may have some difficulties in following them.

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PRIVATE LIFE IN NEW KINGDOM EGYPT, by Lynn Meskell. Pp. xvii + 238, figs. 60, maps 6. Princeton University Press, Princeton 2002. \$29.95. ISBN 0-691-00448-X (cloth).

Scholars working on ancient Egyptian material have at their disposal an incredible wealth of published New Kingdom data relating to the social, economic, religious, and day-to-day life of non-royal individuals, data that are only recently being reanalyzed. Admittedly, much of the data come from a narrow funerary context, and mostly from one small village in the Theban area: Deir el Medina. Nonetheless, theoretical reworkings of these data can provide applicable information about the ways nonelite Egyptians lived and died. This is exactly Lynn Meskell's worthwhile purpose in her book, *Private Life in New Kingdom Egypt*. Using the wealth of archaeological and textual information now published, Meskell collects and reinterprets that which is appropriate for a discussion of domestic, non-public existence in New Kingdom Egypt. She incorporates a number of theoretical methodologies, including social theory, third wave feminism, and postprocessualism, while examining ancient Egyptian private life, from birth to death, for the non-royal individual.

An anthropologist and archaeologist by training, Meskell is not a traditional Egyptologist. Because of this, she relies strictly on textual material published in translation, which necessarily removes from her study the huge amount of material published only in Egyptian or unpublished (but recorded in archives kept in the Griffith Institute, Oxford). Relying on English translation alone for such interpretations can be dangerous. In fact, she often associates 19th–20th Dynasty Deir el Medina texts with 18th Dynasty archaeological material from the same village, a tricky business given Deir el Medina's apparent social and economic changes within that time. Despite these problems, Meskell's work represents the sort of contextual approach—one that uses both representational and textual data within a social, economic, religious, and gendered context—that is too seldom seen in the field of Egyptology and one that is desperately needed.

For the most part, this book is a reorganization and reanalysis of previously published information regarding private lives in the New Kingdom. Meskell's strongest contributions include a much-needed interpretation of Bernard Bruyère's published archaeological material (*Rap-*

*port sur les Fouilles de Deir el Médineh* [Cairo 1926–1939]) in chs. 3, 4, and 7.

In chapter 2, she examines the concepts of community and household, using information from Amarna, Gurob, and Tell ed Daba, but focusing on the Theban workmen's village of Deir el Medina. Chapter 3 examines "social selves"—the ancient understanding of individuality from birth through adolescence to the passage of becoming an adult. Most important is her new interpretation of infant burials from the Eastern Necropolis at Deir el Medina, revealing the significant care taken with such interments. The chapter then veers into a discourse on Egyptian cosmogony and its relation to "becoming a person." This mythological consideration amounts to a problematic tangent. The Heliopolitan creation of Ra-Atum is described only as "one of desire, without need of a partner, and his progeny are accidental: they are a supplement to his autoerotic intent" (62). This is the first of many instances in which Meskell ignores fundamental religious meanings: this is a sacred act of self-awareness and subsequent self-creation through union with the god's female entity (djeret, "the hand"), not just an act of desire. When sexualized religious concepts are discussed, especially in relation to funerary beliefs, the sophisticated mythological context is usually lost in favor of sexual, gender, and feminist theory.

Chapter 4 focuses on the household unit, marriage, adultery, slaves, and the social place of women. Here Meskell includes important new analysis of women's burials from Deir el Medina. She argues quite convincingly that Egyptologists should abandon the notion that a woman's lot in society was equal to her male counterparts. She marshals both textual and archaeological evidence from Deir el Medina to show that women rarely owned their own tombs, stelae, or statues and that they were more often the defendants in legal action brought by men than vice versa. She notes that women were able to supplement their income with household production, to which the texts certainly attest, but she concludes that this "entrepreneurial spirit" (109) was greater than that of the men of the village, who were always working in the royal tombs. This conclusion discounts a mass of texts from Deir el Medina, both published and unpublished, that point to a thriving entrepreneurial business for men in construction and decoration of funerary art and domestic furniture.

Significantly, in this same chapter, Meskell uses representational and archaeological data to conclude that the front room of the typical Deir el Medina and Amarna house was the site of a household cult focused on the child-bearing woman, fertility, and reproduction. She bases this on the presence of the *lit clos* (enclosed bed) and depictions of nursing females and apotropaic deities. The second room of the house is said to be the site of cult activity focusing on the adult male and past family generations, because of ethnohistoric parallels to the architectural space (early 19th-century Islamic Egypt) as well as the common presence of a mudbrick divan and ancestor bust in these rooms. While she does not assign any specific household function to these rooms (i.e., bedroom, reception room), she does demarcate them

according to gender. These conclusions, while perhaps valid, could represent a significant hypothetical leap from the limited data available.

Chapter 5 examines sexuality, love, and eroticism, using New Kingdom literature and artistic representations (Turin erotic Papyrus and figural ostraca) in conjunction with sexual and literary theory. While Meskell suggests some ritual or festival context for New Kingdom love poetry, she effectively removes it from a deeper religious context associated with sexualized rebirth. Similarly, the sexualized female body is a common representation in the New Kingdom tomb chapel. Meskell interprets these depictions as "domains of desire" (143) that allow the tomb owner to continue sexual activity in the afterlife, but she misses the opportunity to observe other embedded religious reasons for depicting these sexually charged images: to enable to tomb owner to revivify himself through sexual activity, as did Osiris after his own death. In her discussion of other New Kingdom tomb scenes, she assigns monolithic sexual meanings to complex religious messages. For instance, fishing and fowling scenes are reduced to "visual motifs and puns that metaphorized the process of ejaculating or begetting, such as spearing fish or brandishing a throwstick" (135). The Egyptians may have had some sexual understanding of these scenes, but such one-dimensional interpretation removes this representation from its multi-layered religious context of providing the tomb owner not only with fertility, but also with the power of order over chaos, and finally rebirth.

Chapter 6 places the human body within its social context, examining scent, hair, beautification, and festival behavior, as well as the commodification of New Kingdom Egypt, evidenced by the sheer mass of material culture. Here Meskell effectively proves (at least at Deir el Medina) that males were buried with more commodities than females, by counting the goods found in the tomb of Kha and Merit and assigning prices to them. However, she never states how she arrives at these hypothetical prices or why certain items should be assigned to one person over another in a given tomb if they are uninscribed. In fact, although many items may have been inscribed with the name of Kha, this does not necessarily preclude Merit from using them in the afterlife. Merit may have had fewer inscribed objects than her husband, but this does not deny her access to his commodities in the afterlife.

Finally, chapter 7 discusses ancient Egyptian attitudes toward death, mourning, and burial rituals, and the social memory of the community, relying mainly on textual and representational sources—in other words, on elite status burials. Meskell misses an opportunity to include an analysis of poorer burials, perhaps from Deir el Medina's Eastern Necropolis, and we are left with the impression that only the literate and wealthy had an understanding of an afterlife. This study would have benefited from a discussion of different conceptions and methods of burial for different socioeconomic groups and levels of education.

Overall, Meskell's contribution to contextual studies of Egyptian material is significant. Her analysis of Deir el Medina archaeological remains is a sophisticated addi-

tion to our understanding of non-royal daily life and death. However, the book suffers from a lack of untranslated textual source material and an inconsistent interpretation of ancient Egyptian religious beliefs.

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DIE KERAMIK PHRYGISCHER ZEIT VON BOĞAZKÖY, by  
*Eva-Maria Bossert*. (Deutsches Archäologisches  
Institut: Boğazköy-Hattusa, Ergebnisse der  
Ausgrabungen 18.) Pp. 185, pls. 167, maps 5.  
Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz 2000. €92.03; DM  
180. ISBN 3-8053-2561-4 (cloth).

In this impressive volume, Eva-Maria Bossert publishes the pottery of the Iron Age (IA) found at the once Hittite capital from 1906 through 1960. In a two-part introduction, Bossert first provides a broad context for her material by surveying the state of knowledge on contemporary pottery in Anatolia and north Syria. She offers detailed consideration of the stratigraphy and absolute chronology of the sites involved, including what is known from textual sources, primarily Assyrian records but also inscriptions in Luwian hieroglyphic script. She then turns to Boğazköy to discuss the topographical and stratigraphical contexts of the pottery. The earliest IA settlement, judged on typological grounds, was on Büyükkaya. The dwellers here seem soon to have opted to move to Büyükkale, that height's *Nordwesthang* (NWH), and the *Unterstadt*. By far the greatest amount of pottery comes from Büyükkale. Here occur two distinct phases of IA occupation: the earlier BK II (b-a), built directly on the ruins of the Hittite citadel (BK III, destroyed in the early 12th century) and using its walls for safety, followed by the considerably better attested BK I (c-a), which had its own fortification wall protecting a series of substantial buildings. The sequence on Büyükkale serves as the typological benchmark for other areas of activity, e.g., the earlier settlement on Büyükkaya. Of two levels on the NWH, the earlier (NWH 4) seems contemporary with BK IIb, while the later (NWH 3) corresponds to BK IIa.

The major section of the book is built around a catalogue of 1,367 items. Bossert begins by identifying 21 painted fabrics and 10 monochrome. Through the period of BK II, painted wares predominate; in the time of BK I, however, monochrome fabrics take the lead. What follows is organized by shape, ending with miscellaneous categories and imported pottery. The author combines discussions of individual shapes with discussions of the painted decoration seen within that shape. This organization makes it somewhat difficult to gain an overall picture of the decorative schemes. Further, even though Bossert provides an excellent series of motif drawings, she does not offer a collective discussion of the motifs as a decorative body. The principal shapes include amphoras, kraters, dinoi, jugs of several varieties, cups, and bowls. These forms first occur in either the Büyükkaya assem-