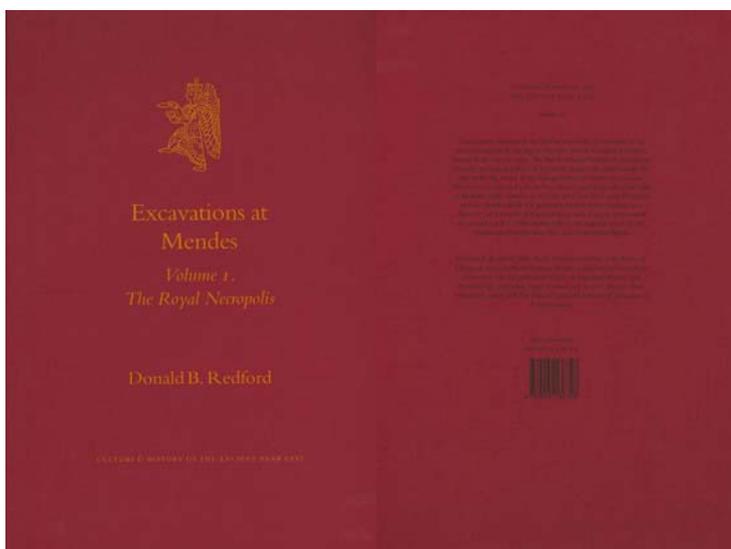


Redford, D.B. 2004. Excavations at Mendes. Volume 1. The royal necropolis. – Leiden, Brill (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, Vol. 20)

Book review by W. van Haarlem



'Excavations at Mendes' is a report of four seasons (1992–1995) of work in the royal necropolis of Mendes by the University of Toronto under the direction of Donald B. Redford. An introductory chapter is treating the history of work at Mendes, and the layout of the excavation. It was started by a team from New York University in the 1960's, under several field directors.

Chapter 1 describes the temenos walls in the excavation area, with extensive profile drawings, giving a detailed stratigraphy from the New Kingdom to Ptolemaic times. Chapter 2 concerns the sarcophagus and tomb installations of Nephertites I. Apparently, it was built on the site of an earlier tomb complex. A plausible attempt is made to reconstruct the complex. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the decoration and epigraphy of the Nephertites tomb. A number of stelae was found in the area with representations of the *Hat-Mehyt* fish, the nome deity of Mendes. This is possibly an indication for a place of adoration of some sort (p. 32–33). The tomb was destroyed not long after its completion, most probably by the Persians, invading Egypt for the second time. Chapter 4 is giving a short overview and summary of the Third Intermediate and the Saite Period findings; the subsequent chapter provides translations and commentaries on the texts found, apart from those mentioned in chapter 3, including *shabtis* and seals. Chapter 6 is a catalogue of objects from the royal necropolis. Whilst the descriptions are extensive, the drawings curiously look if they have been directly photocopied from rough field sketches, with in some instances millimetre draught paper still visible, and with barely legible notes (like figures 53 and 72). They almost seem to have been added in the last moment, as an afterthought. They are of an uneven quality, apparently done by various illustrators. Chapter 7 discusses the analysis of the pottery in the excavation area: not surprisingly, Third Intermediate Period forms prevail. Aegean and Canaanite forms testify to the extent of the foreign relations. In this chapter, the plates here (p. 164–184) are up to the required standards. Chapter 8 discusses the human remains of the Third Intermediate Period: drawings of selected tombs are provided. The next chapter deals with the charred plant remains and chapter 10 concerns the faunal remains, especially those found in and near a lime kiln. The last chapter is an excursus on the so-called basket-handle jars with fine drawings. After the black-and-white plates section (with mostly excellent photographs), an index has been inserted.

All in all, a valuable and careful source collection and a good starting point for further study. The Mendes I and II volumes (De Meulenaere, 1976; Holtz, 1980) are useful companion publications to this one.

Redford, D.B. 2004. Excavations at Mendes. Volume 1. The royal necropolis. – Leiden, Brill (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, Vol. 20). 220 pp. ISBN 90-04-13674-6. Price €115.00/\$155.00 (hardback).

Cited literature

Holtz, R.K., D. Stieglitz, D.P. Hansen & E. Ochsenschlager. 1980. Mendes I. – Cairo, American Research Center in Egypt.

Meulenaere, de, H. & P. Mackay. 1976. Mendes II. – Warminster, Aris & Phillips.