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# Pigs, pelicans, and predators at Beni Hassan

Linda Evans\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Macquarie University – Sydney NSW 2109, Australie

## Résumé

A two-year project has commenced at the Middle Kingdom site of Beni Hassan in which the animals represented in elite tombs are to be documented and their significance in the lives of the tomb-owners evaluated. The study forms part of a larger ongoing project by Macquarie University's Australian Centre for Egyptology, which has the ambitious goal of re-recording and publishing the 12 decorated tombs at the site. A field survey in mid-2015 has revealed a surprising number of unusual animal motifs, including examples of creatures that are rarely attested in the artistic record and entirely new scenes. Three case studies will be presented to illustrate the rich zoological repertoire at Beni Hassan and its potential to enlighten our understanding of the Egyptians' intriguing relationship with the animal world. These are confirmation of a tame Egyptian mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*) represented in the 11th Dynasty tomb of Baqet I (no. 29), a new image of a pelican (*Pelecanus* sp.) in full colour in the 11th Dynasty tomb of Baqet II (no. 33), and a curious depiction of a pig (*Sus scofa*) in the 11th Dynasty tomb of Baqet III (no. 15).

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\*Intervenant