

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN
THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS
AND ANCIENT THEBES**

**Papers Presented in Honor of
Richard H. Wilkinson**

Edited by Pearce Paul Creasman

**University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition
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Wilkinson Egyptology Series, volume I

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The Tomb of the Vizier Amenhotep-Huy in Asasif (AT 28): Preliminary Results of the Excavation Seasons 2009–2012

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Evidence for the career of Amenhotep-Huy, who served as vizier of north and south under Amenhotep III, is examined. His tomb in Asasif, AT 28, is undergoing excavation by the Institute of Studies of Ancient Egypt, and an initial description of its architecture, finds (including relief fragments, a concubine figure, votive ears, and other objects), and later reuse is given.

It is our pleasure to contribute to these papers presented in honor of Professor Richard H. Wilkinson. He has conducted research and excavation in Egypt for the past twenty-five years, mainly in the Valley of the Kings, and most recently excavating the Theban temple of Tausret, a queen of the Nineteenth Dynasty who ruled Egypt as a king. His excavations and investigations at Thebes have a special connection with us and our current project in the Theban necropolis at Asasif, as we have both worked nearby in the field, and this gives a special sense to this paper.

Tomb number 28 at Asasif,¹ as cataloged by Friederike Kampp,² is located in the Theban necropolis, in the northern area of Asasif, before and below the Eleventh Dynasty tomb belonging Djar (TT 366) and adjacent to the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Kheruef (Figure 1).³ In May 1978 it was identified by Andrew Gordon of the University of California, Berkeley and by Diethelm Eigner, as belonging to the Eighteenth Dynasty. Its owner was the Vizier Amenhotep, called Huy, who held his position during the reign of King Amenhotep III. The exploration of both researchers revealed the greatly impaired state of the monument and its unfinished status.⁴

THE VIZIER AMENHOTEP-HUY

Documents and monuments related to the vizier Amenhotep-Huy are scarce in comparison with referrals to other officials of the same period. The main reason for this darkness is, without doubt, persecution of his memory, which resulted in the destruction of his monuments.

Known documents related with the vizier Amenhotep are as follows:

- (a) two inscriptions found at Malkata referring to the first *Heb Sed* of Amenhotep III (regnal year 30);⁵
- (b) a stela (BM 138) containing a copy of the foundation decree of the funerary temple of Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu (regnal year 31);⁶
- (c) various remains of monuments with inscriptions from the quarries of Gebel el Silsila;⁷
- (d) Amarna Letter EA 71;⁸
- (e) two statues from Bubastis, Cairo Museum CG 590 (Figure 2) and BM 1068;⁹
- (f) relief in Amenhotep III's temple at Soleb.¹⁰

In view of the documents that we know so far, we can conclude that Amenhotep, called Huy, was a courtier of King Amenhotep III and that he held the position of northern vizier and later also that of vizier of the south, in Thebes.

The documents that we know correspond to regnal years 30, 31, and 35 of Amenhotep III. This means that, at least, we know that Amenhotep-Huy served as vizier during these years. The subject to discuss and clarify is the sequence of events in Amenhotep's career. Did it begin with his appointment as vizier of the south based in Thebes, or, alternatively, did he originally serve as northern vizier and assume his position as vizier of the south only after the disappearance of Ramose? In our opinion, for the moment, the second alternative is the most plausible, until we have learned more from our excavations in Asasif Tomb number 28.

The two jar inscriptions discovered in Malkata that bear his name¹¹ only demonstrate the presence of Amenhotep as vizier (without specifying southern or northern) in the ceremonies of the first jubilee (in year 30) of King Amenhotep III. On the other hand, it is perfectly logical and coherent that the northern vizier had to be present at such important ceremonies. Ramose was also present at the jubilee, as evidenced by a jar with his name tag found in Malkata.¹²

This evidence is confirmed by the joint presence of both viziers at the inauguration of the temple of Amenhotep III at Soleb. The fact that Amenhotep has been represented before Ramose may have less to do with protocol (Upper Egypt usually being mentioned before Lower Egypt) and more to do with his having held his office longer. On the other hand, we know that the predecessor of Ramose and

The Tomb of the Vizier Amenhotep-Huy in Asasif (AT 28)

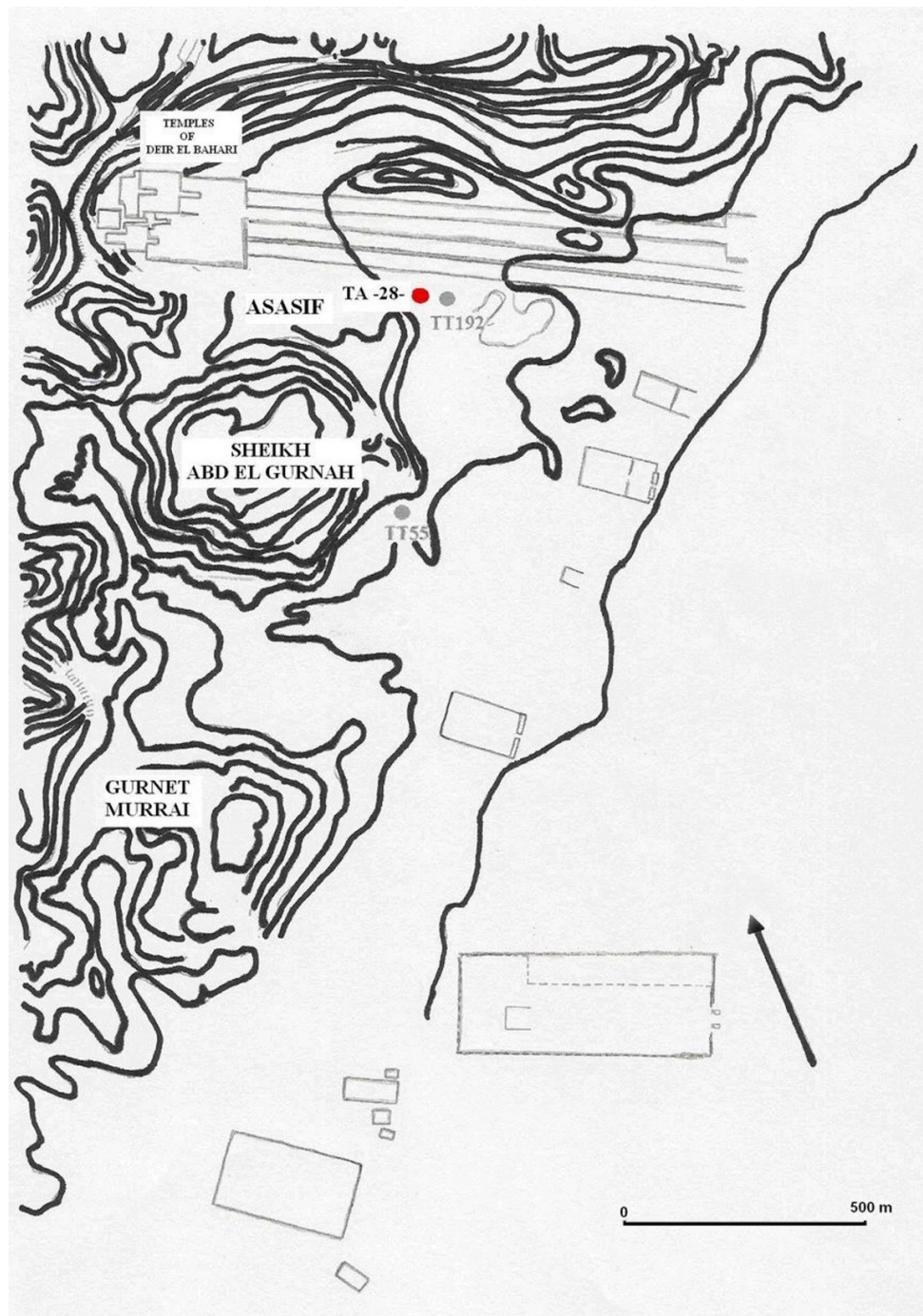


Figure 1: Location of Tomb 28 at Asasif, Luxor (after D. Eigner, "Das thebanische Grab des Amenhotep, Wesir von Unterägypten: die Architektur," *MDAIK* 39 [1983]: pl. 6)

Amenhotep as vizier, in this case of both north and south together, had been the high priest of Amun, Ptahmose. Therefore, it is plausible to think that, after Ptahmose, there were two viziers: one for Upper Egypt (Ramose) and another for Lower Egypt (Amenhotep).

The two statues from Bubastis,¹³ found with the remains of another belonging to the Queen Tiye's steward, Kheruef, prove that both men left their testimonies in the temple of Bastet on the occasion of the preparations for the first jubilee of the king. Here, Amenhotep appears as northern vizier. The titles are typical for the northern civil service and are very similar to those of other officials of the north.

However, evidence exists that in year 31 Amenhotep-Huy appeared in Thebes as vizier to perform the rites for the foundation of the funerary temple of Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu.¹⁴ As Ramose was not present, we can assume that he was no longer vizier of the south: it must be assumed that he resigned from his post as vizier of the south between years 30 and 31, and as a result Amenhotep-Huy assumed this role.

From texts inscribed in the quarries of the Gebel el Silsila¹⁵ we know that, in year 35 of the reign, Amenhotep-Huy continued to occupy the post of vizier of the south (perhaps at the same time as that of the north, such as had also happened during Ptahmose's time as vizier); there was thus a period from year 31 until year 35 in which Amenhotep was unquestionably vizier of the south and probably at the same time vizier of the north, since we do not know of anyone else who might have held this position during this time.

Probably during this period of four to five years, his tomb was being excavated in the area of the Asasif, in the same part of the necropolis where the Queen Tiye's steward, another prestigious royal official, had built his own tomb (TT 192).¹⁶ It is clear that Amenhotep was inspired by Kheruef's tomb to build his own, and that, because of the status of both, the excavation of Kheruef's would have been started some time before that of Amenhotep. This confirms that there was a moment of coincidence between Kheruef and Amenhotep in which Amenhotep held only the title of vizier of the north.

After Amenhotep III's year 35, we know nothing of Amenhotep. As a result, the end of his career as vizier of the north and south probably occurred at this time. We know that the next vizier of the south was Nakht, who lived in Akhetaten (Amarna), while in Memphis the vizier of the north was Aper-El,¹⁷ who served in that capacity during the last two or three years of the reign of Amenhotep III.



Figure 2: Statue of Vizier Amenhotep-Huy from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo 590 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

From the very damaged state of the monuments and documents that have come down to us, we have reason to suspect a persecution of the memory of Amenhotep-Huy by officials of Akhenaten. It also seems likely that the persecution of his memory and the destruction of his name, titles, and images would have taken place on the occasion of his dismissal or death, since we have detected special effort for the destruction of his personality and his *ka*. This implies that Amenhotep-Huy was perhaps one of the strongest adversaries against the new religious currents and, of course, a man closely linked with traditional cults of the Egyptian gods whose clergy would suffer severely because of the imposition of the only one god, the Aten.

THE TOMB: A DESCRIPTION

Exploration carried out in the monument by the Institute of Studies of Ancient Egypt (IEAE)¹⁸ has revealed its greatly damaged state and unfinished status. Until the beginning of our work, the tomb had never been excavated.

The tomb (Figure 3) begins with an outer courtyard, with an area of 528 m²; the north and south faces are lined by columns, of which only one remains in a state of partial construction, excavated in the rock of the plateau. On the west façade of the courtyard are three hollows, two of which are windows; the central one is the entrance to the solar chapel, which has an area of 381 m².

The entrance is in a hollowed area in the rock mass, intended to be the original door leading into two lines of columns. On both sides, north and south, of the above-mentioned entry are two niches, probably devoted to statues of the deceased. The chapel was originally equipped with three rows of ten columns each, thirty in total, apparently all of the closed papyriform style. Only two of them still stand, seriously damaged, while fragments of the others must be among the debris covering the floor of the chamber to a depth of several meters. They were destroyed up to half of their shafts or completely. The chapel is wider than that of TT 192, belonging to Queen Tiye's steward, Kheruef, which is located practically next to AT 28.

Near the door were discovered fragmented shabtis and the remains of linen from mummy bandages. That shows the tomb was used after the Eighteenth Dynasty as a place for mummification and new burials, probably in late Ramesside times and the Third Intermediate Period.

The tomb belongs to the type built in the Theban necropolis during the reigns of the pharaohs Amenhotep III/Amenhotep IV. The general characteristics of these T-shaped tombs are: a courtyard and very spacious chapel/hall, the ceiling of which is supported by a large number of columns or pillars; a longitudinal hall that, in some cases, contains pillars or columns; then, a shaft with several changes of direction leading to a kind of tripartite chapel, and, beyond, to the burial chamber.

At Asasif Tomb 28 the entry and burial chamber, located in the bottom of the southwest corner of the chapel, should have existed. Unfortunately, the excavations carried out in this place during the season 2012 have shown that, although work was begun to build the shaft, it was abandoned unfinished.

In the courtyard of Asasif Tomb 28 there are other catalogued tombs, clearly belonging to periods later than the main monument (Figure 4). In the south wall of

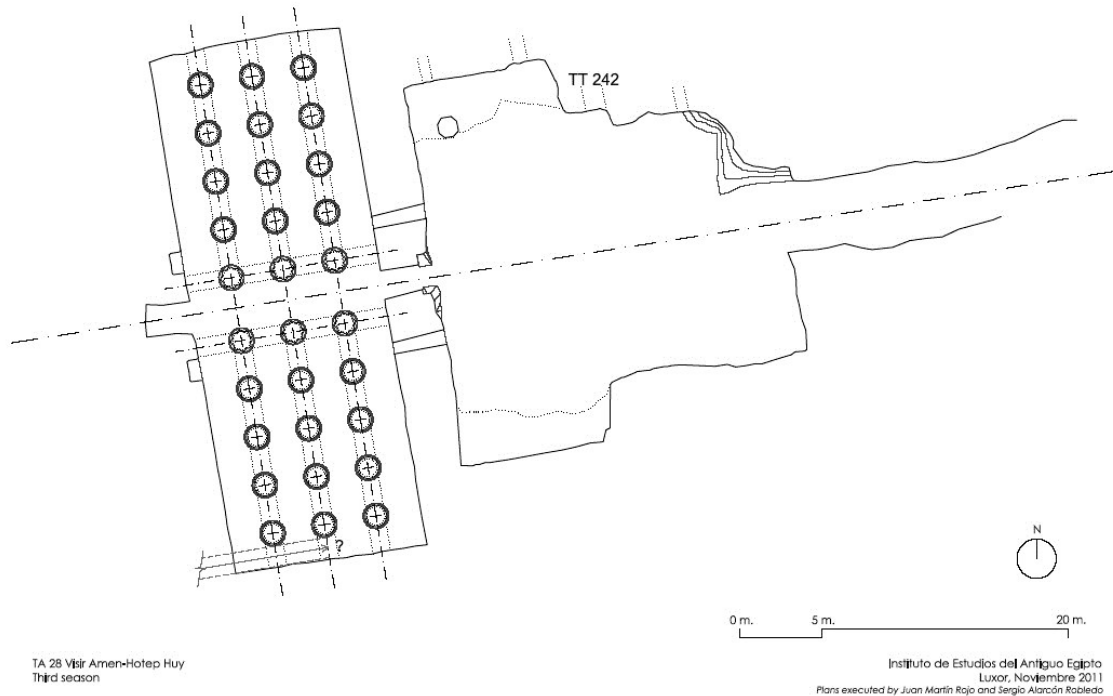


Figure 3: Plan of Asasif Tomb 28, belonging to Vizier Amenhotep-Huy (documentation of the Vizier Amen-Hotep, Huy [AT 28] Project) (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

the corridor to the courtyard is AT 268, and, in the northwestern part of the aforementioned courtyard, TT 244.

Moreover, there are five more tombs, without number: three in the south wall, one in the north wall of the courtyard, and one more close to the main entrance to the chapel of AT 28. Two of these were discovered during our excavations in 2010.

The study of the tomb itself and evidence from other funerary monuments of the same period have presented a series of data that are of great interest to gaining a better knowledge and appreciation of the AT 28 belonging to Vizier Amenhotep, called Huy.



Figure 4: New tomb discovered in 2010 at the north wall in the courtyard of Asasif Tomb 28 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

FROM A GEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

Tomb number 28 at Asasif is carved into the desert plateau, which is primarily made of limestone layers of the Serai Formation (early Eocene Period) and the Drunka Formation (Lower Eocene Period) of the Thebes Group. This type of sedimentary rock is composed of calcium carbonate with fossil mollusks such as echinoids and nummulitid foraminifera, and impurities of dolomite, quartz, iron oxides, and various clay minerals (all aluminum silicate compounds). The color of this rock is whitish gray when first exposed, and yellow or red when exposed to the elements over time.¹⁹

One of the reasons that the builders of the tombs chose the areas concerned to carry out excavations was precisely that this rock is relatively soft and easy to work. In fact, the porosity allowed the execution of reliefs with great skill; one just wetted the surface with water before proceeding to sculpt.

The drawback of this rock is that it developed in horizontal layers of different thickness, and because of this it has a low resistance to seismic disturbances. For that reason this stone is broken, both horizontally and vertically; its low hardness usually results in the excavated monuments arriving at a terrible state of destruction by natural causes.

This is the case of the Asasif Tomb 28. A simple external examination shows the great degradation of rock in which it was excavated (Figure 5).

The arrangement of the New Kingdom T-shaped tomb chapels, with the distribution of space in longitudinal and transverse halls, was typical for the Theban area during the Eighteenth Dynasty. This design differentiates them from tombs of other periods and other places in Egypt. In short, tombs of this type are usually composed with the following elements:

- (a) a passage giving access to the courtyard of the tomb;
- (b) a square courtyard, more or less regular;
- (c) a transverse hall with its roof held aloft by columns or pillars;
- (d) a longitudinal room with its roof held aloft by columns or pillars;
- (e) an interior room with one or more holes or niches excavated in the wall for statues;
- (f) access to the burial chamber, usually a shaft;
- (g) a burial chamber with or without pillars.

FROM AN ARCHITECTURAL POINT OF VIEW

Asasif Tomb 28 establishes the evolutionary process of the design of the tombs in the Theban area during the reign of Amenhotep III. Indeed, it is observed how, from the beginning of the reign, tomb structures were expanded so that the monument became larger on all its parts.

Certainly they were experimenting with design. Sometimes they expanded the courtyard; at other times, the chapel devoted to the solar cult (usually transverse to the east-west axis of the tomb); and at yet other times, the longitudinal room devoted to the owner's funerary cult. This process concluded in the last third of the reign of Amenhotep III, giving rise to the construction of the largest Eighteenth Dynasty tombs in the Theban area. This style of great dimensions is closely linked



Figure 5: The tomb before the excavations in 2009 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

with the classic religious constructions carried out during this part of the reign, particularly from the celebration of the first *Heb Sed* of Amenhotep III.

In this period, the use of columns and pillars to hold bigger rooms and higher ceilings increased, although these were, in effect, faux architectural structures, because the rooms were sculpted in the bedrock and the ceilings thus required no support. The style of these columns could be polygonal (up to thirty-six facets) or in closed papyriform style with up to eight segments in the capital and shaft.

The aforementioned architectural evolution can be observed in TT 48, belonging to Amenemhat Surero, in El Khokha, TT 55 of Ramose in Gurnah, and TT 192 of Kheruef in Asasif, which is the model followed by the designer and director of the construction of Asasif Tomb 28 of Amenhotep-Huy. It could be considered that these two tombs in Asasif (TT 192 and AT 28) were a first test of what would later become the temple-tombs of Deir el-Bahri, built during the Twenty-Fifth and



Figure 6: The chapel of AT 28, looking from the north, as seen in excavation season 2011 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

Twenty-Sixth Dynasties in Asasif (Padiamenopet [TT 33], Montuemhat [TT 34], Harwa [TT 37], Padineith [TT 197], or Pabasa [TT 279]).

Asasif Tomb 28 is badly damaged (Figure 6), and its space had been used as cemetery and place for mummification during late Ramesside times and the Third Intermediate Period and as a habitation during the Coptic Period. In fact, the area where AT 28 is located also includes the frequent presence of burials from the Ramesside Period and Third Intermediate Period.

The work was started with finding the bedrock in the ground of the courtyard, in order to obtain the space required to install the door at the entrance of the tomb. The excavated area had a surface of about 72 m² around the entrance to the tomb, with a depth of 5–6 m.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF EXCAVATIONS IN THE SEASONS 2009–2012

During the excavation, numerous remains of bandages and human bones were found, as well as a multitude of small fragments of ceramic material or clay with

stucco and paint and many poor-quality ceramic shabtis of small size (2~2.5 cm). They are all from the Third Intermediate Period. Also among the finds have been numerous fragments of stone with reliefs of the highest quality accompanied by fragmentary hieroglyphic texts, probably belonging to the lintel and jambs from the door of the tomb (Figure 7).

A remarkable find was a series of votive ears (around thirty-seven pieces) found in the top layers of debris without context level. At a depth of approximately 3.5 m below the first level were found remains of structure of adobe with an area of fire and ash (perhaps from a kitchen), probably from the Coptic Period. The same general area also yielded a female figure of ivory (Figure 8), 14 cm tall (register-book no. 514), nude, featuring a tripartite wig, painted eyes, and a sculpted necklace of shells (*Cypraea moneta*; cowrie) with the image of a cat, probably the goddess Bastet. This dates perhaps from the Third Intermediate Period.



**Figure 7: Relief fragment with the coronation name of Amenhotep III
(T. Bedman; © IEAE)**

Another notable discovery was a block of limestone with reliefs and inscriptions (registry no. 956; Figure 9), which reveals the face of the vizier Amenhotep-Huy. This block is part of no. 339, discovered during the 2009 season.

In the Third Intermediate Period levels we have found remains of a bed of mud bricks with evidence of having been used for mummification of a body, along with dozens of bundles of linen containing natron. We have also found dozens of mud shabtis belonging to (Pa)-di-iry-khonsu, probably also from the Third Intermediate Period (Figure 10).



Figure 8: Concubine figurine, register book number 514. Ivory. Third Intermediate Period (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

On the east wall, inside the chapel, on the northern and southern door jambs, we discovered reliefs representing the goddesses Selket, Nephthys, Isis, and Neith receiving offerings from the vizier, as well as two of the four sons of Horus.

Inside the chapel of AT 28 there were also some pieces belonging to leather straps typical of the mummies of high priests of Amun in the Third Intermediate Period,²⁰ with the effigy of King Osorkon I (Twenty-Second Dynasty) performing anointing for a goddess (who may be Neith) and further evidence of the mummification process (Figure 11).



**Figure 9: Relief fragments with the face of Vizier Amenhotep-Huy.
Register book nos. 339 and 956 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)**



Figure 10: Shabti of (Pa)-di-iry-khonsu. Third Intermediate Period. (G. Cabanillas; © IEAE)



Figure 11: Fragment of leather strap with the effigy of King Osorkon I, Twenty-Second Dynasty (G. Cabanillas; © IEAE)

CONCLUSIONS

The work carried out by the Institute of Studies of Ancient Egypt during the field seasons of 2009–2012 in the Tomb 28 of Asasif has revealed the main features of the monument (Figure 12). The excavation has demonstrated that the site was the subject of multiple violations, including theft of the mummies buried in the tombs constructed in the courtyard of the AT 28. There have also been found reliefs from the walls of the tomb's interior chapel and its gateway, all of a high artistic quality and belonging to the reign of Amenhotep III.

In the late Ramesside Period and in the Third Intermediate Period, the tomb was used as a place for mummification; the monument was apparently regarded as a

The Tomb of the Vizier Amenhotep-Huy in Asasif (AT 28)

sacred place for the worship of the vizier Amenhotep-Huy as an intermediary between the people and the god Osiris.

The work to be carried out in the next seasons will consist of removing all remains from the chapel and looking for evidence of a shaft excavated at the time of the vizier Amenhotep-Huy, leading to the burial chamber, to see if both shaft and burial chamber ever existed.²¹



Figure 12: Asasif Tomb 28, looking from the southwest. Season 2012 (T. Bedman; © IEAE)

NOTES

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- ⁶ A. Varille, *Inscriptions concernant l’architecte Amenhotep fils de Hapou*, Bibliothèque d’Étude 44 (Le Caire: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1968), 67–85.
- ⁷ G. Legrain, “Notes d’Inspection, IV,” *ASAE* 4 (1904): 197–212.
- ⁸ W. L. Moran, *Les Lettres d’El-Amarna. Correspondance diplomatique du pharaon* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987), 246–247.
- ⁹ E. Naville, *Bubastis (1887-1889)*, Egypt Exploration Fund Memoirs 8 (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1891), 31–33 and pls. XIII and XXXV.
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- ¹¹ Hayes, “Inscriptions,” nos. 103 and 185.
- ¹² Hayes, “Inscriptions,” no. 96.
- ¹³ Naville, *Bubastis*, 31–33 and pls. XIII and XXXV.
- ¹⁴ Varille, *Inscriptions*, 67–85.
- ¹⁵ Legrain, “Notes d’Inspection,” 197–212.
- ¹⁶ Oriental Institute, *The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192*, OIP 102 (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980).
- ¹⁷ A. Zivie, *Découverte à Saqqara. Le vizir oublié* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990).
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- ¹⁹ A. Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 4th edition (London: Histories and Mysteries of Man, 1962): 52–55; M.-P. Aubry et al., “Pharaonic Necrostratigraphy: A Review of Geological and Archaeological Studies in the Theban Necropolis, Luxor, West Bank, Egypt,” *Terra Nova* 21.4 (2009): 237–256.
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- ²¹ We would like to thank the Ministry of State for Antiquities in the person of Mohamed Ibrahim, and the SCA Permanent Committee in the persons of His General Secretary Mustapha Amin, and to Mohamed El Bialy, Adel Hussein, Mohamed Ismail, Mansour Boraik, Ibrahim Soliman, Mohamed Abd El Azinz, Noor Abd El Gafar, Fahty Yassin, and all those others who have helped us these years. We also want to thank the Fundación Gaselec, Xelram, Fundación 3M, Thales Spain, and our team, which has included the following: Gustavo

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