

Tomb of Kha-em-hat of the Eighteenth Dynasty in Western Thebes (TT 57)

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2. Abdel Baset (Survey)
3. Ahmed Abdel Halim (Facsimile drawings)
4. Alaa Bashandy (Editor)

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List of Abbreviations

Arch. Ver.	Archäologische Veröffentlichungen (AV) des DAI, Abteilung Kairo.
ASAE	Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte (SAE) (Cairo).
ASE	Archaeological Survey of Egypt (London)
ÄZ	Ägyptische Zeitschrift (Leipzig).
BACE	Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology (North Ryde).
BE	Bibliothèque égyptologique (Paris/Cairo).
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO - Cairo).
BMMA	Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) (New York).
CNIANES	Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies (Copenhagen).
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt (Boston/Princeton/New York/Cairo)
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society (Baltimore/Boston/New Haven).
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (EES, London).
JENS	Journal of Near Eastern Studies.
JEOL	Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux (Leiden).
JSSEA	Journal of the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA) (Toronto).
GM	Göttinger Miszellen (Germany).
KRI	K.A. Kitchen, Ramesside Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical. I - VII' (Oxford, 1969-1990).
LGG	Lexikon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen
MÄS	München Ägyptologische Studien (Mainz).
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo (DAIK) (Mainz/Cairo/Berlin/Wiesbaden).
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (DOG) (Berlin/Leipzig).
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) du Caire (Berlin/Cairo).
MIO	Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung (Berlin).
MMAF	Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique.
MMAJ	Metropolitan Museum Journal.
MonAeg	Monumenta Aegyptiaca (Brussels).
OIC	Oriental Institute Communications (Chicago).
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Louvain).
PM	B. Porter and R. Moss, 'Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings', 7 vols, 1927-1951.
RdE	Revue d'Égyptologie (Paris).
REA	Revue de l'Égypte Ancienne (Paris).
Rec. de Trav et	Recueil de Travaux Relatifs à la Philologie et à l'archéologie Égyptiennes Assyriennes (Paris)
SAGA	Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens (Heidelberg).
TTS	Theban Tombs Series (London)
URK	Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums / begr. von Georg Steindorff.
URK	Urkunden der 18. Dynastie / bearb. und übers. von Kurt Sethe (Berlin)

Wres. Atlas. Wreszinski, Walter, Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte. I (Leipzig).
WB Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache, 7 vols., A.Erman and W. Grapow, 1926-
1931.
ZÄS Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde (Berlin/Leipzig).

Introduction

The tomb of Kha-em-hat TT 57 is well known, featuring unique scenes and an exclusive art style – the vivid colours on the walls, in particular, give the tomb its importance. Open to visitors, it has survived in very good condition, but to date it has only been published once, in 2017, in a book about the site produced by the council of Antiquities in Cairo. This latter publication contained old photographs of the tomb and scene descriptions, but did not include an academic analysis or interpretations of the texts on the walls. When looking for a new challenge for a PhD topic, I was lucky enough to meet Dr Khaled El Anany at Cairo's National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation and he suggested that I should apply for a concession to work on this tomb. The idea of tackling an unpublished tomb was a daunting task but one I was eager to attempt; accordingly I accepted on 16 March 2015 and was soon flying to Luxor to start my working plan. There I was introduced to the Basetts – Damarany the photographer, and Abdel the surveyor – and we soon set to work. Later I was to meet Ahmed Abdel Halim, who undertook the facsimile work of TT 57. My initial plan was to prepare the facsimile myself and I started working on the drawings on my tablet, but being already fully involved in the academic study I did not continue with them.

The project required several phases: I began by photographing the tomb and then did the survey, following this I relocated to Germany and the Ianes Institute at Tübingen. Having collected the wall texts and translated them, I began the scene descriptions and analysis. The work was not easy and I faced several problems dealing with the tomb, primarily financing, which I was obliged to undertake myself and was obliged to stop at certain points from the lack of funds. The other problems were minor in comparison and were overcome. As the tomb had been exposed to fire, and consequently many scenes damaged, I was unable to read some of the hieroglyphic signs clearly and had to revisit them several times; the final visit being to compare the texts with what was there on the walls, using a magnifier to help with the signs that were unclear.

The tomb (TT 57, PM I.2, 113-19) was already accessible in the second quarter of the 19th century, and some of its decoration had been copied by Nestor l'Hôte (1828–1841), Lepsius (1843–1845), as well as by Wilkinson and Prisse d'Avennes. Victor Loret wrote about the tomb in 1889 (*Mem. Miss.*, I, 113–132), and a full recording was undertaken by Abdel-Aziz F. Sadek on behalf of CEDAE in 1967.

Mohammed Abdel Latif el Tanbouli described all the scenes in 1968–1969, and his work was reviewed by Charles Kuentz. This manuscript is in three notebooks kept in the CEDAE archives. Several books mentioned TT 57, but none as detailed as this present study. Loret describes the tomb in general, recording some of the wall texts, but not all. It seems that the tomb was covered in sand by his time and he did not record the lower columns; moreover some signs were incorrectly noted by him and he wrote no translation or transliteration of any of the texts. Mond records cleaning the tomb and describes some of his finds during excavations at Abdel Qurnah. URK IV also contains the hieroglyphic text of the tomb and a translation, but only parts of the texts not all of it. Two articles were published about this tomb: one is on the ‘stela of purification’ by Abdel Aziz Sadek, and the other by Christina Pino on the ‘market scene’ in the hall of the tomb. Bohleke refers to the titles of Kha-em-hat in his dissertation on the ‘overseer of granaries’ in general during the 18th Dynasty. The PM also mentions TT 57, providing a simple plan and references to the tomb. Apart from these sources, various aspects of TT 57 also appear in other articles, e.g. appreciating the art style, or comparing it to other tombs from the same period. Thus TT 57 might be referred to, but no complete data has appeared to date.

The present research, therefore, is an attempt at gathering all the information found at the site itself, and as much as possible of the accessible references. It deals with the translation, a transliteration of all the texts currently existing in the tomb, descriptions of the scenes, analyses of the religious rituals depicted, and comparisons with similar scenes found in other tombs. Last but not least there is a new, detailed survey with the dimensions of the tomb. The plan was made in 2015, once the concession to publish TT 57 had been granted. The future research direction is to compare the scenes in TT 57 with similar ones found in other tombs; lists of these have already been compiled for this present study in tables after every scene, but the scenes still need to be studied in detail.

A further task is to clean the tomb shaft. This present study includes photographs of the shaft in its current state, showing the fire damage that needs to be cleaned and the extent of the restoration required. It seems that there are inscriptions on the walls of the burial chamber.

Discovery

The tomb of Kha-em-hat was discovered in 1842 by George Lloyd, an amateur archeologist. We lack detailed information on the circumstances, only that Lloyd was sadly killed shortly after the discovery by the accidental discharge of his gun.¹

The tomb type corresponds entirely to the normal forms of Theban tombs of the mid 18th Dynasty. As mentioned, the tomb has suffered damage, including being exposed to fire, although nothing is known about the circumstances of this fire. Most scholars commenting on this tomb have admired the tomb’s bas relief and the high-quality preferences of its owner. Unfortunately, since the middle of the last century, the tomb has been plundered by robbers, who also removed wall fragments which are now to be found in different museums around the world.²

¹ A. Varille, *L'appel aux visiteurs du tombeau de Kha-em-hêt*, ASAE 40, 1940, p. 601.

² M. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses dans l'Égypte ancienne*, Bruxelles 1938, p. 40.

TOMB OF KHA-EM-HAT

Ever since its discovery, the tomb has been especially regarded for the exquisite style of its reliefs. Soon copies of these decorations were being made by means of a method made popular in the 19th century – pressing wetted sheets of soft paper onto the reliefs. Alas, this repeated activity has removed nearly all the colour from reliefs, the pigment particles easily adhering to wet paper. Indeed, Kha-em-het became so popular that numerous collections of squeezes were prepared and then sold to tourists, many surviving in various museums and institutions around the world. Of the original fragments, eight are in the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, and three in the Musée Royale du Cinquantenaire in Brussels.³ Concerning the Berlin pieces specifically, Lepsius saved one (Inv. No. 2063), while the remaining pieces reached the city's Museum much later: six were bought in 1899 via the Egyptian antiquities' market, and a further one made its way there in 1925.

Of the squeezes, Devéria also made a set in the tomb in March 1862, although the largest collection (143 sheets) is in the Griffith Institute, Oxford: it is also the best illustrated. Seven well-described sheets are in Boston. Another series was held in the storeroom of the Department of Ancient Art in the National Museum in Warsaw; these were bought by Michał Tyszkiewicz on his visit to Egypt in 1861–1862, and their importance lies in how much they show us has now been lost from the tomb.

Name origin

The extensive cemetery lies on the west bank of the Nile, c. 5 km away, where all the noble tombs have been found. The location was not a random one. Here the high mountains resemble a stepped pyramid, making it the ideal setting for a necropolis. The hills are of coarse limestone, resting on a thick bed of solidified green clay so friable that it can be crumbled with your fingers. Underneath are beds of fine limestone of a close grain, but these could only be used for low-lying tombs, i.e. those of Kha-em-hat, Ra-mose, Puy-em-re, and others, as well as for the tombs of the kings.⁴ The tomb walls were covered with a coating of mud or lime plaster to prepare it for decoration.

Locals believed that there was a lion roaming the peak of the mountain that would attack all who sin against it. This high peak was called 'The Horn' ('Kurn') and the village below derives its name from it. In the centre of the complex is the location of the tombs of the 18th Dynasty tombs. The Sheikh of Abdel Qurna was a revered local saint whose shrine was built on top of the mountain, perhaps replacing Meretseger or other popular Egyptian divinity.

Geographical position (see figures 1-3)

Kha-em-hat TT 57 is located in the Sheikh Abdel Qurna necropolis, on the west bank of the Nile in Luxor. It dates from the reign of Amenophis III, more precisely in the thirtieth year of his reign.⁵ It is considered one of only four private tombs from the time of Amenophis III to

³ Pieces in Berlin Museum are: nos. 2063, 14442, 14503–4, 14635–7, 22439, Gypsum casts of the first four of them were sent to Egypt in 1913 and set into the walls of the tomb, in Brussels: E.2484, E.2164, cf. M. Dolinska, *Khaemhat's bad luck*; http://etudesetravaux.iksiopan.pl/images/etudtrav/EtudTrav_otwarte/EtudTrav_21/04_MONIKA_DOLI%C5%83SKA.pdf, pp29f (viewed 7 July 2019).

⁴ N. Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, New York 1917, pp. 3–6.

⁵ See Hall – west wall, south side, pp. 107–111.

have been decorated with reliefs.⁶ It lies on the right-hand side of the sunken courtyard of tomb TT 102 and TT 126; they share the same court.

The area was already utilized in the time of Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III. Among the high officials of this time, the Vizier Ramose TT 55 and the chieftain Kha-em-hat TT 57 had laid out their graves very close to TT 56. The latter, connected to the slightly older tomb 102 by a common courtyard, lies to the south of TT 56. The forecourts of TT 56, TT 57 and TT 102 are separated by a rocky walkway, c. 6 m wide; the north arm of TT 57's transept ends just beyond the statuary of the Userhat tomb.⁷

To lift the door frame somewhat from the facade area, and fashion the stela to the right of the rock, the right facade area, already used for an earlier grave, was increased a little further, i.e. vertically and moved somewhat lower. The right side of the facade is larger than the one to the left, as the court was already part of a former tomb and there was therefore insufficient space to build the usual symmetrical facade.

What remained was a kind of projection, or narrow mastaba, along the right facade of TT 57. The left facade was not subjected to the same treatment and remained in its original form.⁸

⁶ M. El Tanbouli, *Kha-em-hat*, Center of Documentation and Studies on Ancient Egypt, Cairo 2017, p. 1.

⁷ Seeber and Abdel Ghaffar, *Das Grab des Userhat TT 56*, AV 50, 1987, p. 10.

⁸ F. Kampp, *Die Thebanische Nekropole, zum wadel des Grabgedankens von der XVIII. bis zur XX Dynastie*, 2, Mainz 1996, pp. 267–269.

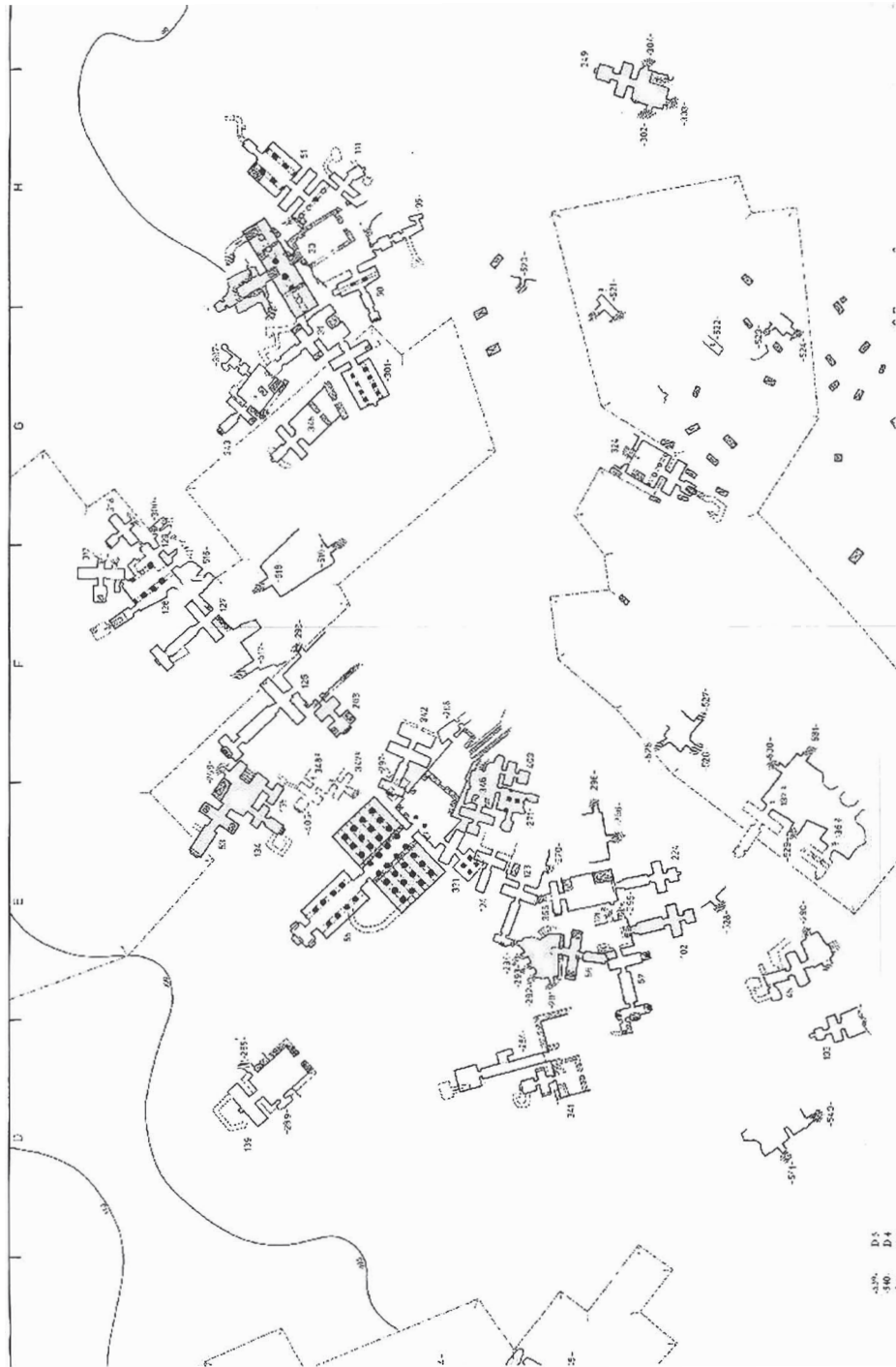


Figure 1. General plan of Sheikh Abdel Qurna. F.Kampp, Die thebanische Nekropole zum wandel des Grabgedankens von der XVIII bis zur XX, Teil II, Mayence 1996.

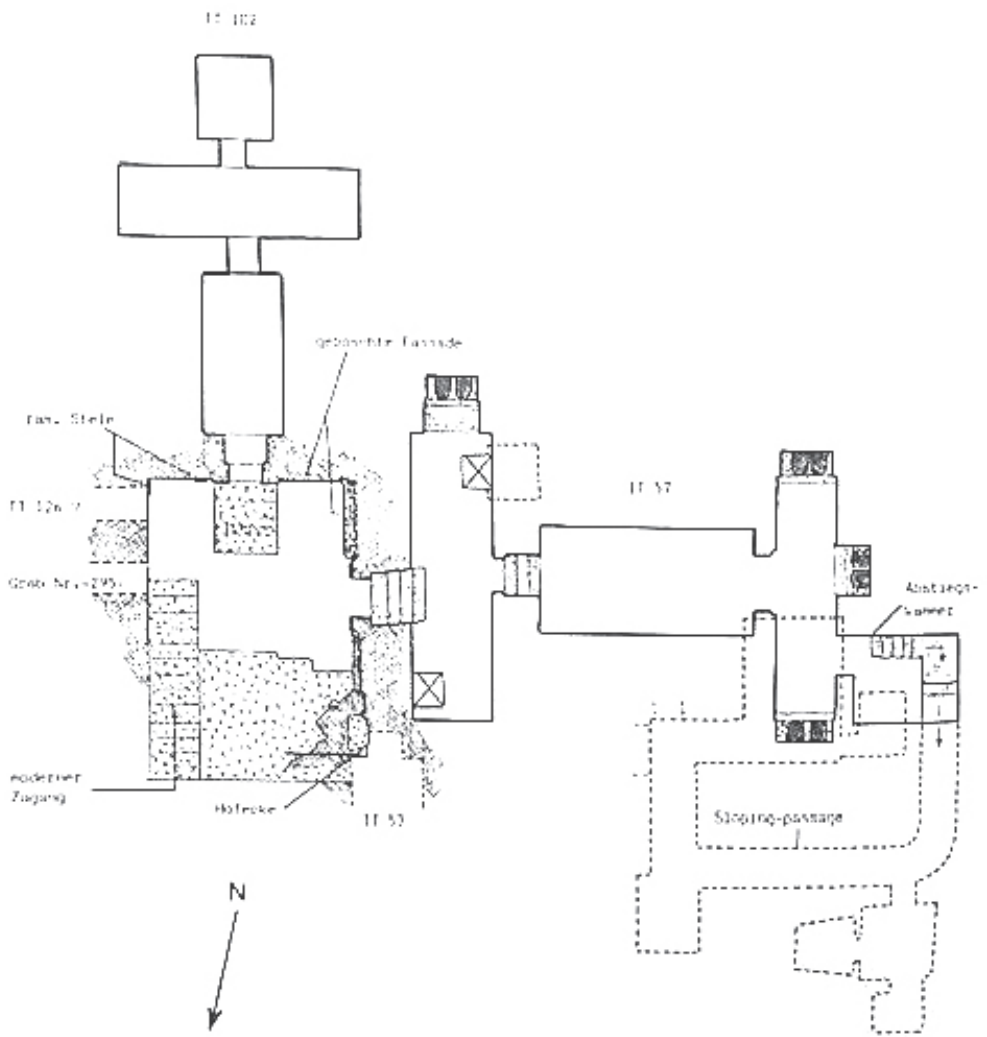


Fig. 156 TT 57, TT 122, TT 126 (?) und Grab Nr. -295-, nach Mosso

Figure 2. Location of TT 57 to TT 102 and TT 126. F.Kampp, thebanische Nekropole, Teil 2, fig. 156.



Figure 3. Location of TT 57 to TT 56 and TT 102. Beinlich-Seeber, Christine; Šadīd, Das Grab des Userhat, pl. 33.

Features and the plan of the tomb⁹ (see figure 4)

Thebes is considered the most important cemetery of the New Kingdom; it has a large number of tombs scattered over different sites. The prominent officials of the 18th Dynasty cut their tombs into the higher slopes while the lower ones were left for the less important. By the reign of Amenophis III the higher level of Sheikh Abdel Qurna was full of tombs, so the more senior officials had to either locate their tombs in the lower level or to move to a new site, i.e. Khôkha and El Asâsif, characterised by a better quality of stone.¹⁰

The arrangement of Theban tombs at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty varied in appearance¹¹ and was restricted to two types: the open vestibule and the closed vestibule tomb. The latter is the more frequent, at least in the tombs known to date, and includes all the tombs into which one enters through a single door, most often facing the rising sun; this door was closed in the past and preceded by a court, where the various funeral ceremonies were held. The family of the dead came to place their offerings here on certain days and periodically renew the funeral banquet, the representation of which is common in all the tombs. The threshold opens into a large vestibule, supported by several columns or pillars, however these pillars are absent in the tombs of Rakh-mi-re and Kha-em-hat. This part of the tomb is decorated with paintings that usually represent the deceased in the performance of the functions he undertook during his lifetime.¹² In all, despite the general characteristics that the tombs shared in common, the details varied.

The tombs had been extended since the time of Amenophis III. Typically, the forecourt developed as a kind of cult stage for the ‘opening of the mouth’ and the cult of the dead, and, together with the now obligatory facade steles, is closely related to the sun cult. Above the tomb is built a grave pyramid, in the middle of which lies another cult room. The pyramid will also be included in the course of the sun, its apex shining from sun rise to sun set.¹³

The architectural plan of TT 57 was designed roughly T-shaped,¹⁴ preceded by a public court shared by several other tombs.¹⁵ This feature seems to have begun from the beginning of the reign of Amenophis III until the end of the 18th Dynasty,¹⁶ and is found at TT 55, TT 57, and TT 192 in Qurna. As the tomb consisted of several chambers, transverse hall, passage, inner room and a burial chamber, each chamber was dedicated to a different purpose, e.g. the burial chamber was reserved specifically for the deceased, while certain places in the tomb were accessible for visitors to read the spells inscribed on the walls for the benefit of the deceased, as the scenes represented on the tomb walls were usually accompanied by texts inscribed in various places in the tomb, i.e. facade, doorposts, architraves, stelae, and false doors.¹⁷

⁹ The dimensions of the scenes were copied from El Tanbouli; cf. the original plan, figure I C with the current dimensions, this plan was made in 2015 during my work in the tomb.

¹⁰ A. Kanawti, *The Tomb and Beyond*, Warminster 2001, p. 66.

¹¹ See plan I.

¹² U. Bouriant, *Tombeau de Harmhabi*, MMAF 5, 1889, p. 413.

¹³ P. Barthelmess, *Der Übergang ins Jenseits in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern der Ramessidenzeit*, Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1992, p. 3.

¹⁴ See pl. I for the plan of the tomb with dimensions.

¹⁵ See pl. I.A.

¹⁶ It was also found in TT 47, 48, 181, 188, 192, and 49 at Khôkha; cf. M. Wegner, *Stilentwicklung der Thebanischen Beamtengräber*, MDAIK 4, 1933, p. 40.

¹⁷ P. Rourke, *An Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Brooklyn Museum 2016, pp. 40–41.

It is noticeable also that almost every text inscribed ended with the name and titles of the deceased, to emphasis his possession of the tomb. The tomb of Kha-em-hat consisted of a transverse hall parallel to the facade and a perpendicular corridor penetrating westwards into the bedrock of the hill, and forming the stem of the T shape of the tomb plan. The transverse hall contained a niche. Then followed an inner room leading to a shaft where the burial chamber is. Peculiarities of this tomb include the rise of the vaulted ceiling in the long corridor and the statue niche above at the back wall.

Several graves of the same period have a transverse chamber next to the corridor as a third room, i.e. TT 87, 127, 79, 77, and, of course, TT 57.¹⁸ The T-shaped tombs in general contained a full repertoire of wall decoration with differing scenes, starting from the 'Litany of Ra' represented on both sides of the door leading to the long, transverse hall. The scenes in the transverse hall in TT 57 mainly represent the deceased's lifetime activities, e.g. his profession as an overseer of granaries, including harvesting and grain tallying responsibilities, and scenes featuring cattle and the market.

Most of the decoration themes of New Kingdom tombs are originally copied from everyday scenes relating to the Old and Middle kingdoms.¹⁹ In particular three categories of tomb scenes can be distinguished – illustrations of everyday activities (farming, boating, hunting, etc.), depictions of actual incidents in the life and death of the tomb owner (being rewarded or promoted by the king, escorting or introducing embassies into the royal presence, funeral rites and ceremonies for the deceased, etc.), and finally scenes of incidents that would occur on the way to, and in, the afterworld (the judgment of the dead, the deceased plowing in the Fields of Iaru, the deceased sitting by the Ished Tree, etc.).²⁰ Thus the hall scenes were mainly dedicated to representations of the activities of the owner of the tomb: the west wall featured scenes of the deceased's professional career and his relationship with the king he served under his reign; the east wall depicted his private life and social activities, e.g. as field inspector. The scene of the ruling king represented on his throne in a kiosk became a prominent feature in New Kingdom private tombs.²¹

The deceased enjoyed a high position in the administration approximately around year thirty of the reign of Amenophis III,²² as clearly represented in his tomb. The ceiling of the hall is flat and decorated with geometrical patterns with three lines of inscriptions, one in the middle and two on each side.²³ The hall leads to a tall, narrow passage adorned with more funerary themes, such as Abydos pilgrimage, west goddess, and funeral procession. The ceiling of passage is vaulted, plain except for three lines of inscriptions similar to the hall. The rock cut life-size statues of the deceased with a family member or more started from the reign of Amenophis II to be one of the popular characteristics of the tombs, either in one room or more, it was continued to be used till the end of the 19th Dynasty.²⁴ The inner room has three chapels; each contains two life-size statues and an opening leads to the shaft. The tomb is

¹⁸ Wegner, *Stilentwicklung der Thebanischen Beamtengräber*, MDAIK 4, 1933, p. 44.

¹⁹ D. Vischak, *Common Ground between Pyramid texts*, JARCE 40, 2003.

²⁰ A. Schulman, *The Iconographic Theme: Opening of the mouth on stela*, JARCE 21, 1984, p. 170.

²¹ A. Shaheen, *Historical Significance of Selected Scenes*, PhD. 1988, UMI 1991, p. 321.

²² J. Capart, *Thèbes*, Bruxelles 1925, p. 248.

²³ See figure XV, B-C.

²⁴ A. Kanawti, *The Tomb And Beyond*, Warminster, 2001, p. 67.

one of the examples with precise dates inscribed in the texts – they appear twice, first the reference to year thirty of the reign of Amenophis III, and the second being the date of the harvest festival.

It was Mond who cleaned out the tomb, cleared its courtyard and repaired the walls.²⁵ Four mummy pits were found in connection with this tomb after Mond's work, and to date, following the new plan made in 2015 by the present author, these four pits still exist: one lies outside in the northern corner of the courtyard (now covered with cement), two are in the exit from the transverse hall, and the fourth is in the burial shaft (plan I). Whether both shafts in the transverse hall originate from the time of Kha-em-hat cannot be determined. In addition there are two small chambers cut into the rock; in one, as mentioned by Mond, there are four recesses in the wall, covered with sandstone slabs, rather like Roman Catacombs, and also small wooden and mud-painted Shabtis. In actual fact these features are more like ledges than recesses, and not very prominent as the chamber is in very bad condition and the walls are covered with soot, except for the broken ones. Two of these four 'recesses' can be made out although the details are not very clear due to the general darkness and soot covering, but it seems that there are inscriptions underneath (see Burial Chamber figures). There might be more to reveal in this room in the future after it has been cleaned, as it contains a good deal of mixed remains, i.e. linen, pottery, fragments from the original walls, and bones (see Burial Chamber figures). Some new images were taken during the work of the present author in the tomb in 2015.

²⁵ L. Collins, *The Private Tombs of Thebes*, JEA 62, 1976, p. 39.

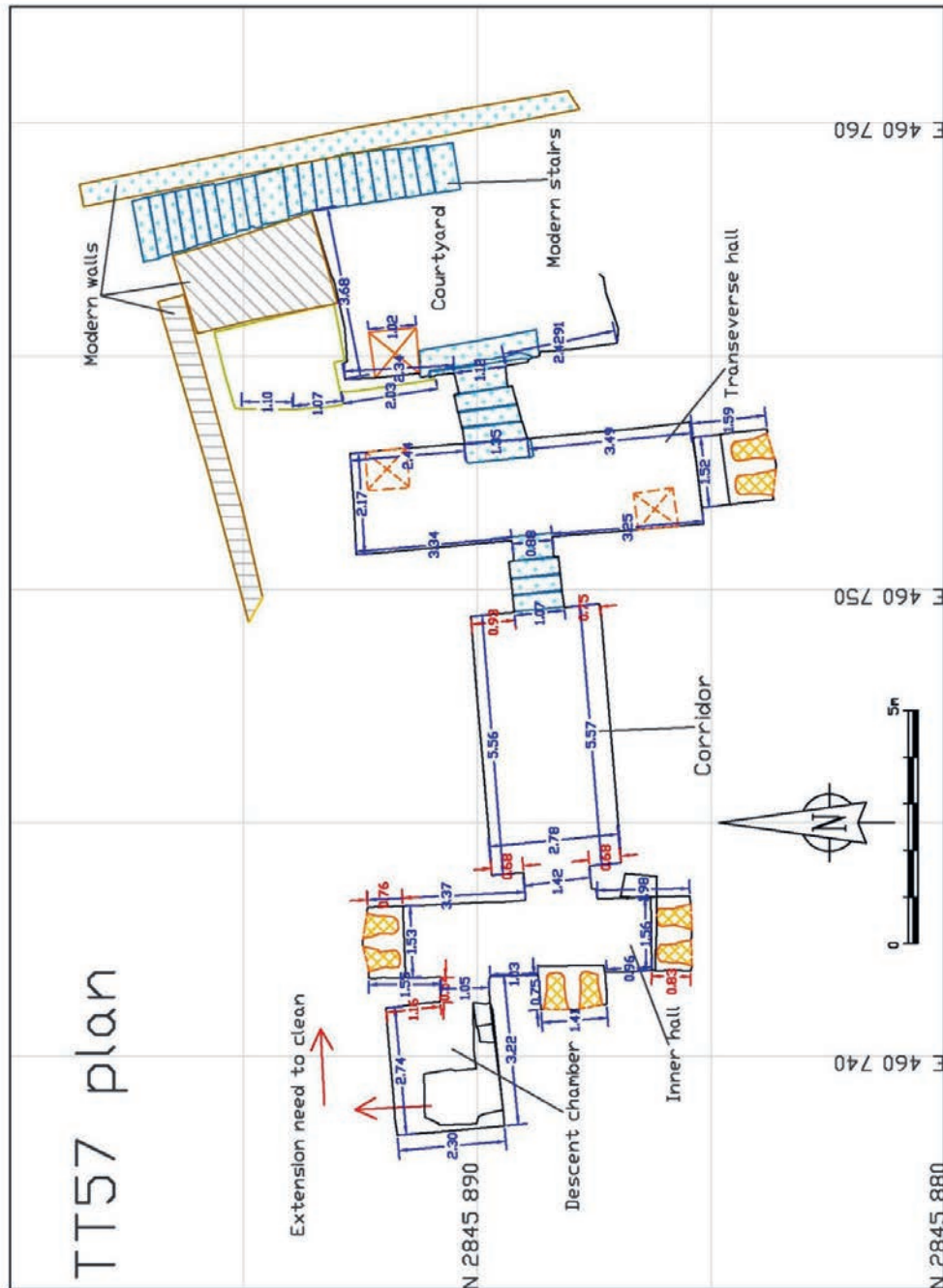


Figure 4. Plan of the tomb with dimensions (By Abdel-Baset).

Art characteristics

Art in Ancient Egypt passed through different phases, which is clearly reflected in the themes depicted on tomb walls found through the centuries. Old Kingdom art was connected to funerary ceremonies, while in the Middle Kingdom we find scenes of sports, agriculture, crafts, etc. In the New Kingdom the focus was once more heavily focused on representations of funerary rites, now to facilitate the passing of the deceased from the earthly realm to the landscapes of eternity.²⁶ More scenes were introduced in the New Kingdom period, especially during the 18th Dynasty, when the scenes took on an official character and recorded the relationship between the deceased and the king, and also emphasised the tomb owner's profession.

The artists of the 18th Dynasty can be said to have achieved near perfection in their work, and the bas-relief in Kha-em-hat's tomb is a wonderful example of this. The heads are beautifully drawn and full of expression – indeed nearly all bas-reliefs of this period are notable for their astonishing attention to profile.²⁷ The relief treatment is characterised by beauty of line, clarity of contour, and delicacy of modelling.²⁸ Care of form is an essential stylistic feature of tomb art, dated particularly to the time of Amenophis III.

The figures in the tomb are distinguished by their harmonious proportions, moderated postures, balanced body shapes, and facial contours. The faces are executed by means of a continuous curved line – from the slightly curved nose with softly modelled nostrils, to the outlined mouth, with a pointed angle from which a slight recess starts at the chin; an oblique eye materialises, spanned by an arched brow and shaped by precisely represented eyelids. The reliefs have in common an extreme over-refinement, embodied through stylization of the natural form, a way of visualisation based on the principles of a distinct Theban tradition, and manifesting in the highly developed relief art found in the tombs dating from the time of Amenophis III²⁹ (see figures 24–27):

²⁶ N. Davies, *Egyptian Tomb Paintings*, London 1958, pp. 2–3.

²⁷ S. Ikram, *Egyptian Art*, Köln 2014, p. 255, pl. 5.

²⁸ M. Wegner, *Stilentwicklung der Thebanischen Beamtengräber*, MDAIK 4, 1933, p. 132.

²⁹ J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Amenemope (TT 41)*, Mainz 1991, p. 198.