

HUNGARIAN EXCAVATIONS IN THEBAN TOMB -400- A NOTE ON THE NEW KINGDOM OCCUPANTS

GÁBOR SCHREIBER, BALÁZS TIHANYI, ZSOLT VASÁROS

The study gives a brief overview of the excavations carried out by the Hungarian Archaeological Mission's South Khokha Project in Theban Tomb -400-, and explores the identity of those who had owned and been buried in the tomb during the Late New Kingdom.

The story of the Hungarian excavations in the Theban necropolis started in 1983, when the late Professor László Kákosy was given a concession to excavate TT 32, the monumental tomb of Djehutymes, *Governor of Esna and Overseer of the Granaries of Amun* on the southern slope of the el-Khokha hillock, a central district of the vast Theban cemetery distinguished by the presence of the oldest rock-cut tombs at Thebes. Djehutymes' mortuary monument has turned out to be one of the most sophisticated examples of the Ramesside so-called "temple tombs", in which the particular architectural units of the tomb were assimilated to the prototypes seen in temples. The original structure of Theban Tomb (hence TT) 32 consists of three grandiose forecourts, a cult chapel of subsequent painted shrines, a spiral-shaped sloping passage terminating in a shaft, a burial chamber, and a mud brick pyramid situated high above the burial chamber, on the steep hillside of el-Khokha. The work done in TT 32 by the Hungarian Archaeological Mission has been published in two volumes: the first being devoted to the architecture and the iconographic programme of the tomb,¹ whilst the second to the archaeological finds excavated therein.² Thanks to the cooperation with the Supreme Council of Antiquities of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in 2009, we also had the chance to show our work and most important finds from TT 32, -61-, 65, and 184 to a wider audience in the framework of a temporary exhibition held in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. In association with this project, a detailed exhibition catalogue has been published in English³ and Arabic,⁴ while the proceedings of the conference held on that occasion have been printed by the Supreme Council of Antiquities.⁵

Parallel with the excavations carried out in TT 32, -61-, and -64-, the South Khokha Project of the Hungarian Archaeological Mission conducted by G. Schreiber asked for and gained a concession to excavate TT -400-, a Ramesside funerary monument situated directly to the west of the tomb of Djehutymes in 2007.⁶ Fieldwork on the site began immediately, with excavating the high heap of rubble 5–6 metres in

¹ Kákosy, László – Bács, Tamás A. – Bartos, Zoltán – Fábián, Zoltán I. – Gaál, Ernő: *The Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes (TT 32)* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2004).

² Schreiber, Gábor: *The Mortuary Monument of Djehutymes II. Finds from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2008).

³ Bács, Tamás A. – Fábián, Zoltán I. – Schreiber, Gábor – Török, László (eds): *Hungarian Excavations in the Theban Necropolis. A Celebration of 102 Years of Fieldwork in Egypt. Catalogue for the Temporary Exhibition in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo November 6, 2009 – January 15, 2010* (Budapest: Department of Egyptology, Eötvös Loránd University, 2009).

⁴ Schreiber, Gábor – Bács, Tamás A. – Fábián, Zoltán I. – Török, László (eds): *Al-hafair al-magariya fi gabbana Tiba* [in Arabic] (Budapest: Department of Egyptology, Eötvös Loránd University, 2009).

⁵ Hawass, Zahi – Bács, Tamás A. – Schreiber, Gábor (eds): *Proceedings of the Colloquium on Theban Archaeology at the Supreme Council of Antiquities November 5, 2009* (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2011).

⁶ The excavation project has received financial support from the Hungarian National Scientific Research Fund (OTKA No. K105313). The authors wish to thank Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim and Dr. Zahi Hawass (Former Ministers of Antiquities, Arab Republic of Egypt), Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled (Director of the Department of Foreign Missions' Affairs), Mr. Magdy el-Ghandour (Former Director of the Department of Foreign Missions' Affairs), Dr. Mansour Boriak (Director of Antiquities, Luxor), Dr. Mohamed Abd el-Aziz (Director of Antiquities on the West Bank of Luxor), Mr. Ali Asfar (Former Director of Antiquities on the West Bank of Luxor), Mr. Fathy Yassin (Director of the Middle Area, Luxor, West Bank), and Mr.

height covering the entire forecourt of the tomb (Fig. 1), which was discovered in 1984. In that year, Mr. Endre Egyed, then surveyor of the mission, reached the inner rooms of TT -400- through a secondary burial chamber which connects the sloping passages of TT -400- and 32. Subsequently, a sketch map based on his observations was published by László Kákósy, showing both tombs.⁷ The international scholarly community recognized the existence of the tomb after the map was re-published in the acts of the conference *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen*.⁸ In 1996 the tomb was listed by the German Egyptologist Friederike Kampp as No. -400-⁹ but its date, layout, iconographic programme, owners and history were still cloaked in mystery until excavation of the monument began in 2007. In that year we cleared the entrance to the tomb and identified the main titles of its owner, who acted as *Scribe of the Treasury and the Divine Offering in the Domain of Amun*, meaning he was a mid-ranking official active in the immense temple economy of the estates of Amun. Another title of his, preserved in a text of the stela in front of the façade of TT -400-, calls him *Prophet of Maat*, which signifies that the tomb owner also held a high-ranking priestly title in the temple of Maat, a sanctuary in Karnak-North situated in the closest proximity of the Treasury. The name of the tomb owner, Khamin, which means “Min has appeared”, was finally identified in 2009 in one of the inscriptions of the transverse hall as well as in several loose fragments originating from lintels and doorjambs. Khamin’s name is also preserved on his funerary stela, wonderfully painted in Ramesside style, in front of which a large funerary deposit consisting of well over 200 ceramic vessels was found (Fig. 2). Between 2007 and 2013, the mission has excavated most parts of the mortuary monument, which consists of a deep forecourt also shared by two other, thus-far-unknown Eighteenth Dynasty tombs, a cult chapel of the traditional T-shaped plan, a short sloping passage, and a complex of earlier burial chambers reused by Khamin and his wife Raia for their own interments. However, this is the original, Ramesside, structure only, and as can be seen in the ground plan of the tomb (Fig. 3), TT -400- accommodates further, intrusive funerary apartments as well. These include Structure 1, an Eighteenth Dynasty shaft tomb, Structure 2, a hypogeum-type tomb of the Imperial Period, Structure 3, a Late Dynastic burial shaft, Structure 4, an as-yet-unexcavated shaft possibly of the Kushite and Saite Periods, Structure 5, a tomb shaft of the Late Third Intermediate Period, and Structure 6 to which we shall return later. Having a look at the plan is sufficient to prove that TT -400- was reused for numerous secondary interments by numerous secondary owners over the First Millennium BC and the Imperial Period, well down to the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.



Fig. 1: Excavation of the debris covering the forecourt of TT -400- (photo by Balázs Tihanyi)



Fig. 2: Funerary stela of Khamin in front of the façade of Theban Tomb -400- (photo by Balázs Tihanyi)

Abdulrahman Ahmed Hassan (Chief Inspector, Luxor, West Bank) for their help and support to realize the fieldwork between 2007 and 2013.

⁷ Kákósy, László: Ninth Preliminary Report on the Hungarian Excavation in Thebes; Tomb No. 32. *Acta Arch. Hung.* 46 (1994), 22.

⁸ Kákósy, László: Ungarische Grabungen in TT 32. In: *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen. Neue Perspektiven archäologischer Forschung. Internationales Symposium Heidelberg 9.-13. 6. 1993* (SAGA 12), eds Assmann, Jan et al. (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1995), 50.

⁹ Kampp, Friederike: *Die thebanische Nekropole zum Wandel des Grabgedankens von der XVIII. bis zur XX. Dynastie* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 769. Cf. *ibid.*, 223, Fig. 126.

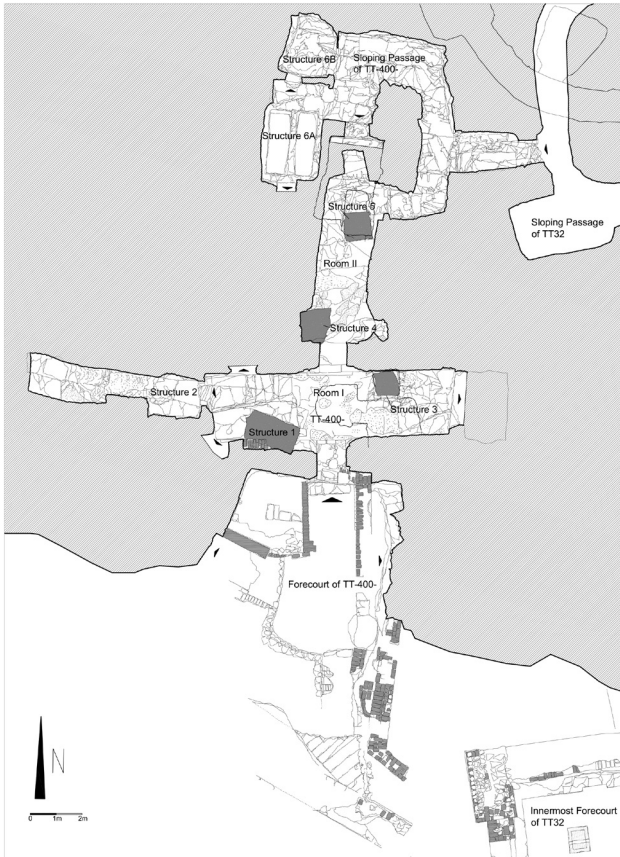


Fig. 3: Ground plan of Theban Tomb -400- (drawing by Zsolt Vasáros)

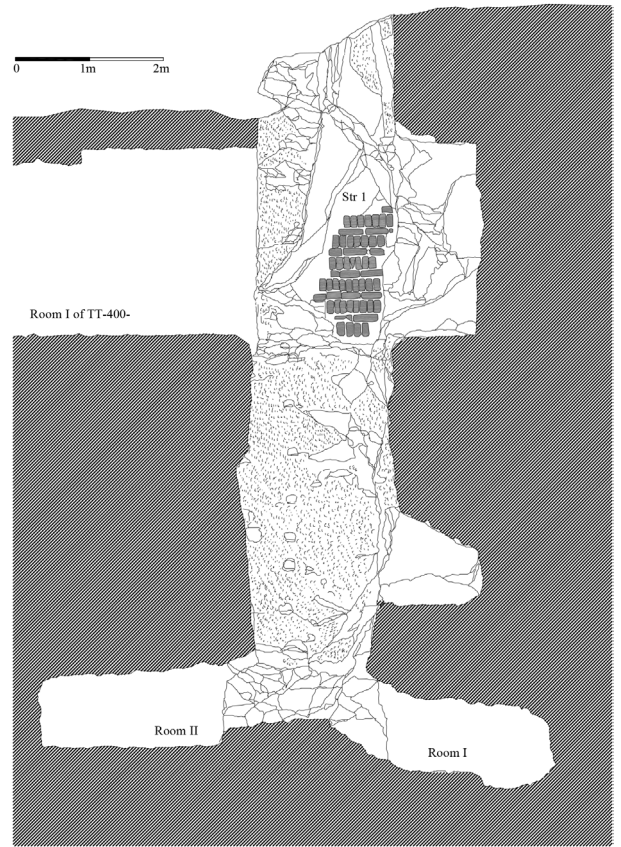


Fig. 4: Section of Structure 1 (drawing by Zsolt Vasáros)

In this brief note, we only intend to highlight some observations made in connection with the tomb owners who occupied TT -400- and its territory during the New Kingdom. As noted above, TT -400- was built sometime during the Ramesside Period, most probably in the later Nineteenth or early Twentieth Dynasty. By this time, the southern slope of el-Khokha had been densely dotted by funerary monuments, most of which date to the reign of Tuthmosis III. The existence of this early New Kingdom cemetery owes much to the proximity to the mortuary temple of that king, situated at the base of el-Khokha. It is thus no surprise that TT -400- is in direct physical contact with no fewer than six Eighteenth Dynasty tombs. The situation is nicely illustrated by an early New Kingdom tomb shaft that we call Structure 1. This shaft has its opening above TT -400- and it cuts through the western aisle of the transverse hall of Khamin's tomb, reaching to a depth of -9.5 m (Fig. 4). Since this was an already-existing shaft at the time of building TT -400-, the architect of the tomb made an effort to conceal the traces of former ownership. To be sure, the builders backfilled the shaft to the floor level of the transverse hall, filled the cracks in the southern wall with mud bricks and constructed a half-vault to conceal the gap in the ceiling. The material excavated in the shaft can be dated to the reign of Tuthmosis III, based on the pottery, especially a handsome bottle with red splash decoration which is typical of this period (Fig. 5).

Structure 1 was, however, not the single obstacle Khamin had to meet and tackle while constructing his mortuary monument. Theban

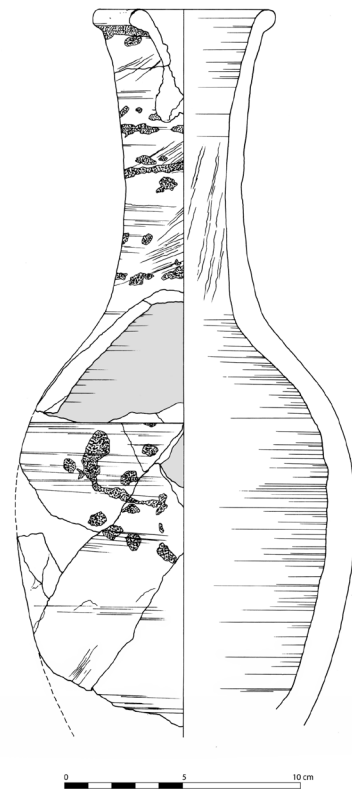


Fig. 5: Bottle with red splash decoration – Eighteenth Dynasty (drawing by Balázs Tihanyi)



Fig. 6: Canopic jars of Paser and his wife
(photo by Balázs Tihanyi)

tombs of the Ramesside Period are characterized, among others, by the presence of a sloping passage, i.e., a slanting corridor or tunnel carved out of the bedrock which connects the cult chapel and the burial place, and may vary in length from a few metres up to well over 60 metres. Since there is a bend in the axis of the sloping passage of TT -400- at Sector 11 (m 11), it is rather evident that the builders of the Ramesside monument originally intended to continue hewing the sloping passage to a western direction, when, accidentally broke through into an earlier burial complex that we now term Structure 6. This unexpected circumstance naturally foreclosed any attempts at sticking to the original plan and necessitated an alteration in the design of the sloping passage and the burial chamber. Thus, instead of cutting a newly made burial chamber, Khamin had to be content with occupying the antechamber of this Eighteenth Dynasty burial complex. It is apparent that at this time the antechamber of Structure 6 was enlarged along the western side wall in order to allow space for hewing two rectangular floor niches for the new proprietor and his wife. The floor of the chamber was also re-carved and levelled flat, while the Eighteenth Dynasty equipment found therein was probably relocated and deposited in the inner chamber of Structure 6.

The original, Eighteenth Dynasty, owner of this funerary apartment must have been one Paser and his wife, the reading of whose name is as yet uncertain. During the 2013 season we could reassemble some vessels of their canopic sets (Fig. 6) and reconstruct, at least in part, the canopic chest of Paser (Fig. 7), all inscribed with short formulae taken from Book of the Dead chapter 151. A pottery assemblage of the early New Kingdom evidently belonging with these interments has also been uncovered, of which special attention should be given to a small jug bearing decoration in the so-called “brown- and red-painted style” (Fig. 8a) and two juglets with decoration in imitation of stone and glass prototypes (Figs. 8b-c).

Judging by the number of Ramesside mummy boards inscribed with the so-called Nut formula and the shabtis



Fig. 7: Canopic chest of Paser
(photo by Balázs Tihanyi)

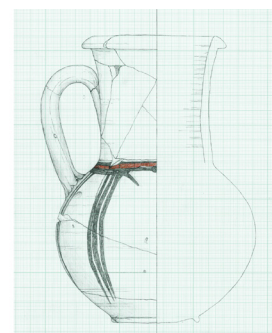


Fig. 8a: Jug with decoration in “brown- and red-painted style” (photo and field drawing by Balázs Tihanyi)



Fig. 8b-c: Two juglets with decoration imitating stone and glass vessels (photo by Balázs Tihanyi)



Fig. 9: Funerary figurine from the shabti set of Paenrenu (photo by László Mátyus)



Fig. 10: Transverse lid of the shabti box of Khaemwaset (photo by Balázs Tihanyi)



Fig. 11: Funerary figurine from the shabti set of Amenmesse (photo by László Mátyus, drawing by Eszter Tóth)



Fig. 12: Transverse lids of the shabti box of Suty (photo by Balázs Tihanyi)

discovered this season in Structure 6, we may infer that at least eight persons were interred in this complex during the Nineteenth-Twentieth Dynasties. One of them was a certain Paenrenu, whose funerary figurines (Fig. 9) and one of the transverse lids of his shabti boxes have been unearthed in 2013, together with fragments from another box inscribed for a man called Khaemwaset (Fig. 10).

But who were these people that were apparently given the right to deposit their own interments here within a very short period of time after the original burials had taken place? Objects from two further shabti sets seem to provide us with an answer, however vague and hypothetical. One of them is a complete funerary figurine from the shabti set of one Amenmesse (Fig. 11). Thus far the single example of this set known to Egyptology was the one kept in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.¹⁰ Since we excavated four examples from the same set over the past two seasons, we can now prove that Amenmesse had been buried in TT-400-. What is the most interesting feature of this shabti set is Amenmesse's title, *Chief of the Guardians* (or *Sheikh el-Gafar*) in the *Treasury of Amun*, meaning Amenmesse had a professional life at the same institution where the tomb owner, Khamin had. This time the Treasury of Amun was located in Karnak North, and together with another institution, the so-called Divine Offering of Amun, it was a kind of economic head office managing the financial matters of the huge estates of Amun.¹¹

Besides Amenmesse's shabtis, two transverse lids from the shabti box of one Suty have also been excavated in the 2013 season (Fig. 12). The title featured in the inscription, *Priest of Maat*, is once again

¹⁰ van Haarlem, Willem: *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum. Allard Pierson Museum Amsterdam II/1* (Amsterdam, 1990), 39–40 (No. 9455).

¹¹ Cf. Grandet, Pierre: *Ramsès III. Histoire d'un règne* (Paris: Pygmalion/ Gérard Watelet, 1993), 235–236, 253–254.

much instructive, given that Suty, as a regular priest, must have performed a service in the same temple of the goddess Maat situated in Karnak North, where the tomb owner, Khamin, occupied the post of a prophet as member of the high clergy. In addition to this, it is to be noted that the main temple of Maat, personification of the cosmic equilibrium, stood in the closest vicinity of the treasury in Karnak North, in the maintenance of which the priests of the deity had played a key role. Taken together, we have evidence from TT -400- for three persons – family members or just colleagues: we do not know this – coming from the same walk of life, working in the same institution, and, apparently, buried in the same tomb. Considering these facts, it is probably not too far-fetched to state that the building of TT -400- was the venture of a group of colleagues working together in Karnak North and that Amenmesse and Suty had also paid in their share, in exchange of which they were allowed to use a burial place common with the socially most elevated person of the company, i.e., Khamin, *Scribe of the Treasury and the Divine Offering of Amun, and Prophet of Maat*.

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

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