CHAPTER 18

Karakhamun’s Artists

Elena Pischikova
South Asasif Conservation Project Researcher, American University in Cairo

Abstract

This article addresses several observations on the qayrawān (TT223) tomb in the Asasif Necropolis. The tomb has been studied several times in the past, and the author of this article has written about it previously. The author conducted several campaigns to study and excavate the tomb, and the results of these campaigns are presented in this article. The author presents new observations and interpretations of the tomb’s contents, and the results are discussed in detail.

Personal Note

By this modest contribution to the studies in honor of Dr. Mohamed El-Bialy I would like to express my gratitude for his many years of friendship and productive professional relationship. Dr. El Bialy was very supportive of my
work in the tomb of the Vizier of Upper Egypt Nespakashuty (TT 312) at Deir el Bahri,¹ and recently in the South Asasif necropolis.² In 2012 Dr. El Bialy, in his capacity as Chairman of Egyptian, Greco-Roman Antiquities Sector, was also instrumental in the organization and running of the international conference “Thebes in the First Millennium BC” organized by the South Asasif Project in Luxor.³

The subject of this article is very broad and cannot be covered here in any considerable depth. Moreover, as the tomb of Karakhamun and its decoration are far from being fully reconstructed we do not have enough information for a comprehensive analysis. Rediscovered in 2006, the tomb of Karakhamun was found completely collapsed, ruined by floods and later occupants. Seven years of excavation, conservation and reconstruction work revealed an enormous amount of decorated fragments still left in the tomb, making it almost fully reconstructible. The reconstruction has already started with the pillars of the First Pillared Hall and the south wall of the Second Pillared Hall. As seen now the tomb consists of an entrance structure, open court, two pillared halls with side rooms, and a spacious burial compartment with a painted main burial chamber. Its size and superb quality of carving place the tomb of Karakahmun among the most significant Kushite tombs of the Theban necropolis.

A number of found fragments and reconstructed scenes show that the tomb’s decoration was left unfinished, therefore the tomb provides a great deal of information on all the phases and methods of relief carving used by the artists as well as their personal styles. This article comprises some preliminary observations on the working techniques and styles of carving in the tomb of

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¹ The tomb of Nespakashuty (TT 312) was first discovered and excavated by the Metropolitan Museum Expedition led by Herbert Winlock in 1922–24. It was re-excavated by the Metropolitan Museum/ARCE mission led by the author in 2001–2005. The sandstone entrance gate was reconstructed on site in 2005.
³ Pischikova, Budka, and Griffin (eds.), *Thebes in the first millennium BC*. 

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