 CHAPTER 22

The False Door of Senneferi, Theban Tomb 99

Nigel Strudwick
University of Memphis

Abstract

It has been my privilege to know Mohamed el-Bialy since 1984 when we began work in Qurna. Mohamed was our inspector in our second season, and since then I have been in contact with him regularly, both professionally and socially, as he ascended the SCA/MSA chain of command in Luxor and Aswan. He has always been incredibly kind and friendly to Helen and me and to members of our Mission, and it is a great pleasure to be able to include this short article in this volume in his honour.

I chose the false door of Senneferi for this publication as, without Mohamed's input, the material relating to it would never have come to my attention.¹ I had

¹ This is an expanded and updated version of part of a paper that will appear as part of an article in the forthcoming proceedings of the Third International Colloquium of Egyptology.
many years ago realised that the tomb of Senneferi originally possessed both a false door and a stela in the front room, each made from a separate piece of stone as opposed to carved and/or painted in the native rock.\(^2\) I presume that the false door was located on Wall 2 (front room, south) and the stela on Wall 5 (front room, north).\(^3\) Excavations in the courtyard of TT99 had brought to light hundreds of fragments of pink granite. Most were small, many little more than splinters.\(^4\) A small number of fragments bore hieroglyphs or other decoration, and the identification of a torus roll on some of these indicated that it the most likely source was a false door. However, the information available by the end of excavation work in 1998 was insufficient to propose a reconstruction of the door.

The background to the next part of the story is the reorganisation of store-rooms on the West Bank at Luxor at the beginning of the 21st century. The main chapel of TT96 (‘upper tomb’, TT96A) had for many years been used as a magazine for storage of finds, and was virtually off-limits to everyone, not least as it contained some objects, notably boxes, from the tomb of Tutankhamun.\(^5\) Now, it had been decided that the tomb was no longer to be a magazine, and in 2002, Mohamed, now Director of Luxor, instigated inventory work in TT96A. 2002 also saw our final study season in TT99, and, on my arrival in Qurna in September 2002, Mohamed informed me that this work had revealed a number of fragments of a granite false door which he thought might belong to TT99. He permitted me to study these fragments, and move relevant ones into TT99, where they are now stored. I should like to thank Mohamed for his openness with information and his generosity in moving the fragments. While the resulting reconstruction is by no means complete, these were some of the ‘missing

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\(^2\) A. Hermann, Die Stelen der thebanischen Felsgräber der 18. Dynastie (ÄF 11, Glückstadt, Hamburg, New York 1940), 28. The remains of the TT99 stela are considered in the forthcoming Montepulciano publication, and in the final tomb report.

\(^3\) A schematic diagram of the tomb with wall numbers and links to photographs will be found at http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/tt99/architecture/chapel.html (accessed 21 July 2014).


\(^5\) L. Manniche, City of the Dead. Thebes in Egypt (Chicago 1987), 53–54, fig. 45.