

Preliminary Report on the Work Carried out During the Season 2010

The main concerns of the work undertaken in January and February 2010 were the following (1):

1. Architectural documentation of tombs KV 26 and KV 30.
2. Clearing and consolidation of KV 31.
3. Search for the entrance of KV 59, cleaning of its shaft and covering with an iron door.
4. Cleaning of the surface around KV 40.
5. Topographical study and survey of the surroundings.
6. Documentation of wall fragments from KV 17 (Sethi I) located in KV 18.

1. Work in KV 26 and KV 30

The tomb KV 26 was cleared in the previous season. The plan made of this anonymous tomb by the Theban Mapping Project was updated and corrected thanks to the mapping undertaken by Tanja Alsheimer in January 2010.

Restoration of the pottery originating from KV 26 was started in this season. The number of large Nile silt jars can now be estimated to 16.

Although a big amount of sherds was found inside the burial system last year, there are still pieces missing which can be expected to be near the tomb in the surrounding area. The tomb owner remains unknown, because no fragments with inscribed names have been discovered. According to the pottery types the burial can be dated to the reigns of Thutmosis III-Amenhotep II.

KV 30: After the visit and planning work of E. Thomas in 1966, the last work carried out was the mapping and measuring done by the Theban Mapping Project. The tomb had for a long time been occupied by bats and needed a thorough cleaning before the work for a new plan could be started this season (fig. 6).

2. Work in KV 31

From KV 31 only the upper part of the shaft was known before the clearance in this season. The shaft was first cleared from modern garbage until a layer of limestone chips, sand and a few flint boulders appeared. The shaft had been built through a collapsed conglomerate originating from the mountain above the tomb. The debris, without any modern remains, continued until the floor of the shaft, where three flowerpots of Nile silt had been deposited after sealing the entrance. These pots were probably used as containers of mud, while closing the wall between room B and the shaft A with mud and seal impressions. The same phenomenon was also observed in KV 26 in 2009. Behind the shaft, the tomb consists of 3 rooms. All the rooms had been plundered thoroughly and all of their original funerary objects were scattered and broken in the more than 1 m high debris of limestone chips and sand. Inside room B the debris reached almost to the ceiling on the east side near the entrance, 40 cm higher than on the west side. Fig. 4.

Shaft A and room B are well carved, the upper part being cut into the conglomerate. At a level of 70 cm above the floor of the tomb the excavation reaches the bedrock, where chisel marks can be observed on the walls. Rooms C and D are built completely in bedrock; room C shows only minor cracks but room D has long cracks in its ceiling. All in all the limestone in the tomb is of good quality and damage is not visible in the tomb itself, only on the remains of the burial objects and on the mummies. Fig. 5.

The debris in room B and in room C and D were removed in trenches. The nature of the debris was consistent in all the layers; the same kind of pottery sherds was found from top to bottom and joining fragments of jars and mummies were found in all the rooms and layers. The jars are mostly big storage jars with white slip on the surface and of Nile silt fabrics like in KV 26. The work on the jars will be started in the coming season, but the number of big jars can be estimated to 50-60. Fragments of decorated flasks and jars, made of marl silt and dating to the Thutmose period, were found in all the three rooms, but the biggest amount was in room D. Fragments of one limestone and one calcite canopic jars were found. On the inscribed limestone jar the name of the owner was left blank. A fragment of a dummy jar of Sennefer, similar to those found in KV 42 und KV 32, also appeared in this tomb.

The organic material was astonishingly well preserved, as no water seems to have entered the tomb. Wooden objects were broken into small pieces and the valuable inlay or plating has been removed with scrapers or knives from all the surfaces. The black painted wood from coffins with a few remains of yellow inscriptions, together with the pottery, speak in favor of a dating to the first half of the 18th dynasty. Remains of 4 mummies were in the debris, three of them in room C. The human remains were found unwrapped of their bandages and big amounts of linen stripes, natron bags and other types of textiles were in all the layers of the debris in every room. The mummies will be studied in the future seasons by specialists.

The mummies have not been taken out into a cachette in the Twenty-first Dynasty, but the tomb has been robbed of all its valuable objects, probably a first time towards the end of the New Kingdom.

Several ostraca from the 19th-20th dynasties were found in the debris in all the rooms, together with a piece of linen with the cartouche of Ramesses III (fig. 6) and a royal shabti from the 20th dynasty. These objects must have fallen into the tomb during its refilling after the first robberies in Pharaonic times. They are the only items not belonging to the Eighteenth Dynasty. No modern remains were present in the entire tomb.

Conclusions:

The results after the preliminary study of KV 31 are that the tomb dates to the Eighteenth Dynasty, probably to the reigns of Thutmosis III - Amenhotep II. The tomb was used at least for four burials. The identity of the deceased could not be established. The tomb was not decorated but the rooms are well carved. It was probably robbed in Pharaonic times. Because no earlier finds have been recorded, we assume that the tomb was not excavated in modern times but perhaps visited by early archaeologists. No plan of the tomb has been

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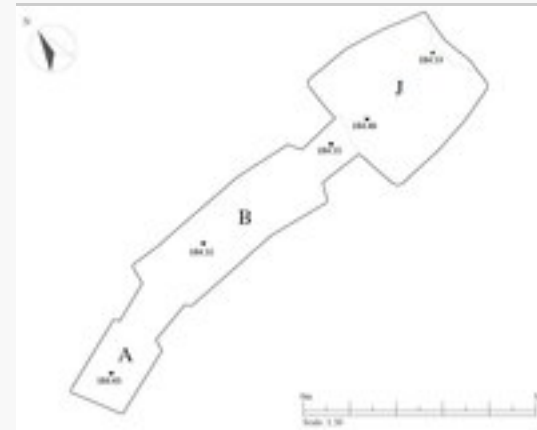


Fig. 1. KV 26 new plan (T. Alsheimer, 2010)



Fig. 2. KV 26, restored pottery jar

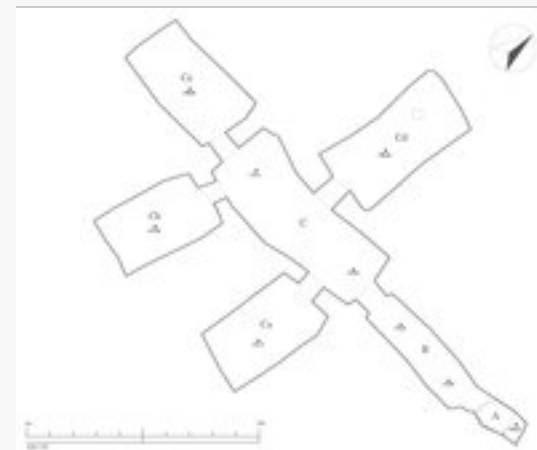


Fig. 3. New Plan of KV 30 (T. Alsheimer, 2010)

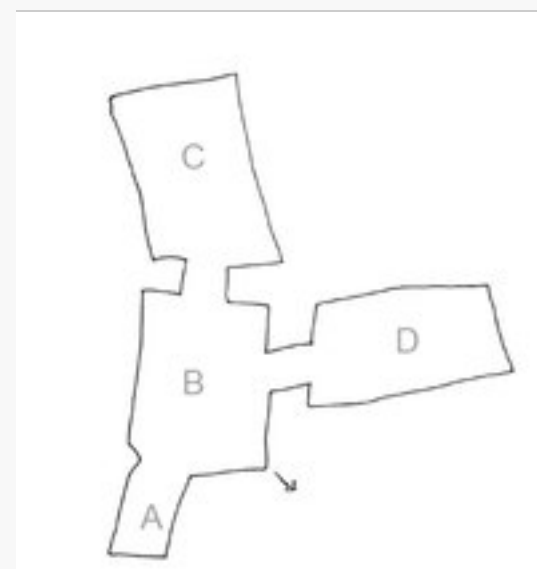


Fig. 4. Sketch of KV 31



Fig. 5. KV 31, rooms B and C



Fig. 6. Linen with embroidered cartouche of Ramesses III, before restoration

produced before our work in KV 31, a sketch of the tomb was done this season and a proper plan will be measured in the coming season in 2011.

In the end of our season 2010 the tomb was documented by photographs. Over the shaft entrance an iron door was built on a brick wall, covered with hiba. It was built larger than the opening of the shaft, so that the original measurements are visible for the new plan of the tomb KV 31.

3. Work in KV 59

The search for the entrance of KV 59 continued in this season 2010. In the end of the campaign 2009 an area of 8x8 meters was opened between the path to KV 34 and the cliffs on its east side as our trench A.I in order to find the hidden entrance to tomb KV 59. This trench is situated on the spot marked by the Theban Mapping Project for KV 59. Two layers were excavated and we reached a level of approx. 2 m under the surface of the flanking path. Only a few pottery sherds were found in the entire area. One of the marl sherds joins an Eighteenth Dynasty jar originating from KV 26.

In this season the mouth of the shaft of KV 59 was discovered in the trench A.I of last year. The tomb is situated in the horizontal bedrock under the very high vertical cliff, between the tombs KV 26 and KV 37 and opposite KV 31. Its orientation is approx. West-East.

Shaft A was filled with homogenous debris consisting mainly of small limestone chips and coarse sand. At the height of the entrance to room B, ca. 2 m above the floor of the shaft, the debris showed traces of a flood. The shaft did not include any finds except a few pottery fragments dating to the New Kingdom. In the surrounding area, beside the shaft, modern debris were found down to the bedrock. These facts indicate that the tomb stood open for a longer period and that water could enter into the room at the end of the shaft on the east side.

Room B could not yet be cleared in this season. The surface of its filling consists of a dry flood layer over the entire room. In the east end limestone blocs from the wall and the ceiling have fallen down due to the humidity. The air in the chamber was very hot and humid when the entrance was opened from the shaft. The tomb must have remained closed for a longer period after its last discovery, probably by H. Carter. To our knowledge no information about the tomb exists nor are any objects known to come from it.

In the end of the season 2010 an iron door was built over the shaft entrance supported by a brick wall and covered with a layer of hiba.

The work in KV 59 with mapping and cleaning shall be accomplished in the next season. KV 59 has not been recorded by the Theban Mapping Project. A rough sketch was made at the end of the campaign. Fig. 7 & 8.



Fig. 7. Shaft opening of KV 59 in 2010



Fig. 8. KV 59 bottom of shaft, profile in entrance to room B

4. Work around KV 40

In the end of the season the opening of the shaft was cleaned and measuring points were set for the future campaign. The tomb shall be cleared and mapped in the next season 2011. Fig.9



Fig. 9. KV 40 in 2010

5. Topographical study and survey of the surroundings.

A topographical survey documenting the location of the tombs to each other and their position within the landscape was undertaken. One of the prominent features of this side valley is the niche that now stands high in the cliff above tomb KV 37. In the Ramesside period it must have been accessible from the ground and used for worship by those scribes and priests who also produced the numerous ostraca known to come from this area. A fair amount of new ostraca was found during the last two seasons in and around the tombs examined.

The niche is badly damaged. Its inner surfaces were carefully prepared to receive a decoration painted on stucco. A photographic documentation of the remaining decoration was undertaken. The best preserved part is on the left inner wall, where a seated goddess with cow horns and sun disk, a large wig and elaborate dress can be recognized. On the right wall, traces of the feathers of Amun remain. Fig. 10 &11.



Fig. 10. The niche on the cliff



Fig. 11. Remains of a seated goddess

6. Documentation of wall fragments from KV 17 (Sethi I) located in KV 18.

In KV 18 some of the wall fragments from the tomb of Sethi I were studied and photographed by Florence Mauric-Barberio. Beside these pieces excavated in the earlier seasons near the tomb of Sethi I, further fragments, discovered by the ARCE and Edwin Brock, were included to the collection of more than 2500 fragments which are now stored in the tomb of Ramesses X. Thanks to the kind co-operation with the SCA team and its director Dr. Tarek el-Awadi a visit in the tomb of Sethi I was possible in order to relocate some of the documented fragments.

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