

CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS AND FUNERARY DEPICTIONS WITHIN INDIVIDUAL TOMBS AT AL-ASSASIF NECROPOLIS DURING THE LATE PERIOD

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL EXAMINATION OF OFFERING SCENES



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Abstract

The religious and funeral scenes were the most distinctive Features in the private tombs during the late period of ancient Egyptian civilization. These tombs have included rare and unique scenes that were previously restricted to kings. In addition to adding several modifications and changes to these inscriptions, as it appears in Al-Assasif Necropolis. For instance, The appearance of individuals in the king's form in TT34, TT36, and TT279. Furthermore, the scenes of offering tables, the brigades of deities, mourners and the funeral procession in TT27, TT33, TT34, TT36, TT 279, TT 410, TT 414, and ect. Whereas this paper would discuss the offering scenes through archeological and analytical study to figure out how many tombs owners were influenced by the artistic features of the Old, Middle, and new kingdoms, and to what extent they modified or added to these scenes. So, these tombs have become unconventional and controversial.

Keywords: Al-Assasif Necropolis, Late Period, Offering Scenes, Alterations, Changes.

مُلخَص البَحْث

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية دراسة لمناظر الحياة الدينية والجنائزية الخاصة بمقابر الأفراد خلال العصور المتأخرة؛ حيث كانت هذه النوعية من المناظر من أبرز السمات المميزة لمقابر الأفراد خلال هذه الفترة، فيما تضمنت هذه المقابر مناظر نادرة وفريدة من نوعها والتي كانت مقتصرة من قبل على الملوك، بل وازدادة العديد من التعديلات والتغييرات على هذه النقوش، فعلى سبيل المثال، ظهور الأفراد في هيئة الملك كما في TT34، TT36، و TT279 بجبانة العساسيف.

علاوة على ذلك، مناظر موائد القرابين، وألوية الآلهة، وموكب الجنازة في TT27، TT33، TT34، TT36، TT279، TT410، TT414، إلخ. في حين أن هذا البحث سوف يناقش مناظر القرابين من خلال دراسة أثرية وتحليلية لمعرفة مدى تأثير العديد من أصحاب المقابر بالسمات الفنية خلال الدولة القديمة والوسطى

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والحديثه، وإلى أي مدى أضفوا تجديدات على هذه المناظر، فباتت هذه المقابر غير تقليدية، حيث لا عجب في ذلك فقد يؤول هذا إلى المناصب التي اعتلاها معظم أصحاب المقابر كالمديرين العظام للزوجات الإلهيات بصفة خاصة والعاملين في مؤسسة الزوجة الإلهية لأمون رع بصفة عامة.

الكلمات الدالة: مقابر العساسيف، العصور المتأخرة، مناظر القرابين، التغيرات، الزوجة الإلهية.

Introduction

The ancient Egyptians were meticulous about the features and the rules of their Egyptian Art over regions, where art was characterized by its coherence, stability and grandeur. It clenched to the rules of religion. Obviously, it shows up in the inscriptions inside tombs, which reflects the nature and holiness of that religion. In addition, the ancient Egyptian Art was affected by the nature of the people, the environment in which they live, and the phase they were going through, whether politically or economically.

Fortunately, Al-Assasif Necropolis has the high number of private tombs during the late period of the ancient Egyptian civilization.¹ These tombs were distinguished by their architectural styles;² Some of them took after previous tombs, where others were unique.³ Apparently, they combined many architectural elements from different eras in one tomb; Therefore, these tombs have become very complex to the extent which made some scholars called it “funerary palaces”.⁴

Scope of the Research

Alteration Rate of the offering Scenes inside the Individual Tombs at Al-Assasif Necropolis, and how much it was related to the empowerment of their affiliations and their positions by comparing and analyzing the offering scenes.

I. Alteration in the Offering Scene from Vestibule of Shashanq Tomb “TT27”:



The deceased is shown standing in front of his father, who is sitting on a seat, wearing a long linen necklace (this necklace belongs to the most important officials of the divine wife in the twenty-sixth dynasty), hanging from his neck and his titles appears beside him (Fig. 1).⁵

¹ Dietham, E. (2015), 53.; Thomas, N. (1980), 352, Fig. 78.

² Wutte, A. & Duarte, J. (2021), 319-336.

³ Weeks, K. (2001), 381.

⁴ Abdel Aal, A. (2016), 23-24.; El-Sadeek, W. (2007), 151.; Gestermann & Gomaa, (2014), 202-203.; Dietham, E. (1984), 197.; Thomas, N. (1980), 163.; Maher, H. (2021), 25-40.

⁵ Sist, L. (1992), 485-491.; Hallmann, A. (2014), Fig.18-14,18-15.

With comparing this scene with another scene which is on the western end of the northern wall in *Rekh-mi-R^c* tomb from New Kingdom which shows him sitting with his mother in front of the offering table (Fig. 2).⁶



Fig.1: The scene from Shashanq's tomb standing in front of his Father.
(Hallman, A. (2014), fig.18-14).



Fig.2: The scene from *Rekh-mi-R^c*'s tomb sitting with his mother in front of the offering table.
(Davies, N. (1935), PL. XIX, XXV).

Firstly, the Saite artist added a stick between the deceased,⁷ and his father in order to separate them, or it could be for respecting.⁸ Secondly, there is a fact that the scene in

⁶ Davies, N. (1935), PL. XIX, XXV.

⁷ Abu Bakr, J. (1989), 26-29.

⁸ Kanawati, N. (1981), 221.

the New Kingdom was mostly depicting the deceased sitting next to his mother or his wife not his father. Thirdly, the deceased is standing here instead of sitting like scenes in tombs of the New Kingdom (Fig. 3 a, b).

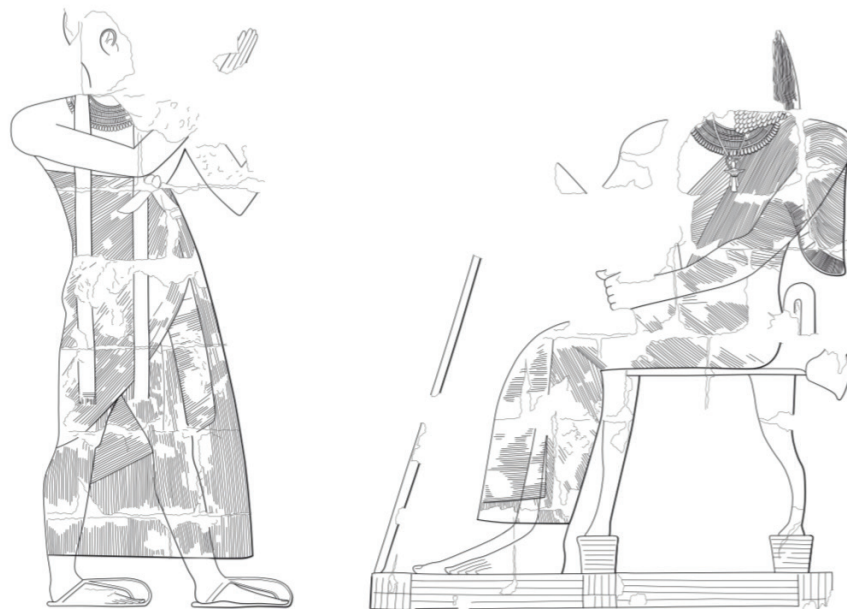


Fig. 3a: The scene from Shashanq's tomb standing in front of his father and with a stick between them. (Hallman, A. (2014), fig. 18-15).

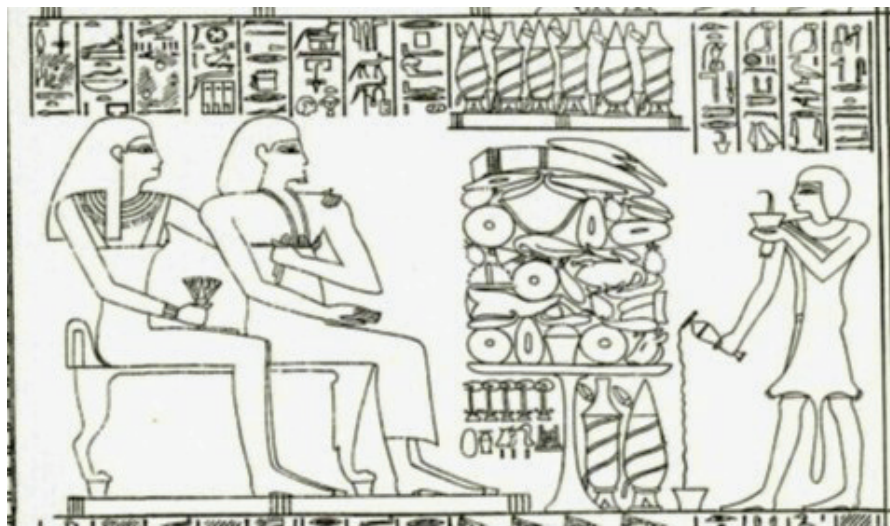


Fig. 3b: The scene from *Rekh-mi-R'*'s tomb sitting next to his wife in front of the offering table. (Davies, N. (1935), PL. XXIV).

Fourthly, there is a vase of a sacred oil under the chair of deceased's father. We can meet this scene of the seventh vase of sacred oils on the east wall of Montuemhat tomb

(TT34),⁹ where he is sitting on a seat in front of the offering table,¹⁰ and one vase of the sacred oil under his seat (Fig. 3c).¹¹ With backing to the Old Kingdom, these vases with their names used to appear in the false door,¹² or on the upper lintel of the inner room such as on the west wall of Idu tomb (G7102),¹³ or on the west wall like the scene inside Mereruka mastaba, who has an offering scene sounds like Montuemhat's scene as their both seats ended with animal legs. But, there is a sacred vase under Montuemhat's seat.¹⁴ While there is nothing under Mereruka's seat. It replaced by wine vases under the offering table in the scene (Fig. 3d).¹⁵ Furthermore, there are differences between Montuemhat and Mereruka on the clothes and the position of hands.



Fig. 3c: The scene from Montuemhat's tomb sitting on a seat in front of the offering table.¹⁶
(Russmann, E. (1994), fig. 2b).

⁹ LÄ V. 366.; Byl, S. (2012), 87.

¹⁰ Abdel-Mahaimin, A. (2019); EL-Abidin, A. (2001), 229-274.

¹¹ Russmann, E. (1994), 1-19.

¹² Pischikova, E. (1994), 63,65,67.

¹³ Simpson, W. (1976), 27-28.

¹⁴ Duell, P. (1938), PL. 64.

¹⁵ Pischikova, E. (2008).

¹⁶ Russmann, E. (1994), Fig. 2b.

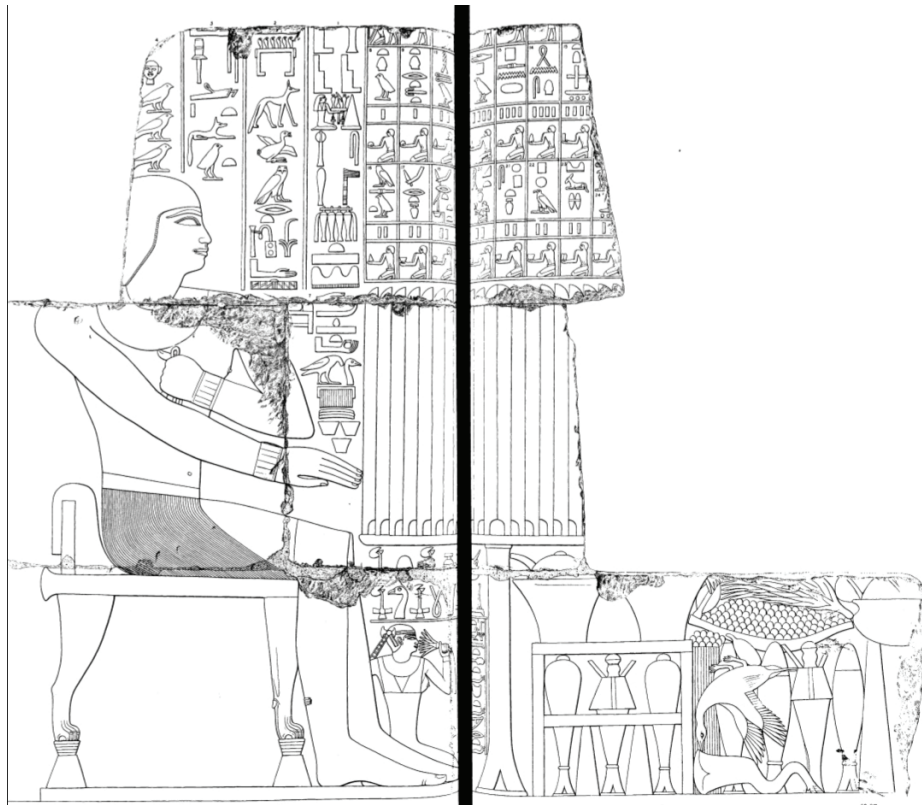


Fig. 3d: The scene from Mereruka's tomb sitting on a seat in front of the offering table.
(Duel, P. (1938), PL. 64).

II. Two Rare Scenes from the West and East Walls of The Vizier *Nes-p^c-k^c-shuty* Tomb "ns-p3-k3-Šw.ti" TT312 :

The West Wall:

This piece is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum No. 23.3.468. It shows the remains of three scenes; the lower part is showing the procession of the offering bearers,¹⁷ the pilgrimage scene is in the second part, and the procession of the bearers of sacred oils is in the third part. In the lower register, we find a section of the eastern wall which is showing the offering bearers, then a group of mourners (Fig. 4).¹⁸

¹⁷ EL-Badrawy, S. (2023), 93-97.; Pischikova, E. (1998), 92.

¹⁸ Pischikova, E. (1998), Fig. 27.

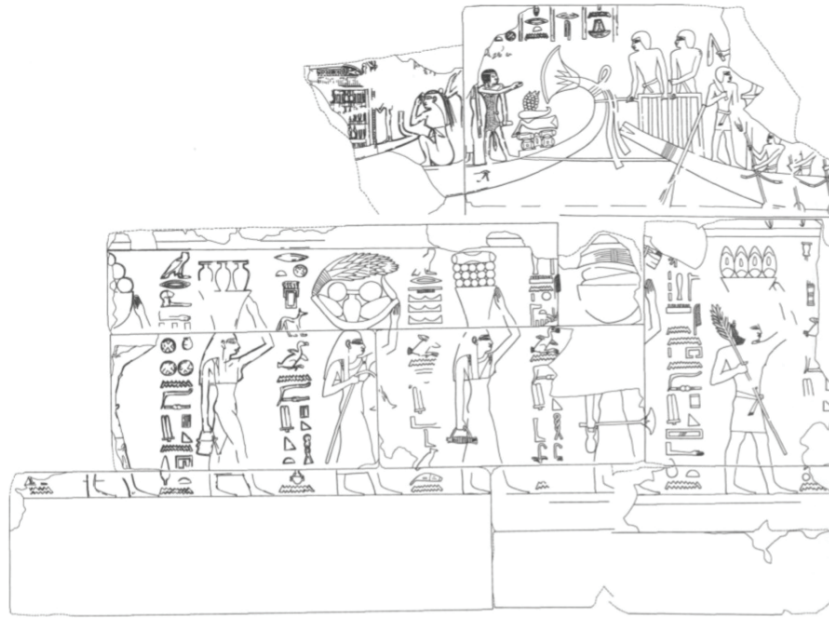


Fig. 4: The scene from Nespakashuty's tomb shows the offering bearers.
(Pischikova, E. (1998), fig. 27).

The East Wall:

This piece is in the Brooklyn Museum No. 52.131.3,24-25. It is an unfamiliar scene appears in the Egyptian art. It shows one of the offering bearers when he is balancing the offerings, not on her head, but on her both shoulders, using her both arms, where the traditional scene is carrying offerings on one shoulder (Fig. 5).¹⁹

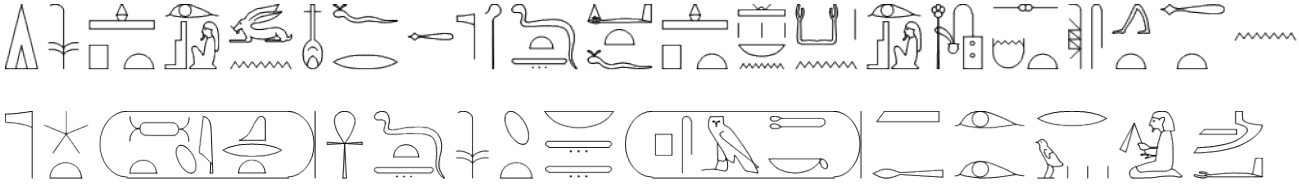


Fig. 5: The scene from Nespakashuty's tomb shows one of the offering bearers.
(pischikova, E. (1998), fig. 31).

¹⁹ Pischikova, E. (1998),78, Fig. 31.

III. An Offering scene from Iretrau Tomb (TT 390):

She appeared in the outer lintel of the inner room, seated alone before offerings at the left end, with her titles as a Scribe and a Chief Attendant.²⁰ Finally, Iretrau appeared with libation-vases before Osiris in the niche containing a false door [Fig. 6].²¹



*ḥtp-dī-nsw wsir wn-nfr ntr ʿ3 ḥk3 dt di.f ḥtpw nb(.w) n k3 n wsir sš.t šm.t Šms.t ʿ3.t (n) dw3.t
ntr Nit-Ikrt ʿnh dt s3.t nsw nb t3wy Psmṯk m3ʿ ḥrw ʾIrt-ir-w mʿ3.t ḥrw.*

[An offering which the king gives to Osiris wennfer ‘Onnofris’, the Great God, Lord of Eternity, he gives all offerings for the spirit of the deceased, the Female Scribe, a Chief Attendant of Divine wife Nitocris, Daughter of the Lord of the Two lands, Psmatik, Justified, Iretrau, Justified].²²

In addition to appearing alone in most of the scenes; which means she was the most important person here not the secondary person as we usually find in the case of non-royal women who shared the tomb of their husbands according to an elite male perspective. Accordingly means Iretrau was an royal woman who utilized the privilege of royal women who owned single tombs.²³ Furthermore, Iretrau did not share her status with her husband like most of women, nor did she derive her status from her husband. Iretrau’s husband was of higher rank than she was and was buried in his own ancestral cemetery at Abydos, while her son, also a vizier, had his own tomb in the hills overlooking the Asasif plain.²⁴

²⁰ PM 11, 441; Maher, H. (2021), 31-33, Fig.3.

²¹ Champollion, J. (1844), 511, b.

²² Maher, H. (2021), 34.

²³ Sabbahy, L. (2013), 1-2.

²⁴ Maher, H. (2021), 35.

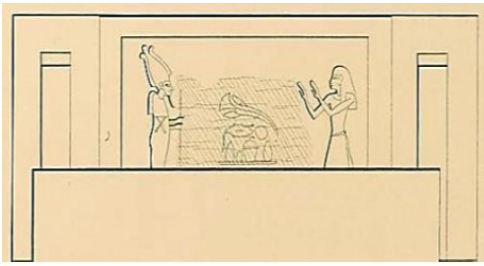


Fig.6: The scene from Iretrau's tomb, appearing her with libation-vases before Osiris.
(Maher, H. (2021), fig. 3).

IV Scene From the East Wall of Room II in Mutirdis Tomb (TT410) "Mw.t-ir-di.s"



The scene shows the deceased sitting on a chair ended with a roll of papyrus, and the spoiled monkey appears under it, as we have seen in Aba tomb (Fig. 7a).²⁵ Also, there is an offering table in front of her and a text called "The Call to Loved Ones", which is made up of seven columns starting from the entrance lintel and ending at the doorjamb above the head of the deceased. Some details of this view differ from the Old Kingdom. For example, the scene on the south wall of "Ni-Khnum, Khnum-hotep" tomb, which is depicting Ni-Ankh-Khnum sitting on seat without papyrus or monkey in front of the offering table, wearing a wig and a necklace on the chest with a dangling amulet (Fig. 7b).



Fig. 7a: The scene from Mutirdis's tomb sitting on a chair with a monkey under it.²⁶
(Thomas, N. (1980), fig. 100).

²⁵ Assmann, J. (1977).; Thomas, N. (1980), 143-144.; Assmann, J. (1977), 23-24.; Helck, W. (1986), 523.

²⁶ Thomas, N. (1980), Fig.100.



Fig. 7b: The scene from Niankhkhnum's tomb sitting on a chair.
(Moussa & Altenmuller, (1977), Abb.20).

V A Scene From Ankh Hr Tomb “*ḥnh-ḥr* (TT 414) “ :

Firstly, Ankh Hor shows with his mother sitting in front of the offering table with her hand on his shoulder. Secondly, there are five vases of the seven sacred oils under the seat. It differs from other scenes inside tombs of late period which show up one vase or the entire seventh vase (Figs. 8 a, b).²⁷



Fig. 8a: The scene from Ankhhor's tomb sitting with his mother in front of the offering table.
(<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-luxor-egypt-tomb-of-ankh-hor-tt414>).

[27] Pischikova, E. (1994), 56; Bietak & Haslauer, (1978), Taf.37.

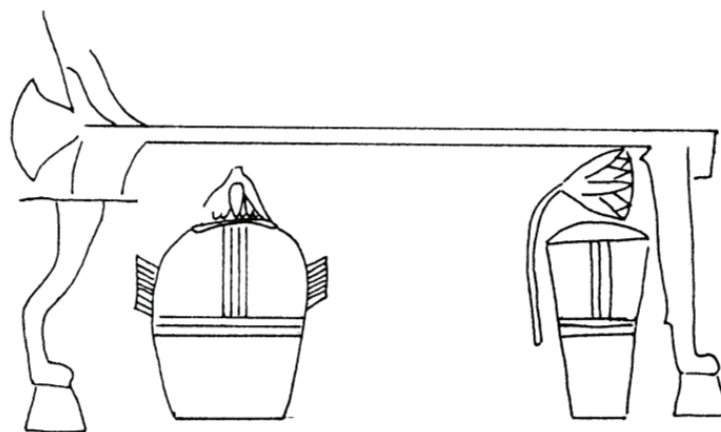


Fig. 8b: The scene from Ankhhor's tomb shows vases of the seven sacred oils under the seat. (Pischikova, E. (1994), fig. 9).

Conclusion:

To sum up, this study has clarified and determined the artistic and archaeological value of these tombs by comparing them with the previous tombs. Additionally, it has figured out the similarities and differences between offering scenes in each other and between the tombs of the Old, Middle, New Kingdoms. Finally, these scenes have emphasized and shown up that most fundamental reasons of the empowerment inside the tombs backing to the affiliations of the Tombs owners with the god's wife of Amun Re association in most cases.

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