brought to notice some 160 years ago. They have been interpreted as 'mummy labels'; 'boundary stones' to mark the territory of a prospective tomb owner; dummy offering loaves or pieces of meat; 'visitors' cards'; dummy roofing poles; or as a purely decorative element, for it was realised by some that the cones were originally placed as a frieze above the entrance to the tomb, set in the wall with the circular end visible. A recent suggestion takes into consideration that the circular shape is identical to the shape of the sun's disc and would perhaps allow the person whose name it carries to partake in the solar cycle.

Funerary cones are chiefly a Theban phenomenon, although some of the people named on them had occupations which took them elsewhere. It is a curious fact that no cones have a definite connection with Deir el-Medîna, the section of the necropolis reserved for the workmen cutting and decorating the tombs of the kings. In time they occur from the Eleventh dynasty to the Late Period (2000–600 BC), but the cones which do not belong to the New Kingdom can easily be isolated, either because they are uninscribed (the early cones) or through an inscription which dates them with certainty to a period later than the New Kingdom. These cones, which are not from the New Kingdom, are very few in number compared with the rest. Among the New Kingdom cones the majority can be assigned to the Eighteenth dynasty, which gives us a very large group of cones and therefore persons, who were known to have lived within a limited period of time and to have made arrangements for a tomb of which the cones formed an element.

Through the names and titles it is not difficult to match owners of funerary cones with owners of tombs. If one takes as a criterion a minimum of two common denominators, like name and title, as proof of identity, it is possible to identify about eighty cone owners of the New Kingdom with as many tomb owners. This leaves us no less than about 325 tombs for which no cones have been found. On the other hand the number of cone owners to whom no tomb has yet been attributed is more than four hundred.

Each tomb owner had upwards of three hundred identical or similar cones. Before we consider the possibility of adding four hundred tombs to the list of decorated tombs, we must consider whether it was possible to insert one's funerary cone in someone else's monument. Some cones have a woman's name only preceded by 'his wife'. Virtually no women are known to have had tombs of their own. There certainly seems to have been no place for unmarried women in the world of the decorated tombs. The only person in modern times to have seen a row of inscribed funerary cones *in situ* was Rhind in the 1850s, and although he was a keen observer, he does not reveal whether the cones he saw carried the same inscription. Uninscribed cones of Eleventh dynasty date have also been discovered in their original setting. It remains a possibility that each example of an inscribed cone represents one decorated tomb, and in that case the number of decorated tombs would be at least twice the number of tombs known at present.

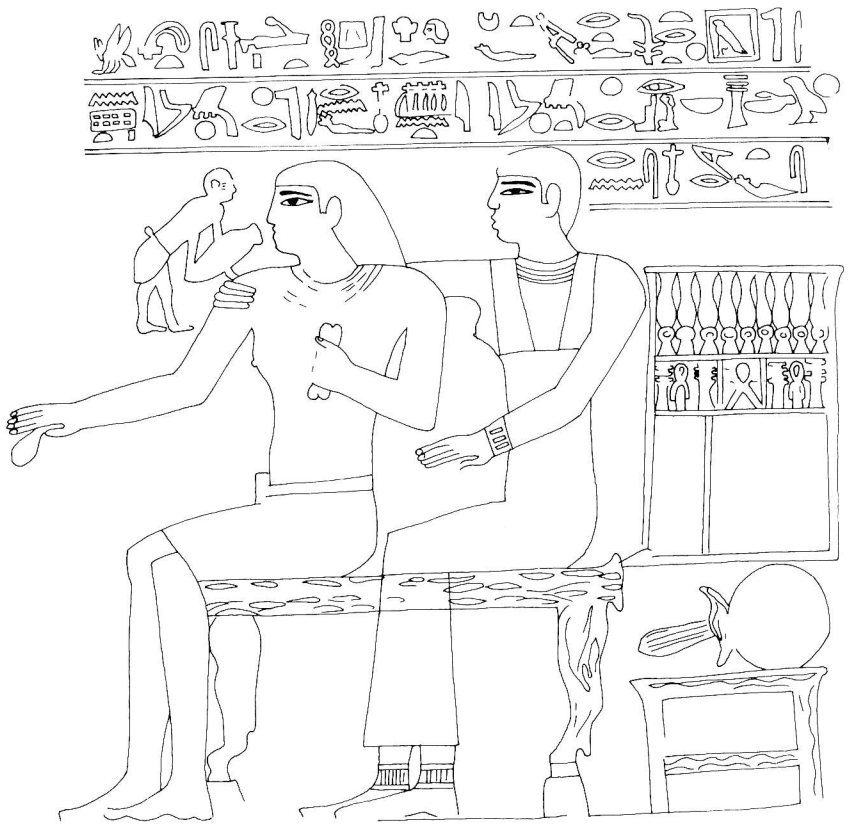
2

THE BEGINNING

In the days before Thebes began to rise to glory it was a provincial town like many others, far removed from the capital of Memphis in the north. This is naturally reflected in the surviving monuments: the tombs. The court claimed the best artists, and the tombs of the high officials at Gîza and Saqqâra are those which attract attention. In those days Thebes was confined to the east bank in the area where the temples of Karnak now tower over the palm trees. The inhabitants were buried immediately opposite on the west bank of the river. This ancient necropolis is situated in the angle formed by the modern Fadlîya Canal and the road leading from the river to the temple of Sethos I, the area called el-Ṭarif. People had lived here since prehistoric times, for the tombs are built on top of remains from the Naqâda II civilisation (*c.* 3300–3000 BC) followed by a layer which in turn is covered by a layer containing stone tools and seals of First dynasty date.

As the cemetery is in the plain and not in the mountain, the architecture of the tombs reflected these conditions and followed the tradition established in the north: they were of the so-called *mastaba* type consisting of a subterranean burial chamber reached through a shaft, with a superstructure of mud bricks around an earth core in the shape of a brick bench (Arabic *mastába*), in which was incorporated a chapel with mudplastered and white-washed walls. These *mastaba* tombs have been dated to the Fourth dynasty (around 2500 BC). Bodies were buried on their backs with the heads to the north, resting on a stone slab, and they were accompanied by storage jars with food and cosmetic vessels. Only two tombs of this type have been recovered at Thebes, and both had been re-used and rebuilt. It looks as if they were part of a larger cemetery which has since vanished under tombs of a later date.

It remains a mystery where the governors of Thebes of the Fifth dynasty were buried. Scattered finds prove that they did have tombs, but there is otherwise a complete blank for this period. In the Sixth dynasty the centre of the necropolis had shifted to the area of Khôkha. Five tombs are representative of this dynasty. They are cut in the rock and decorated with paintings on plaster or with reliefs. One or several burial chambers reached through sloping passages house the dead, while a pillared decorated chapel was cut into the hillside above. No uniform plan had as yet been adopted, but one of the tombs shows the transverse hall, later so characteristic. The method of preparing the walls for decoration had been established: the rough walls were covered with mud mixed



with straw and given a light cream wash, though some walls needed only the wash, which was in this case a dark grey colour.

The scenes depicted include large-scale representations of the tomb owner and his wife with heaps of offerings before them and rows of people bringing more; slaughtering; grinding corn, baking and brewing; fishing and preparing the catch; the granary and agricultural activities; all subjects which have a direct bearing on the sustenance of the *ka* in the Hereafter. In two tombs we have representations of metal work, which must reflect the importance of this industry on the tomb owner's estate. At the funerary banquet entertainment is provided by female harpists and dancers performing among other things a mirror dance where the point was to reflect one's hand or a hand-shaped object in a mirror held in the other hand, the dance being associated with the cult of the goddess Ḥaṯḥor.

It is interesting to find in these early tombs two subjects of which we shall have occasion to speak later: the symbolic voyage to Abydos, and the tomb owner fishing and fowling in the marshes. A third precursor of a scene shown in some New Kingdom tombs is the representation of the bedroom.

The owners of these five tombs of the late Old Kingdom held the

highest provincial offices. Two (tombs no. 186 of Iḥy and no. 405 of Kheti) were governors of Thebes; another (tomb no. 185 of Senioḳer) was 'hereditary prince and divine chancellor'; Unasankh (tomb no. 413) was governor of the South and overseer of the granaries; whereas the fifth, whose tomb has no number and whose name is disputed, was 'overseer of the priestly phyles of the nome'. We are thus dealing with the cream of Theban society at the end of the Old Kingdom, just before the collapse which led to a period so disorganised that Egyptologists could think of no other name for it than the First Intermediate Period. People lived and died at Thebes during these 120 years or so of famine and feuds, but they left no tombs, and they remain anonymous.

By 2134BC the situation began to change with the rise to power of a Theban family several members of which bore the name Intef. One of them eventually called himself King of Upper and Lower Egypt and sat on the throne for more than fifty years, thus providing a focus for

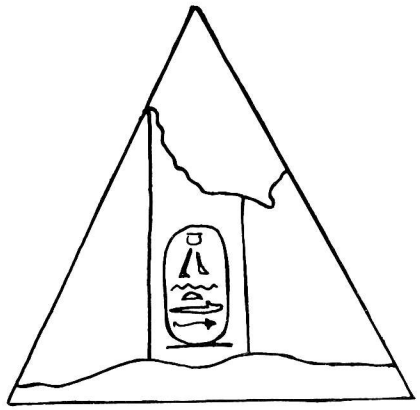
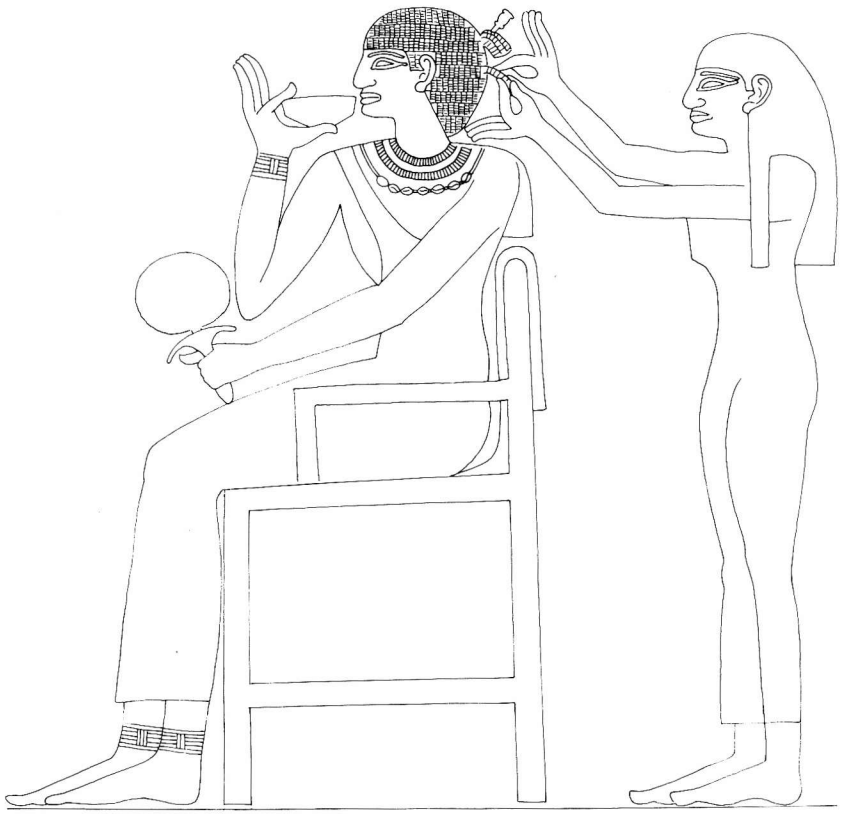


FIGURE 16
The pyramidion from the tomb of Antef, found in the previous century. From Hay MSS 29848, 38.

stability and prosperity. He and his successors made their tombs at el-Ṭarif where the inhabitants in the Fourth dynasty had built their *mastabas*. As was the custom the court officials followed their sovereigns and crowded their tombs around the three large tombs of the Antef kings. The tombs here are of a characteristic type generally called *ṣaff* tombs (*ṣaff* in Arabic meaning 'row' (of holes)). A shallow courtyard was sunk into the desert plateau, the chapel being cut into its rear walls. The chapels are quadrangular, the roof being supported by one or two pillars. Shafts or corridors contained the burials. Numerous stelae were found in the area which had originally been inset in the façade of the tombs. The royal tombs at least were crowned by a pyramid.

After the Antef kings, rulers who bore the name Mentuḥotp again shifted the centre of the necropolis to the south. Mentuḥotp II built his magnificent funerary monument under the vertical cliffs at Deir el-Baḥri: a pyramid resting on two pillared terraces with a tree-lined causeway leading up from the valley. The monument was completed by his successor. Mentuḥotp had his burial chamber cut immediately below the pyramid, the entrance being through a sloping corridor opening up



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in the forecourt. Alternative arrangements for a burial were made in the courtyard behind the pyramid. Members of the royal family were buried in chapels nearby. Among the six young women one was just a child; another was 'unique royal concubine', Kemsit, whose burial chamber is decorated with reliefs of her receiving offerings and being attended by her maids.

Princess Nofru had her tomb excavated in the cliffs just outside the temple. The upper part of the tomb takes up the themes of decoration seen in the tomb of Kemsit: offering bringers and toilet scenes in relief, while the burial chamber is decorated with painted funerary texts and objects almost like the inside of contemporary coffins. Several hundred years later the tomb was built over when Queen Ḥatshepsut laid out her mortuary temple, but a tunnel enabled the curious tourists of the Eighteenth dynasty to visit the tomb of the princess. Numerous graffiti on the walls bear witness to the antiquarian interests of the ancient Egyptians. The decoration in sunk relief is of superb quality, but now very fragmentary.

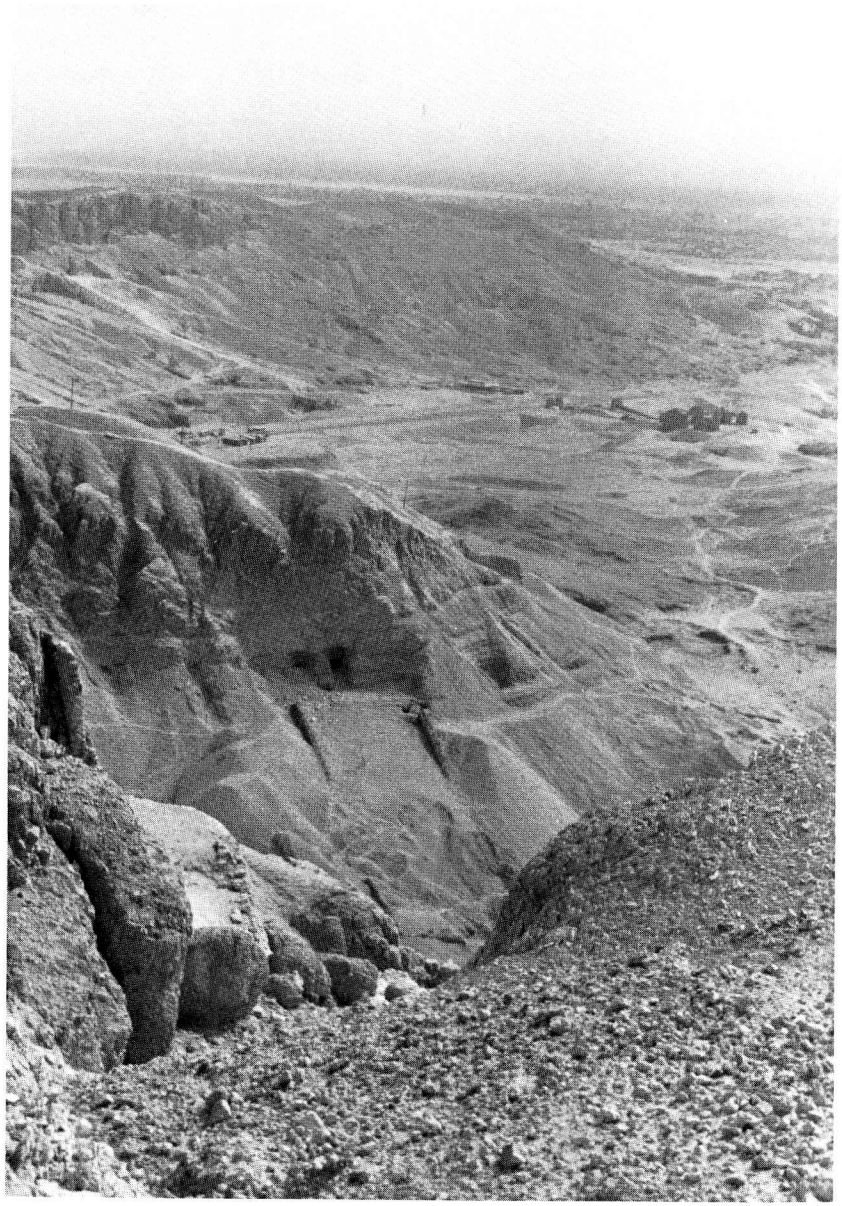
The members of the court and high officials cut their tombs in the cliffs above the temple. The governors and viziers, the chancellors, a great steward, a custodian of the king's harim, sealbearers and a custodian

of the bow were laid to rest up here. In the cliffs to the south, on the slopes of Sheikh ʿAbd el-Qurna, we find the majestic tomb of Dagi, who had no less than twenty-eight titles, the highest ranking being governor of the town and vizier. His tomb (no. 103), much later re-used as a Coptic church, was decorated with fine limestone reliefs, but like most Middle Kingdom wall decoration it is now smashed. The chapel is a portico with six pillars. Apart from offering scenes and the voyage to Abydos the subjects depicted concern activities of daily life: gardening and harvesting grapes; spinning and weaving; storing grain; baking; metalwork; fishing; tending cattle; in brief, daily chores on a large estate which we shall soon meet again in a different medium. One of Dagi's own personal duties has been included: as vizier he was in charge of supervising the recording of treasure.

The cliffs to the north shelter the tombs of other high officials, commanding a breathtaking view of the countryside. In the tomb of Kheti, the chancellor (no. 405), brick steps lead to the rock cut façade of the tomb, which originally had a huge wooden door. A long corridor leads directly to a painted chapel inside, where a statue of the tomb owner once greeted the visitors. Those with evil intentions were deceived by two false crypts, for the real burial chamber with painted decoration of offerings and funeral equipment lies at the end of another passage deep down. The sarcophagus was buried under the floor slabs, but in spite of all these precautions the chancellor was not allowed to rest in peace. The reliefs in the upper corridor suffered a strange fate: they were broken up and used to make stone vessels, leaving only fragments of the original decoration to suggest the delicate reliefs of hunting scenes, fishing and fowling, and dancing, all destroyed for the sake of the manufacture of insignificant dishes sometime towards the end of the Pharaonic period.

Of the tomb of Ipi, the vizier (no. 315), little decoration has survived, but the tomb yielded two interesting finds: one was a cache of embalming materials which had been left over when the mummy of the tomb owner had been prepared. The other was the archives of Ḥekanakhte, one of Ipi's mortuary priests, which were found in a hole of the passage. Through these personal papers we gain an unusual insight into daily life and its various problems which were committed to writing some four thousand years ago.

The chancellor Meketrēʿ chose a central position for his tomb (no. 280) to the south of the royal mortuary temple. With its large courtyard and portico of octagonal columns it was impressive, decorated inside with painted reliefs of which, needless to say, hardly any remain. But the tomb has gained fame because of the finds made in it. In the burial chamber were discovered more than 1200 model tools and weapons as well as the remains of the chancellor's coffin. Tomb robbers had deprived Meketrēʿ of all chance of survival, but in one respect he outwitted them. In a chamber under the floor he stored a miniature copy of his estate: his villas, stables, slaughter house, granary, weaving workshop, kitchen,



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fishing boats, pleasure boats and servants, who would all go on producing for him in the Hereafter and provide nourishment for his *ka*. These wooden models are the most perfectly and beautifully carved specimens ever found in Egypt. Models as such went out of use by the end of the Middle Kingdom when scenes on the walls were considered sufficient.

The inspector of Meketrē''s storehouses was a man called Waḥ. He chose to be physically near his master after death as well, and he was granted permission to have a tomb cut in the courtyard of his master's

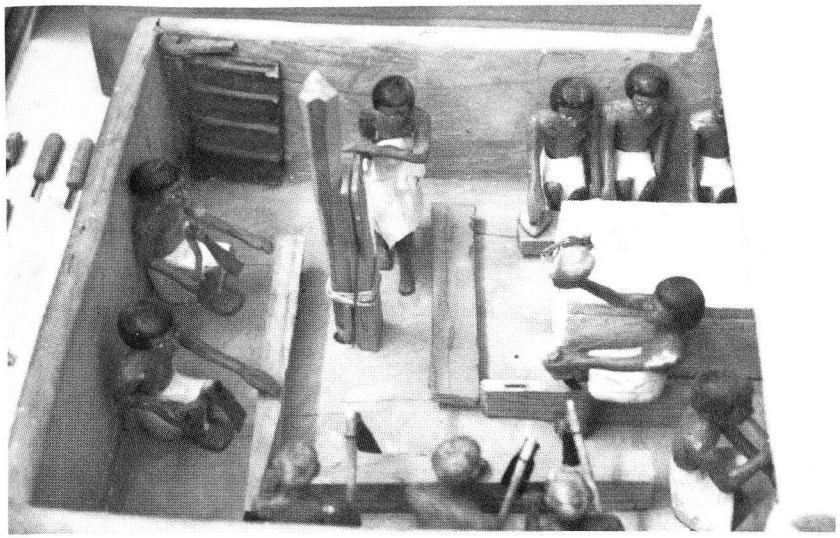


FIGURE 19
Two of the Cairo mod
from the tomb of
Meketrē': carpenters,
the weavers' worksh

tomb. It was discovered in the 1920s, and here we have a real chance to take a first hand look at an intact burial. The entrance had been concealed with chips of the rock, and the door below was blocked with a brick wall. The small burial chamber was undecorated, but the coffin and its contents remained in immaculate condition. The body looked like a huge cylinder wrapped in sheets and pads held in place by bandages, with a red shawl tied like a kilt round the waist. The face and upper body of the mummy was covered with a gilt stucco mask showing Waḥ as a thin man with whiskers and moustache. More sheets and pads with a layer of resin appeared underneath, eventually revealing four bead necklaces and a spectacular row of eleven hollow spheroid silver beads.

A string of blue beads and four scarabs of silver and lapis lazuli had been placed on his chest. Under more bandages splashed with resin funerary jewellery had been placed about his body. Altogether 845 square metres of linen had been used for his wrappings, most of it old household linen, but it reveals just how important an industry weaving and spinning must have been.

Waḥ must have relied on provisions from his master, for apart from a meal of bread, beer and meat placed beside his coffin, there was nothing in the tomb to help him along.

The last vizier of the Eleventh dynasty became the first king of the Twelfth. Amenemḥēt was his name, meaning 'Amūn is in front', and in front the god was to be for a good many years. Amūn became the god of the empire, and whoever served this principal national god was guaranteed a brilliant future. The capital and the royal cemetery were shifted to the north to a site called Lisht where the Delta met Upper Egypt. But Thebes became more and more prominent as the home of Amūn and the religious capital. This is reflected in a curious fashion on the tombs of the private individuals. Only one person of the Twelfth dynasty had a spectacular tomb at Thebes, but this was enough to keep the tradition alive and carry it into the New Kingdom, when Thebes was to become the most important burial ground ever in Egypt. Many officials of the period were buried in more modest tombs in the area of Deir el-Baḥri. Before we look at the tomb of Antefoḳer which bridges the gap between the decorated tombs of the Eleventh dynasty and those of the New Kingdom, we may look at one of the many burials of the less well-to-do Thebans in the Twelfth dynasty. It was discovered in December 1823 by J. Passalacqua (see below, p. 104). His description and accompanying drawing are more detailed than was customary for excavators at that time, and the find remains together to this day in the museum in East Berlin. The engraving in Passalacqua's publication gives us a unique glimpse of what was probably an everyday event in those days. Most of his contemporaries would have thrown themselves on the spoils without bothering to take notes. The coffin of a steward named Mentuḥotp is surrounded by two servant statues; two funerary boats; four storage jars with clay stoppers having once contained Nile water; the head and shoulder of a bull; two plates with cakes resting on twigs of sycomore; two wooden sticks; and a neck rest. The find as such is perhaps nothing out of the ordinary. But the drawing of it is.

The mummy was wrapped in linen bandages and pads and had as its only ornaments a fayence necklace, and a figurine showing the deceased was placed on the chest of the body. The mummy itself was in a very fragile condition and disintegrated when the coffins were extricated from the tomb.

In the Twelfth dynasty, when the political centre moved to the north, the capital and the royal burial ground was at Lisht near the oasis of Fayûm. In the reign of Sesostris I, at the very beginning of the dynasty,

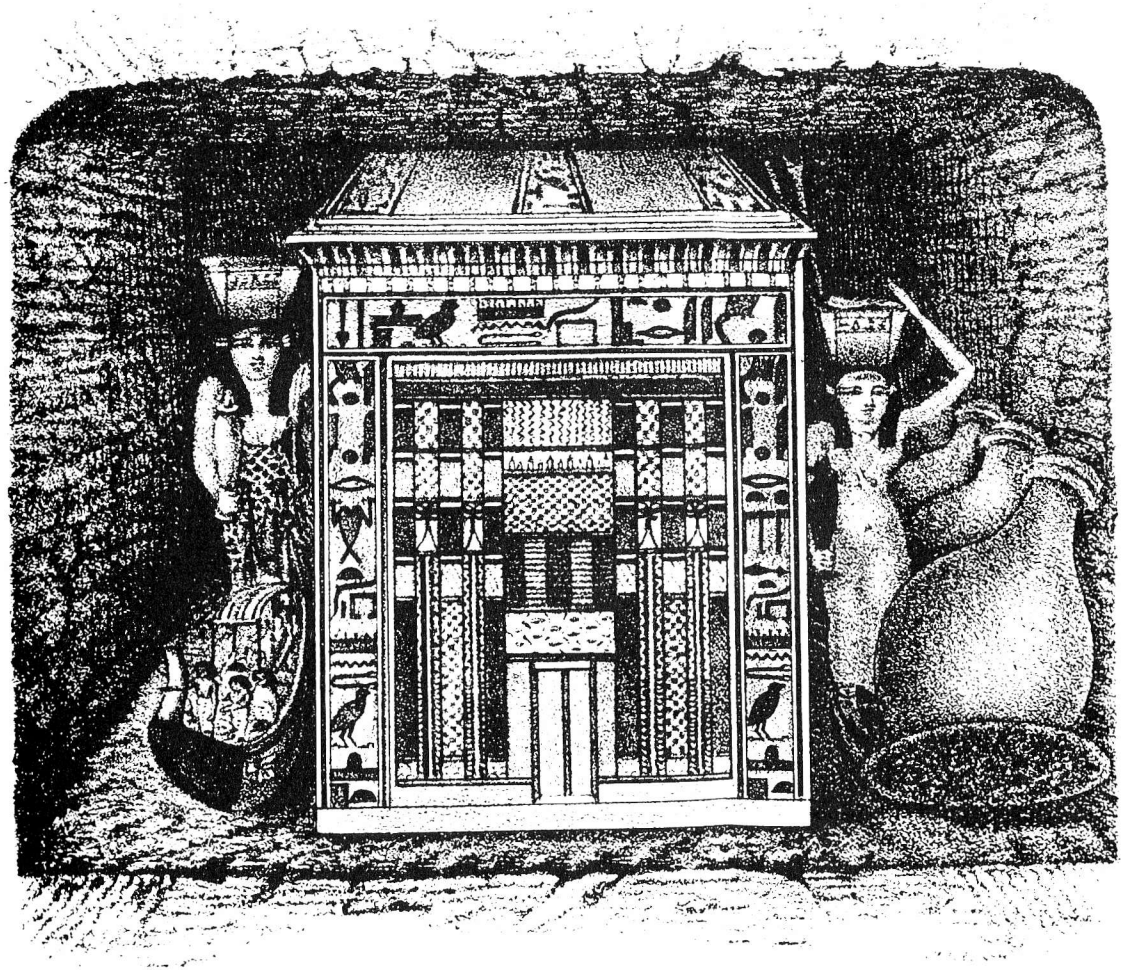


FIGURE 21
The burial of Mentuḥotp. From the frontispiece of Passalacqua's publication.

the place where he performed his duties. It remains the sole representative of a decorated Twelfth dynasty tomb in this area, and we do not know whether we can call it a typical tomb of the period. It probably was, for it bridges the gap very well between the tombs of the Old and the New Kingdoms. In one respect, though, it is unusual. As mentioned above, decorated tombs for private persons of the female sex are virtually non-existent. Women are present in the tombs as mothers, wives or daughters, never in their own right, and never take precedence over their husbands. In Antefoḳer's tomb (no. 60) the situation is different. Not only does a lady called Senet appear more frequently, and also on her own on the walls, but in some cases the texts are written exclusively for her. Though now known as the tomb of Antefoḳer, it would be more correct to call it 'the tomb of the lady Senet'. The reason for this state of affairs has not been satisfactorily explained, nor has the fact that the figure of Antefoḳer has been mutilated in many of the scenes. At some stage the tomb was burnt out, causing a distortion of the colours and

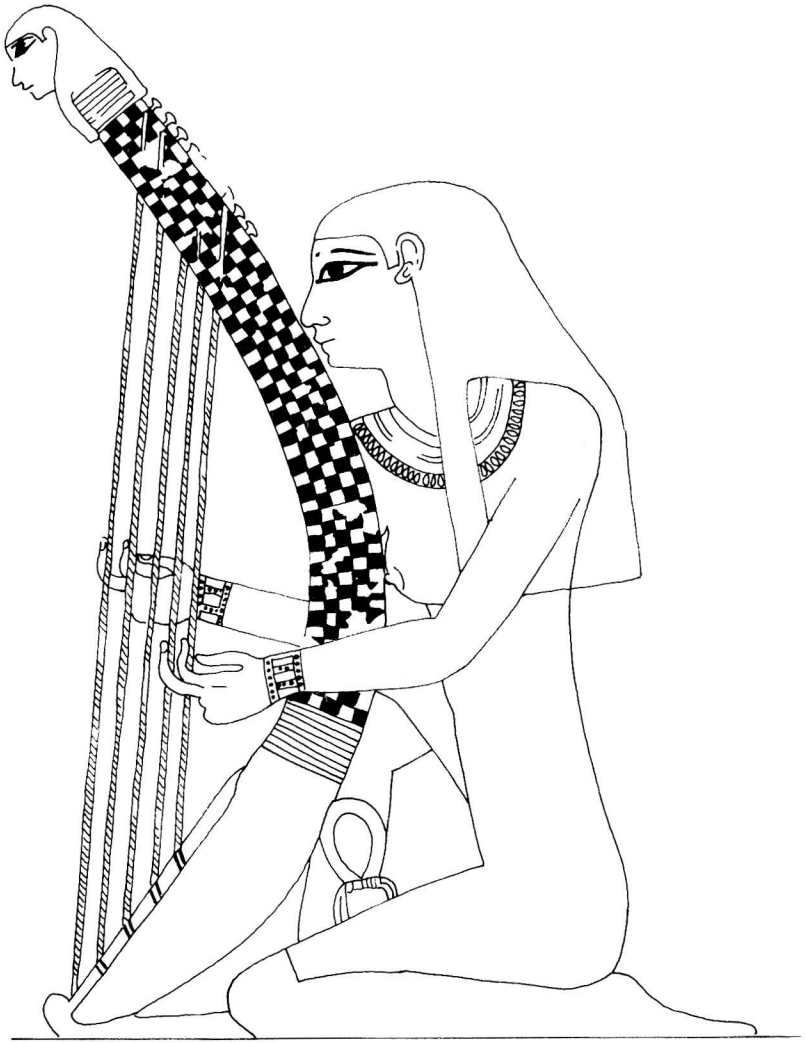


FIGURE 22
playing a harp in
TT 60.

mud was burnt away. Nevertheless, thanks to N. de G. Davies, who published the tomb (see below) we are able to obtain a very good impression of the tomb and its decoration.

Like the tomb of Nofru at Deir el-Baḥri, this one was a point of pilgrimage and sightseeing. Visitors came here at the beginning of the Eighteenth dynasty, and those among them who could write (mainly scribes) left a record of the visit on the walls. One is of particular interest, for it was scribbled by Amenemḥēt, a scribe, counter of grain and steward of the vizier of Tuthmosis III. He later decorated his own tomb (no. 82) in the neighbourhood and somehow got his artist to copy some of the scenes for his own tomb.

Antefoḳer's tomb (no. 60) probably provided the inspiration for later tombs of the Eighteenth dynasty in many respects. It consists of a long

corridor sunk straight into the mountain side, but the later so typical transverse hall is lacking. The shaft descends from the rear end of the corridor. The scenes of the funeral procession, combined with the representation of the voyage to Abydos, are to be found on the left wall; the hunting and fishing and fowling are on the right wall, as was common in the Eighteenth dynasty; and a figure of the tomb owner and his wife greet the visitors at the rear end of the tomb.

Among the subjects we find many which are the immediate predecessors of those in the later tombs, both in content and execution. A basic activity like work in the fields never changed much, but all the individual phases are present and are rendered in the same way: ploughing and sowing; harvesting the grain with a sickle and leaving the straw on the ground; a man with his sickle tucked under his arm and drinking from a water jar; provisions laid out in the shade of a tree; carrying the corn in a hemispherical basket to the threshing ground; threshing with oxen and winnowing by girls who protect their hair with a scarf and use scoops for throwing the grain into the air; recording the grain and storing it in granaries. The harvesting of grapes is also included, but it is rendered with fewer details, and the pressing of the grapes is not shown. Activities in the kitchen inspired the artist to draw baking, brewing, roasting fowl and threading meat onto strings in a fashion which was so vividly displayed in the models of Meketrēʿ.

Hunting in the desert is nearly indistinguishable from later scenes, showing the tomb owner striding in the desert accompanied by his servant and shooting his arrows at the beasts which have been trapped in a stockade on the pink sand. It is interesting to find the fishing and fowling here in its final form. In the Old Kingdom tomb of Kheti it had merely been suggested. The full significance of the scene will be explained below. In Antefoḳer's tomb we have the symmetrical representation of the tomb owner in two canoes on either side of a papyrus thicket. Unfortunately the scene is too damaged to distinguish many details.

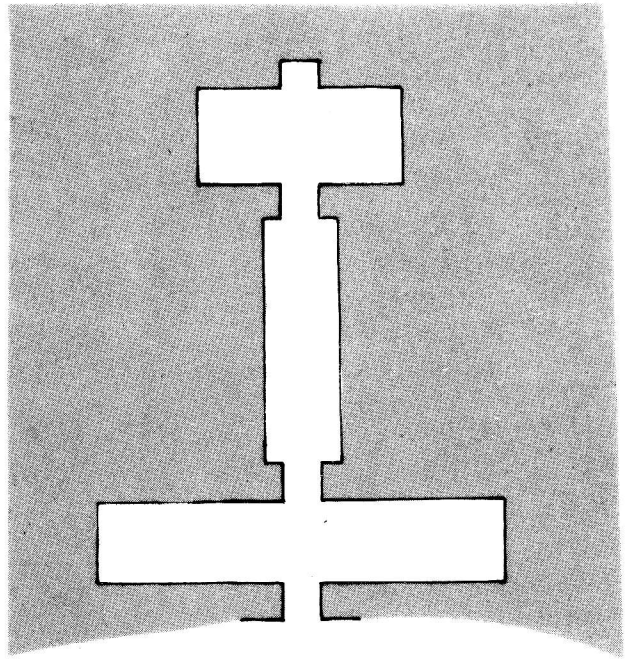
The voyage to Abydos and the funeral ceremonies are naturally archaising and continued to be so in the New Kingdom, and no development can be expected here. The banquet scene, which has such prominence later, is here more rudimentary and without the significant little details which later reveal its *raison d'être*. But one of the central pictures in the tomb suggests that the underlying ideas may have been the same. Senet is being presented with food offerings, a bowl of unguent and a mirror – three basic requirements for survival which appear in tombs as early as the Predynastic period.

The Middle Kingdom was followed by a second 'intermediate period', when Egypt was in the hands of foreigners for some one hundred years. No decorated tombs of any consequence appear to have survived from these years, but burials, notably on the lower slopes of the hills at Draʿ Abû el-Nagaʿ have yielded many interesting smaller objects such as toilet equipment, furniture, figurines, musical instruments as well as the coffins in which the Thebans of the time were buried. Where the coffins

had previously been rectangular they now tend to adopt the shape of the human figure. The surface was decorated with a pattern of feathers and, along the sides, scenes of funerary nature: offerings, slaughter, funeral procession and so on, in short subjects which, if the owner were in more fortunate circumstances, would have been depicted on the walls of a more expensive tomb chapel.

3
THE EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY
(1575–1335 BC)

The Theban tombs of the Eighteenth dynasty have a uniform character which sets them apart from tombs from other periods and sites. The architectural features may vary though the basic requirements remain the same for most tombs of this period. At Thebes one particular type of tomb is more frequent than any other, and the so-called T-shaped tomb is the one that has set the standard.



As far as the decoration of the rooms is concerned it remains an inexplicable fact that with very few exceptions the only site of New Kingdom date in Egypt which has tombs with painted decoration is the Theban necropolis. The tombs elsewhere are sculpted. The absence of painted tombs of this date at other sites cannot be due to the nature of the rock where tombs were traditionally cut, for painted tombs of the period before and after the New Kingdom abound all over the country.

Few paintings have survived from monuments other than tombs, and the scenes depicted on the walls of houses, palaces and temples were