

The case of a necropolis in the enclosure of Tomb No. -28- in Asasif (Luxor) of the Vizier Amen-Hotep, Huy

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Abstract: *The discoveries inside the enclosure of Tomb AT No. -28- Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy, (from the time of Amen-Hotep III/Amen-Hotep IV), show that this main tomb was used in later times to build other individual tombs, what that suppose the existence of a special group of necropolis (from late XVIII dynasty, to the 2nd. century AD).*

The tomb of the Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy (TA no. -28-) is unfinished, and its construction work was suddenly interrupted; this happened around the year 31 of Amen-Hotep III.

The Vizier fell into disgrace during the Aton's movement and was subjected to a *damnatio memoriae*. The excavation work carried out by the Spanish Archaeological Mission of the Institute of Ancient Egyptian Studies in Tomb No. -28- of Asasif, in the framework of the *Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy Project*, during the seasons 2010 to 2023, have revealed sufficient documentation to propose the inclusion of this personage in the census of those belonging to the XVIIIth Dynasty who were the object of popular pious worship in later times, especially during the Ramesside Period and the Third Intermediate Period.

The pious cult received by the Vizier at the time of the Ramesside restoration led to the use of the enclosure of his unfinished and original tomb as a place for the excavation of other tombs, from the nineteenth dynasty, and uninterruptedly, until the second century AD.

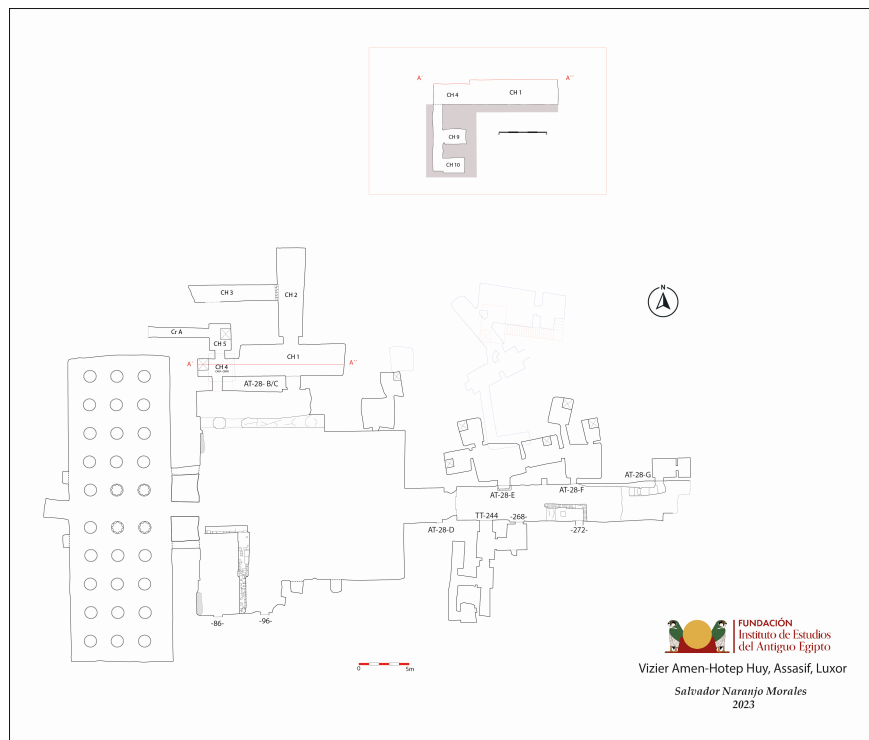


Fig. 1 Plan of Tomb AT No. -28- and Secondary Tombs excavated up to the 2023 Season

The chapel of the Vizier's Tomb, with an area of 375.99 square meters, housed a *Wabet* to prepare the mummies that would be deposited in these tombs.¹

The Archaeological Mission of the *Instituto de Estudios del Antiguo Egipto* has been working on the Tomb No. -28- in Asasif (west of Luxor) since 2009.

During 2010 Season, we discovered a secondary Tomb, numbered as 'AT -28-, A', which was excavated in 2014 (1-2nd centuries BC).

Tombs AT-28- A

In December, 11th. 2010, we found in the square D-9, in the North wall of the courtyard of the main tomb AT N° -28-, the entrance to an unpublished and new tomb, (with provisional number FMTB 1. Now numbered as AT -28- A). No tomb owner's name was found. We has proposed for this tomb a chronology from 1st century BC to 2nd century AC²

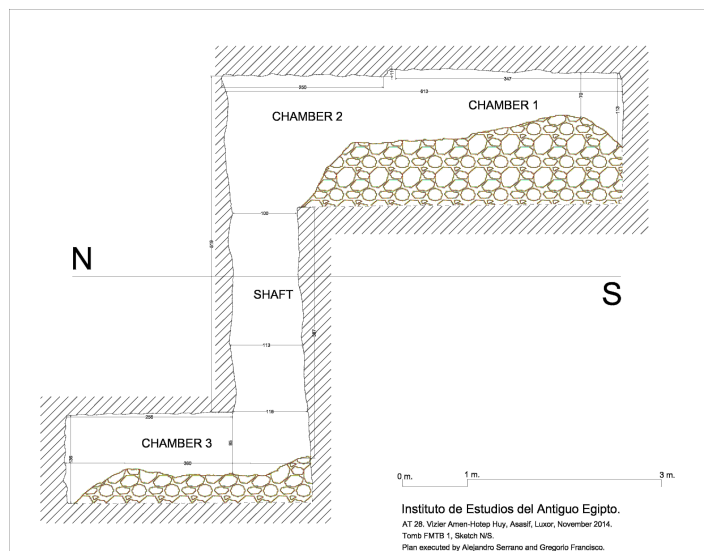


Fig.2a. Section of Tomb AT -28-A (Season 2014)

¹ Martin-Valentin, F. J. and Bedman, T. 2021: 227

² Martin-Valentin, F. J. and Bedman, T. 2011: 56-67

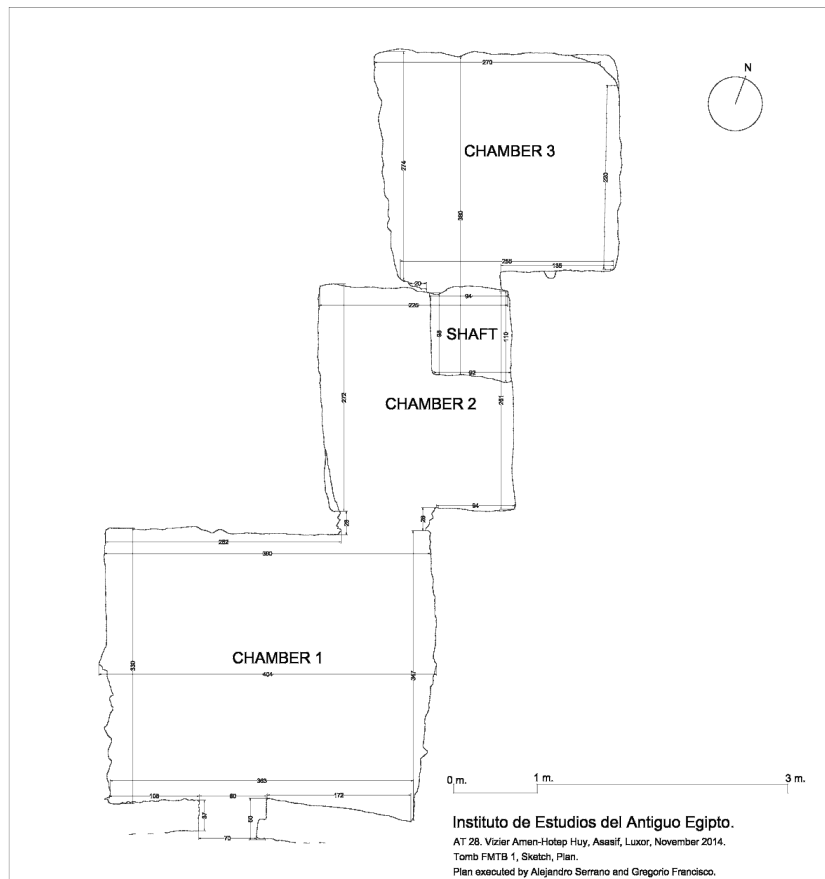


Fig. 2b. Floor plan of Tomb AT -28- A (Season 2014)

On Seasons 2014 to 2020, were discovered on the south wall of the courtyard the main entrances of Tombs numbers -86-, and -96-, and in the north wall of the corridor, those of Tombs, TT 244, and numbers -268- and -272- (Frederika Kampp's Catalogue).

The preliminary inspection of all of them showed certain differences with Frederika Kampp's documentation. These tombs have not yet been excavated by our team. They will be in the coming seasons of work.

On the same seasons, six other unpublished tombs were discovered and numbered according to the instructions of the West Bank Antiquities Directorate, as follows: AT-28-, B/C; AT -28-D-; AT-28- E/F, and AT -28- G.

We must add those of two intact burials, existing next to the exterior façade of the Chapel of the main Tomb AT nº -28-, (years 2014 and 2015).³

Our excavation work has been carried out, so far present, in Tombs AT28 B/C, and AT28 E/F.

Tombs AT -28- B/C

The cleaning of the remains inside the tomb AT-28-, B/C began on November 17th. 2018.

The work began in room CH-1 of the tomb, with a height of + 1,242 m. of debris.

On December, 2nd a debris level of + 0.514 m. was reached.

The tomb showed evidence of having been plundered for years and there were discovered remains of newspapers and many fragments of mummies at its superficial level.

Work carried out from 2018 to 2023 has shown us that the two tombs were connected over the time.

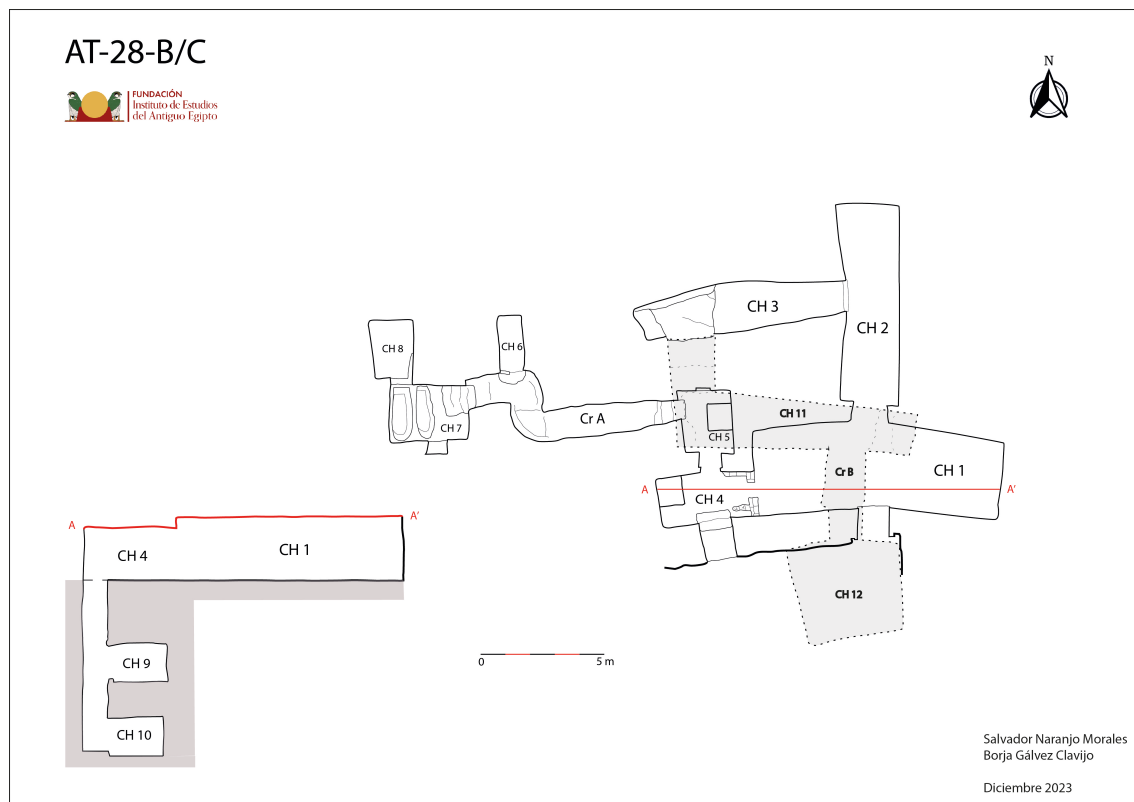


Fig. 3. Floor plan of Tombs AT -28- B/C

³ Martin-Valentin, F. J. and Bedman, T. 2015: 383

Martin-Valentin, F. J. and Bedman, T. Eds. 2017 : 56-59, 80-83, 225-245; figs. 115-118, 119-126

Tomb AT-28-C

Everything indicates that the first one tomb to be built was the one numbered as AT -28-C.

Excavated in the shape of a 'T' with its corresponding corridors and rooms without any shaft. The tomb has a corridor (Cr A) that opens from the west arm of the cross, from which an underground ramp begins, that leads to CH11. Another corridor (Cr B) continues descending until it reaches CH12, probably the burial chamber. There is no inscription or decoration on the walls of these rooms. This first tomb would correspond to the end of the XX dynasty.

The name of a single owner of the tomb has not been discovered. In fact, the inscriptions on the lintel and the door jambs appear to have been clearly erased since there is some evidence of any remaining hieroglyphic inscription on them, although they cannot be read.

However, objects with the names of three individuals have been found in the excavations: Two men and one woman.

In the room CH-1, the base of a statue was found showing the title and name of the *nTr n(y) mwt bAk-n(y)-mwt, mAa-xrw* (The divine Father of Mut, Bak-en-Mut), probably datable to the XX dynasty.

Also discovered at CH1, was an uninscribed sandstone offering table with four loaves of bread, two *kebeh* vessels for libations, and a water lily in the center. Probable dating: End of the XX dynasty.

In the room CH11, numerous figurines of unnamed servants were also found, near the remains of a beautiful box with its lid, bearing the name of *nbt-pr ns(yt)-Htpy-(A)st* (The Lady of House Nesy(t)-Hetepy-Aset), also clearly datable to the XX dynasty.

In chamber CH12 were found several ushebtys of a men named Akh-Menu with the titles *wab n(y) lmn Ax-mnw; sS Htp(w)-nTr n(y) pr-lmn Ax-mnw* (Wab of Amun and Scribe of the God's Offerings in the House of Amun); its typologies belong to the XX dynasty.

Therefore, all the important finds discovered in this tomb, AT-28-/C, must be placed in the late XX dynasty, and the tomb as having been built in that chronological period.

Tomb AT-28-B

Excavation began outside of the AT-28-B on the Season 2014.

The entrance to the tomb was prepared by his builders using the porch of the courtyard of the Vizier's tomb at its confluence with the façade of the Chapel of the main tomb, framing the access with a original pillar of the porch.

A small courtyard, closed by a wood door, was built, in front the main entrance open in the rock wall in the porch of the Tomb of the Vizier itself. An adobe wall was built to delimit the sacred space and protect this small courtyard, in front of the door made in the porch wall. The floor between the exterior wall and the inner wall of the courtyard was plastered with plaster on clay.

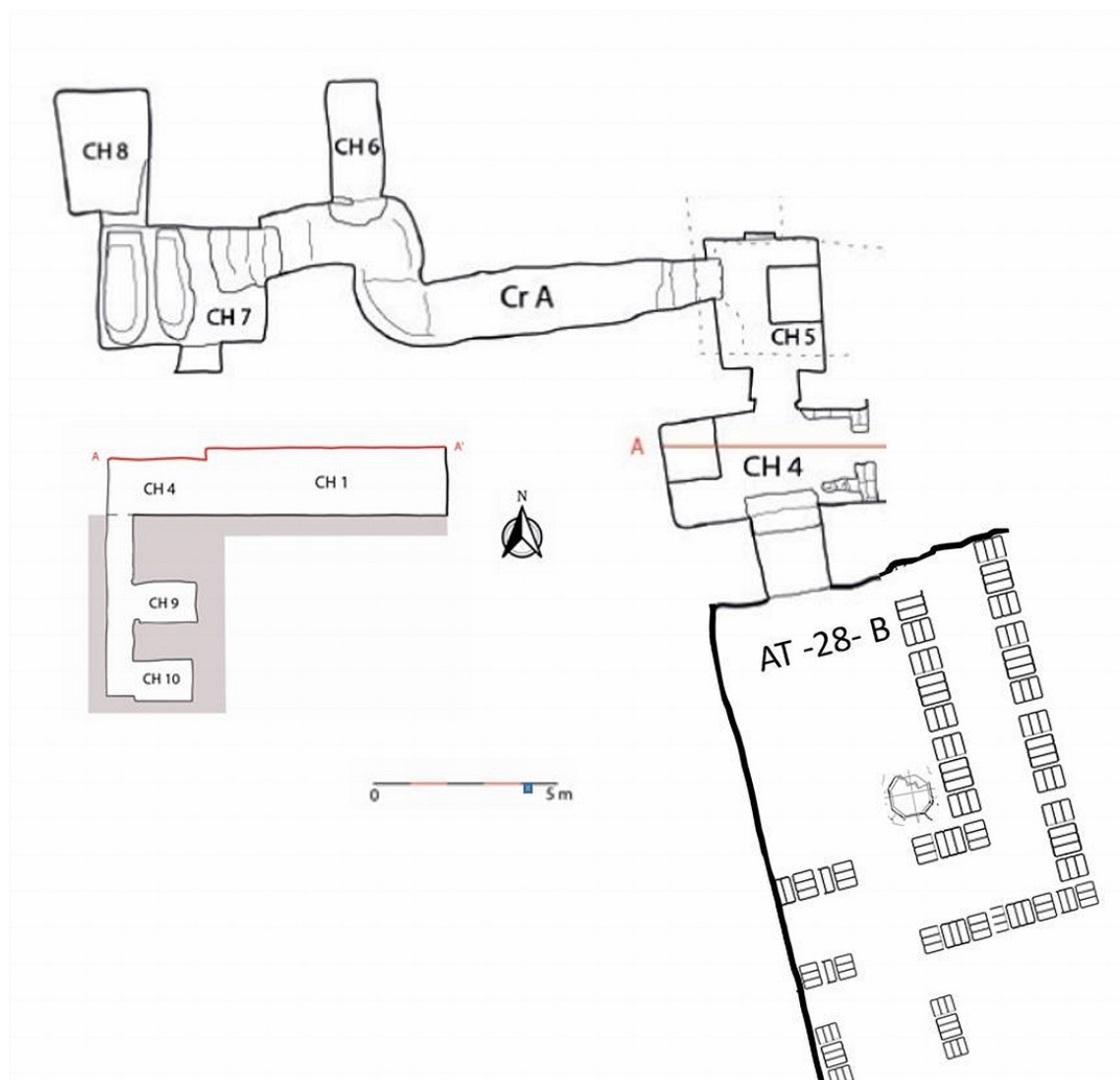


Fig. 4. Floor plan of Tomb AT -28- B

This tomb was probably built by excavating its rooms into the mass of the mountain, from the west wall of Room CH1 inside Tomb AT 28/C. There are two clear phases of construction: The first was developed to excavate Rooms CH4 and CH5 in the rock, the latter being perhaps the original room of the sarcophagus of a first burial.

Subsequently, a shaft was added located in the northwest corner of Room CH1, equipped with two other chambers, those numbered CH9 and CH10. This happened after attempting to dig another shaft in Room CH5, a partial work that resulted in leading to the underground corridor CH11 of Tomb AT 28/C.

The second phase, clearly belonging to the XXII dynasty, consisted of opening the west wall of CH5, to make a narrow corridor, CrA, leading to Rooms CH6, CH7 and CH8. In the western half of Room CH7, two anthropoid holes were carved into the floor to deposit two sarcophagi inside, which disappeared in the looting to which the tomb seems to have been subjected at an unspecified time. The entire tomb was clearly looted of all its contents from which some objects have been found, such as fragmented servers without names and a canopic vessel fragmented into two pieces in the shape of a Hapi carved from a block of limestone, found in rooms CH5 and CH9.

Notable finds include a clay seal with three imprints bearing the name of the High Priest

of Amun mn-xpr-ra, (Men-Kheper-Re) (1045-992 B.C.) inside his cartouche, and a server with the name of the Osiris pA-di-iry-xnsw (Pa-di-Iry-Khonsu), both objects found in the room CH8.

Tombs AT-28- E/F

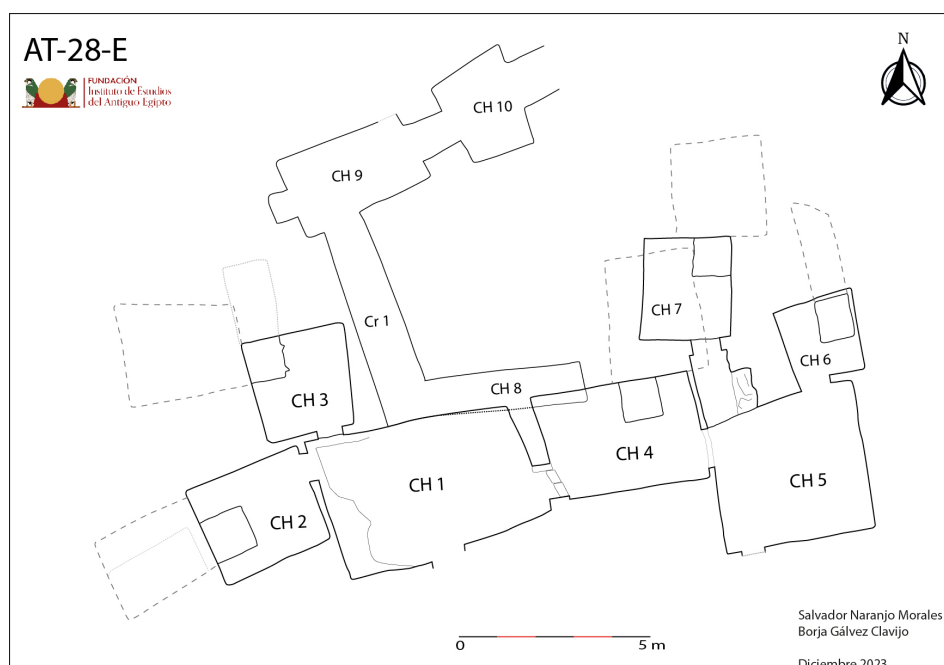


Fig. 5. Floor plan of Tombs AT -28- E/F

This set of rooms, which have been called AT28 E/F Tombs, have two main doors that lead to the corridor of the main tomb of the Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy. They were discovered in the 2018-2019 seasons. Excavations have begun in the 2023 season.

In view of its typology and the discoveries made, it can be said that its chronology corresponds to the XXVI dynasty (664–525 BC).

The first room (CH1) is accessed directly from the north wall of the corridor of the Vizier's Tomb. It has several openings in its walls, and a first room with a well in the western wall (CH2) can be documented. There is a second door very close to this, near the northwest corner, which gives access to a second room with a well (CH3). The eastern wall opens the way to a rectangular room with a well (CH4) which in turn gives access to the CH5, from where you can enter two small rooms with wells to the north of it (CH6 and CH7).

On levels close to the ground, there is a large fire area that covers almost the entire room with numerous charred human skeletal remains, this being another example of the systematic looting of this complex.

Of particular note is the discovery of several servants of the *wsir Xry-Hbt iry-aA-xnsw mAa xrw*, from the Saite period (Dynasty XXVI), of good quality, hand-painted on terracotta.

The excavation work of this complex will continue in the next Seasons of the year 2024 and beyond.

These discoveries show that the enclosure of Tomb AT n° -28- Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy, (since the time of Amen-Hotep III/Amen-Hotep IV), was used in later times to build another individual tombs that suppose a necropolis (from late 18th, dynasty, to the 2nd century AD).

A preliminary hypothesis allows us to consider the Tomb of the Vizier Amen-Hotep Huy (AT n° -28-) a practically intact set that shows the history of the Theban necropolis in the Asasif area for about sixteen centuries.

At the moment, it can be said that the great historical and religious prestige of the memory of this Vizier from the time of Amen-Hotep III was one of the most decisive reasons to be created this important necropolis within the enclosure of his tomb.

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