

Unique Architectural and Artistic Elements of Qubbet El-Hawa Tombs

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Abstract

The cemetery of Qubbetel-Hawa is one of the provincial necropolises, which is distinguished by an exceptional artistic style. Although there are some existing literatures, which cover different subjects about Qubbet El-Hawa tombs, but there are some remaining questions about the reasons behind the unique architectural elements that appeared in Qubbet El-Hawa and the reasons why the tombs' exceptional artistic style was varied from one to another, in addition to what differentiates Qubbet El-Hawa from the other private tombs in Egypt. This article explores the reasons for choosing Qubbet El-Hawa to be a burial site during Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. This work highlights the significance of studying Qubbet El-Hawa artistic style and how this gives us information about the political and cultural policies in Qubbet El-Hawa. Additionally, this study aims to examine some unique elements in the construction program in Qubbetel-Hawa tombs that gave each tomb a distinctive character such as: the variations in size and shape of the tomb plan, the arrangement of figures, and using ramps in front of tomb entrances, etc.

Keywords: Qubbet El-Hawa, Architecture, Ancient Egypt, Private Tombs.

Introduction

Qubbetel Hawa is the current name of the ancient town necropolis of Elephantine. Its modern name "Dome of the wind " is derived from the well-known Sheikh Aly Abu el-Hawa¹ burial that sits atop the necropolis. Elephantine island is situated between the two banks of the Nile. This vast island is located to the south of the First Cataract, it served as the capital of Upper Egypt's first district, or Ancient Egypt's southernmost province. (Edel, 1984, 54). On the western bank of the Nile, Qubbet el-Hawa cemetery is situated on a rough outcrop, facing Aswan city (Gómez, 2021, 145). It houses the rock-cut tombs built by Upper Egyptian Nome's rulers and officials (Magi, 1996, 9). These tombs turned into the fundamental place of burial of Elephantine governors' families (Bloxan, 2010, 36-38).

The ancient capital of Memphis occupied a strategic position to the north of Elephantine at the mouth of the Delta, nearer the Mediterranean Sea (El-Dissouky, 1969, 33). Elephantine's importance grew not only for its strategic significance but also as the primary and most proximate business center with

¹ He was one of the righteous saints who lived in that region during the Fatimid era, and he was called "Sidi Aly Abu al-Hawa," before he was buried in that region, and his disciples built for him a dome above his tomb, inspired in its architecture by the Fatimid domes that were established in Egypt during that time period.

Nubia. Some trade expedition leaders chose Qubbet el-Hawwa to be their burial place, including Harkhuf, Pepinakht, and Sarenput I (Bunson, 2009, 325).

The earliest tombs in the cemetery at Qubbet el Hawa were constructed by elite who were residing on Elphantine island during the end of the Old Kingdom (Raue, 2002, 21). This phase of the Old Kingdom was characterized by changes not only in the administration of expeditions into Nubia and elsewhere, but also to the overall structure of the provincial administration. The changes are evident in the titles of the provincial officials, in the biographies from their tombs, and in the growth of tombs of Nobels and traders that changed Egypt's topography. Harkhuf tomb (N34) that belongs to the era of Pepi II, is the oldest tomb which was discovered in the site (Vischak, 2006, 22).

Apart from tombs of the Old Kingdom, there are other tombs from the middle, and New Kingdoms. Some people were buried inside the tombs of their relatives which already cut in the rock instead of digging new tombs for them such as the tombs of Sabni and Serenput I. During the Coptic period, some tombs were transformed into churches and reused by the Coptic community who lived there (Pilgrim, 2021, 394:395).

The cemetery consists of tombs carved in the rock of the Nubian Mountain, arranging tombs in horizontal lines extending along the cliff's convex curve. Most of tombs form two tiers along the mountain's east face; a handful of tombs from a third, lower tier has also been uncovered (Vischak, 2006, 49-50).

The construction of Qubbet el-Hawa cemetery can be divided into two stages. The first stage begins during the Fifth Dynasty "king Djedkara era". This stage demonstrates how the elite regarded the southern region of Egypt as a site with high value, this is reflected in choosing this place to be a burial site from the Old Kingdom onwards. It is likely that the expedition of leaders Sabni, Mehu, and Harkhuf initiated the second stage. This stage

is marked by the elite's tomb separation from the island of Elphantine. (Raue, 2008, 6).

Each tomb consisted of a flat vertical façade. Tomb entrances were cut into the smooth façades. The entrance leads to a forecourt. The tombs are varied between simple, single rooms whose grounds included a lot of grave shafts. Most of large tombs are on the top tier. Nearly all of the tombs at Qubbet el Hawa have internal pillars cut from the rock and arranged in rows. Despite these common components, the difference in space, construction plan, number, arrangement of pillars gives each tomb a distinctive character. The tomb owners and artisans of Qubbetel-Hawa used an unusual building program, showing a number of unique aspects related to art and architecture which have never been found in any other contemporary tombs in the ancient Egyptian capitals. Qubbetel-Hawa is characterized with using some architectural and artistic elements such as: choosing panel system decoration, concentration on offering figures, adding various style in the same scene, and the establishment of a new tradition in the building program (ramps) (Vischak, 2006, 49:50).

Unique architectural and artistic elements in Qubbetel Hawa cemetery

There are some unique elements shared by the construction program in Qubbetel-Hawa tombs, which differentiate them from the majority of private tombs in Egypt. Probably, the elite who were chose Qubbet El-Hawa to be their burial place regarded the distinctive styles that were applied inside their tombs as an expression of their identity and high rank. Thus, the architectural and artistic styles of the cemetery show a noticeable difference between the governors' tombs of Qubbet El-Hawa and the other provincial tombs in Egypt during the same parallel eras (Ezz El-Din, 2020, P.23).

The researcher is presenting some of the unique architectural and artistic elements that

appeared in Qubbet El-Hawa cemetery as follows:

The first element: The location of the cemetery in the high desert cliffs

Qubbetel Hawa mountain is regarded as a section of high desert escarpment of Aswan. It is approximately a mile (2.5km) north of the place of residence inhabited by people. The site location is typically close to the island settlement which is uncommon in southern Egypt. (Fig. 1) The location of each tomb in the cemetery affects its relationship to the environment; the southern tombs are visible from Elephantine settlement site. The northern tombs are near to the river north and east of the cliff, particularly to boats heading toward Elephantine from the rest of Egypt (Edel, 1984, 54-55).

Reasons for choosing the site location:

- The elevated position of the site, made it clearly visible from Elephantine and the first cataract area.
- The abundance of fine-grained sandstone, which facilitated the building and the decorative carving in the site, may also have had a role in the decision. The sandstone layer had a higher iron content, ensuring the stability of the cemetery ceilings. (Badawy, 1966, 163:166).
- The distinctive experiences of members of the Elephantine community, including their professional work, their cultural environment, and their distance from the king and Memphite traditions, are all rooted in the landscape and location of their town. These unique experiences in this place during a particular time became manifest in the complex and unique tombs created by the people who inhabited it (Knapp, 2003, 566).



(Fig. 1) View of Qubbetel-Hawa from Nile River
Taken by the researcher

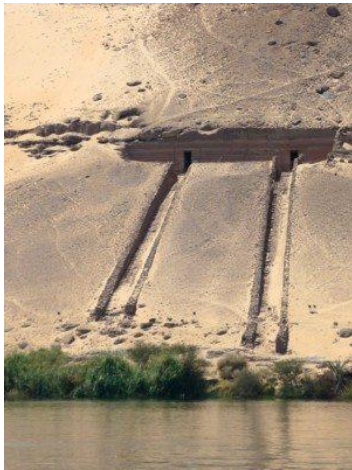
The second element: Ramps in front of tomb entrances

Unlike the other private tombs in the Egyptian capitals such as Memphis during the Old Kingdom and Thebes during the New Kingdom, some tombs in Qubbetel-Hawa had ramps in front of the tomb entrance. The ramp had two functions:

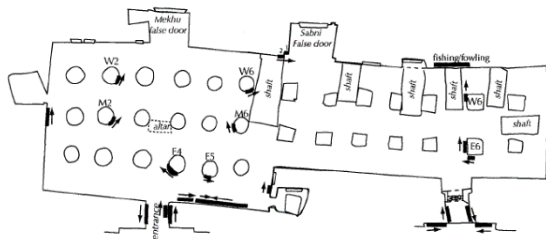
- It was used to facilitate the transport of the sarcophagus of the deceased from the river to the tomb.
- To ease the access to the tomb by the relatives of the deceased, who used to visit the tomb of their dead relative after his death during festivals, or to present offerings for the deceased (Vischak, 2015, 139).

The best example of such case can be seen in Mekhu and his son Sabni double tomb (QH 25- QH 26), which sits at the southern edge of the cemetery. The tomb owners served as Nomarchs in the Sixth Dynasty under King Pepi II. There are two long ramps in front of the tomb lead from just above the edge of the river to the tomb court (Fig. 2). After ascending the ramp there is a double entrance consisting of two doorways, each doorway leads to a tomb (Fig.3). The south entrance leads to Mekhu's chapel, the north entrance leads to Sabni's chapel (Habachi, 1981).

The tomb plan is equally revealing its dual ownership (Fig. 3), with two distinctly separate spaces united in the single monument (Vischak, 2006, 74).



(Fig. 2) Two long ramps leading to the tomb
After: Vischak, 2006, Fig.5.



(Fig. 3) Plan of Mekhu and Sabni tomb with two doorways, shows the dual ownership of the tomb
After: Vischak, 2006, Fig.7.

The third element: An uncommon case of three tombs connected visually

The tombs of Pepynakht Heqaib1 QH 35, Pepynakht Heqaib2 QH 35d, and Sabni2 QH 35e are linked visually by sharing some architectural elements:

According to **Habachi**: a great man earned this tomb complex in the cemetery, but according to **Vischak**: these tombs owned by different men. **Vischak** suggests that each tomb is considered a separate monument dedicated to a separate person. The nature of the tombs’ architectural setting is unique. A stone-built wall creates a broad exterior courtyard. The western edge of this courtyard is defined by a second enclosing wall. This inner wall creates a smaller, more intimate courtyard that links tombs 35, 35d, and 35e. Tombs 35e and 35d is a double tomb connected with each other, its separate entrance opens onto 35d’s forecourt. (Fig.4 - a) Also, once the workers cut away the cliff

face around tomb 35 to create tomb 35d, the staircase they left provided the only means of access to the earlier tomb (tomb 35); this staircase can only be reached via this internal courtyard. (Fig.4 -b) Thus, these three major tombs are linked visually by the architectural elements that bind them, as well as via means of access. The owners of the tombs most likely related individuals (Vischak, 2015,102:104).



(Fig. 4- a) A plan connects tombs QH 35, QH 35d, QH 35 e visually.



(Fig. 4- b) Staircase that provided the only means of access to (tomb 35)

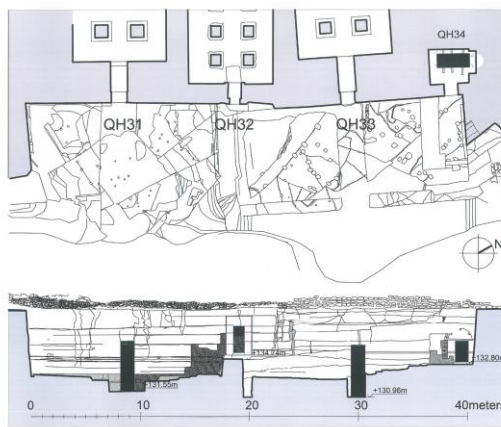
After: Vischak, 2006, Fig.36.

The fourth element: Some tombs placed in the same alignment

Tombs QH31 , QH32, QH33 of (Sarenput II), (Khema?) and (Heqaib III) respectively were built in the same alignment during the eras of Amenemhat II and Amenemhat III.

According to **Martínez-Hermoso**: tomb QH32 was the first tomb to be built at the middle of this group. The entrance was in the center of the slope. The following stage of building involved designing the QH31 court a little bit in a lower level to respect QH32. It

stretched into the courtyard of QH32. The third tomb QH33, followed the same building idea, as a result the QH32 courtyard that only provided access to the funeral chapel was reduced. In addition, that pathway functioned as a wall dividing the courtyards of QH31 and QH33. South of QH32, the facade of QH31 was excavated parallel to the existing tomb (Martínez-Hermoso, et al ,2018, 29). Compared to the other tombs situated on the hill, the façades of funerary complexes QH31, QH32, and QH33 were carved deeper into the mound giving them a unified shape (Martínez Hermoso, 2017,174: 175).(Fig. 5)



(Fig. 5) Plan of the tombs QH31, QH32, QH33. After: Martínez-Hermoso, et al ,2018, Fig.3.

The fifth element: A unique type of architecture for QH33 complex to witness summer and winter solstice alignment

The funerary complex QH33 was the burial place for two governors of the Late 12th Dynasty. It was originally built by Heqaib III and completed by his brother and successor Ameny-Seneb (Jiménez-Serrano, & Forstner-Müller, 2020, 746).

The QH33 complex is built 45.00 m above the level of the Nile River. The funeral structure primary axis runs perpendicular to the slope and faces the Nile River. Although all the tombs at Qubbet El-Hawa faced east, the axis direction of QH33 was aligned with the adjacent tombs QH32 and QH31. This process brought to light the significance of orientation as a crucial geometric component of planning buildings in ancient Egypt. The

tomb is distinguished by a significant solar incidence all around the year, coinciding with the summer solstice, one of the sun’s cycle extreme points. It is also said to be the oldest private funerary complex where an ideal alignment of the winter solstice occurs. (Jiménez Serrano, 2015, 169).

By studying the solar cycle and recording the sunlight inside QH33, **Jonathan, R. and others** concluded that the tomb acted as a vertical mast that caught sunlight into the holy of the holies. The door's height served as a light clock as it was intended to achieve the sanctuary's daily lighting at dawn. The way architecture functioned was by measuring the amount of space that light travelled in a certain amount of time, particular for each architectural part in the landscape.

Beginning with the summer solstice, the light was hardly visible at the doorway of the passage, for around thirty days in the first month of the Flooding season. During this period, from month one to three, the sun rose inside the transitional room across the chapel's main area. This season is characterized with extreme intensity because the sun became at its zenith. The equinox occurred between the month four to five, after the sun start to light up the first parts of the southern pillars in the chapel. Between the fifth and sixth months, the sun was gradually projected onto the three left pillars, until reaching the holy of the holies. During the period from month six to eight, winter soloistic make some changes in the cycle, keeping it completely or partially lighted. Month eight ended with the sun setting, leaving the sanctuary and returning in month nine to light the pillars in the direction of the doorway. Once more, the equinox of the tenth month marked the presence of the sun in the passage leading to the doorway, and announced the approach of the summer solstice during the twelfth month (Jonathan, et al ,2022, 230).

The sixth element: Using the panel system

In contrast to the widespread standard of tomb wall decoration of the ancient Egyptian art, Qubbetel Hawa tomb wall decoration at Qubbetel Hawa consisted of separate images

or figures applied onto walls or pillars. This resulted in a series of “panels” (Fig. 6). Using panels was the most favored style among Qubbetel-Hawa tomb owners. It appears that artisans developed this system because of some changes and influences during this period. Perhaps the number of the local artisans was not enough for Qubbetel-Hawa tombs, in addition to the site’s rocks bad quality were the most known reasons for using the panel system for the tomb decoration.

Instead of presenting the scenes in registers as it was usual in tombs, the artisans at Qubbet el-Hawa used the panel system which consisted of separate panels with complete scenes and different styles. In register system, scenes were more complicated, full of details, successive, related to each other, and each type of scenes had a specific location inside the tomb. While scenes of the panel system were not related to each other, small, simple, and most panels represented scenes placed around the main panel of the tomb owner (Vischak, 2015, 134, 135, 140).

Most tomb owners preferred to place the panels in front of lit areas. Therefore, panels were applied on the parts of columns and pillars that are oriented toward the tomb entrance to receive the sunlight. As a result of applying separate panels, there were some empty parts without scenes on the wall surface. Indeed, for the tomb owner, this technique is cheaper than decorating the whole wall (Vischak, 2015,134:138).



(Fig. 6) Two different types of reliefs in one panel on the façade of the tomb of Sabni2
After: Vischak, 2015, Fig. 56.

The seventh element: Using two different types of reliefs in one panel

Such example of applying two different kinds of reliefs in one panel is clearly shown in a panel of offering figures consists of two figures, the overseer of ka-priests Seni and his wife Wadjewkawes, in addition to four much smaller figures of their children. While the husband and all four children are carved in sunken relief, the wife is carved in raised relief, which is a highly unusual combination in Old Kingdom art. In spite of this difference, the figures of husband and wife share the same proportions, general shape, and nearly identical forms of hands and ears; the only visible difference is the type of relief (Fig.6) (Vischak, 2015, 126).

Using different types of reliefs in one panel inside a large number of Qubbetel Hawa graves indicates that local tomb owners and artisans employed them intentionally. Tomb owners traveled to Memphis and were aware of the appearance of a typical tomb program, further artisans had received training under the supervision of Memphite artisans. Perhaps, tomb owners and artisans made choices with a knowledge of their options (Vischak, 2006, 306).

The eighth element: The thematic focus on family and offering scenes

The majority of scenes in the panel system were focused on family scenes and offering figures. May be family and offering scenes were a tradition used in Qubbetel-Hawwa tombs and developed with time. Unlike the Old Kingdom program, which incorporated different types of daily life scenes in tombs, scenes of daily life in Qubbetel-Hawa were used on a limited scale such as fishing, fowling scenes, bullfights, crafts, and agricultural scenes (Vischak, 2015,140: 141).

It is possible that some circumstances prompted localized modifications of their tombs and programs, for example a possibly small artisan community in the early stages of the cemetery could have led to the use of a

panel system and perhaps resulted in the limited thematic content (Vischak, 2006, 306).

The ninth element: Excessively elongated bodies - Awkward proportions

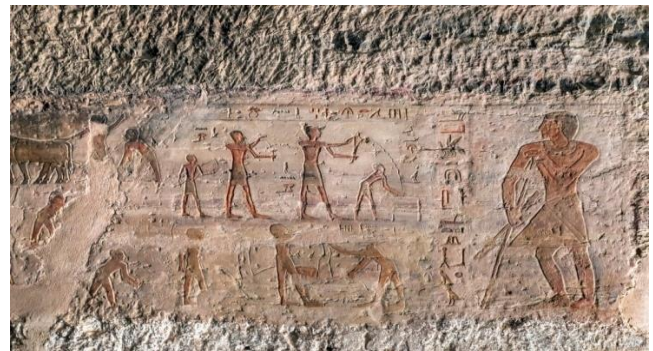
The bottom panel of the northern side of Mekhu's entrance, shows Mekhu's inspector of ka-servants, he is followed by his family who all face into the tomb. The figures proportions are generally elongated than average for this style during the Old Kingdom, though Mekhu's inspector of ka-servants as the first and primary figure is larger overall and as a result less excessively elongated and with thicker arms and legs. Mekhu's inspector of ka-servants censes with a bowl-shaped censer, and his family members hold the offerings of small birds and shallow bowls receiving triangular breads (Vischak, 2006, 75:77) (Fig.7).

Another example shows the awkward proportions is on the east wall of Mekhu's chapel, which represents Mekhu leans forward on his staff with his front foot pulled back in a watching posture. Unlike the usual Egyptian canons, figures in this scene are represented with various sizes and proportions. The eyes, eyebrows, noses, mouths, and ears of the figures in the art of this cemetery take many distinctive shapes and sizes. The skillful, low raised relief and complex arm positions contrast with the somewhat awkward proportions and angling of the legs (Fig. 8). There are two registers facing the owner of the tomb showing workers engaged in agricultural activity, incorporated into groups of offering figures. From the artistic style and quality of scenes and architecture, it is noticeable that the ancient Egyptian skilled artists throughout Old Kingdom and First Intermediate eras were concentrated inside the capital city and may be visited the provincial tombs such as Qubbetel-Hawa as supervisors of work. Many scholars suggest that the most highly skilled artists in Memphis would have traveled to the provinces such as Qubbetel-Hawa on short-time journeys to work in tombs and to train new artists, they would not have permanently settled there. This might be the reason behind the awkward proportions of the bodies and figures at

Qubbetel-Hawa cemetery (Vischak, 2015, 161).



(Fig.7) Mekhu's inspector of ka-servants and his family with elongated bodies
After: Vischak, 2006, Pl. IV.



(Fig.8) Mekhu with awkward proportions
After: Vischak, 2006, Fig. 25.

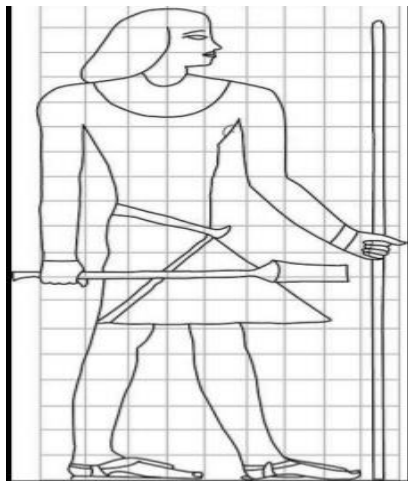
The tenth element: Large number of unfinished scenes with gridlines

Unfortunately, some tombs were left unfinished for various reasons, maybe governors ruled for insufficient time to complete the improvements within their ruling eras, or due to starting to build the graves during their final years before death, thus chapels remained unfinished (Vischak, 2006, 53, 56). However, the incomplete aspect of such tombs is more intriguing than other examples of completed ones, as archaeologists can follow the construction and decoration steps.

The unfinished scenes inside Qubbetel-Hawa show a series of lines marking the main parts of the body; these lines are called gridlines. By

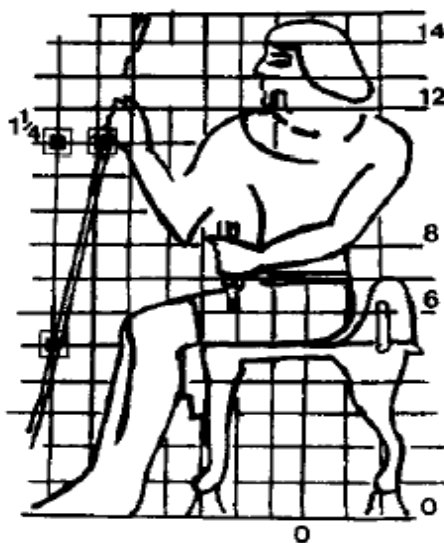
using the artists' grids, in which various body parts corresponding to distinct grid squares, Egyptian proportions were preserved for thousands of years. (Peck, 1978, 27).

Gridlines had guided and helped the artist to draw the proportions of the human figure correctly (Kanawati, & Woods, 2009, 34). The grid system varied slightly from one period to another. The following figures 9 and 10 show the difference in the number of the square grids between the standing and the seated figures (Iversen, 1955, 30).



(Fig.9) Surviving traces of the original grid lines showing a standing man applied on grids of eighteen squares.

After: Robins, 1994, Fig. 20-b.



(Fig. 10) Figure of tomb owner drawn on a grid consisting of fourteen squares

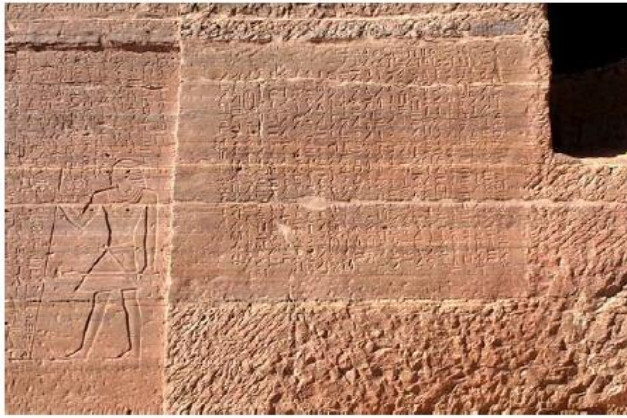
After: Robins, & Shute, 1985, Fig. 2.

The eleventh element: Texts inscribed on tomb façades (ex: Harkhuf tomb)

The first appearance of the ancient Egyptian autobiography was at Memphis, which dates back to the 4th Dynasty, later it was developed between the 5th and 6th dynasties. During the 6th dynasty, some autobiographies started to emerge in high officials' tombs in locations other than Memphis, including Elephantine, Edfu, and Deshasha. (Sayed, 2016, 223-224). It is worth noting that some of tomb owners of Qubbet El-Hawa used to record their autobiography on the façade of their tombs to narrate some stories about their life and career and to show their good deeds. Harkhuf is a great example whose tomb is the best-known one at Qubbetel Hawa due to the its written texts on the façade, including his autobiography, in addition to a letter sent by young Pepy II for the tomb owner.

Harkhuf served under Merenra and Pepi II, he was one of the Upper Egyptian nobles, he has led four expeditions in the southern lands were led by Harkhuf. (Vernus, & Yoyotte, 2003, 122). His tomb (QH34n) is the oldest surviving tomb in the cemetery and one of only a handful of Old Kingdom tombs in the cemetery to employ relief carving on the façade. It provides evidence of work, travels, and campaigns in south "Nubia", and west "Libyan desert". (Angelini, & Capriotti, & Baldi, 2016, 71).

The large rectangular area holding the inscription of the letter from Pepy II is on the extreme right of the façade (Fig. 11). This letter describes a fourth expedition to Yam land, during which Herkhuf sent to youthful King Pepi II precisely informing him that he was returning with a Pygmy. Pepi II sent a response to Herkhuf's letter, and Herkhuf was so pleased of it. Because of that letter, Herkhuf had engraved this text on his tomb facade. (Bussmann, 2023, 26).



(Fig.11) Inscription of the letter from Pepy II
After: Angelini, & Capriotti, & Baldi, 2016, Fig. 2.



(Fig. 12) Headstone of the northern entrance into the causeway of Sarenput I
After: Bommas, 2016, Fig.11.

The twelfth element: Using blue sandstone

There is a headstone from the causeway of the governor Sarenput I (served under Senuseret I in the 12th dynasty) shows one of few usages of blue sandstone. (Ezz El-Din, 2020, 21). This kind of sandstone was harder than other sandstone kinds, it was brought for the first time from Shat el-Saba Regal area, near Kom Ombo. According to **Bommas**, selecting this material for building indicates that the tomb was built before the appointment of Sarenput I during the reign of Senuseret I, whose structures are distinguished by using limestone. (Bommas, 2016, 35)

The construction of the cemetery and causeway of Sarenput I may now be used to trace the transition from the usage of blue sandstone under king (Mentuhotep II) to limestone under king (Senuseret I).

The headstone depicts an ox being driven. There are two men walking rapidly to the left, make their way to the causeway's entrance. The first one is holding a rope that is fastened to the ox's head with both of his hands. The following man is grabbing the same rope with his right hand and holding a second, much shorter rope that is fastened to the animal's right foreleg with his left hand (Bommas, 2016, 34:35) (Fig.12).

Conclusion

Studying any style of art gives us information about the political, social, and cultural life about any society. Qubbet el-Hawa regarded as one of the significant provincial necropolises from ancient Egypt because of its uncommon architectural and artistic style. Perhaps the far distance of Elephantine from the capitals of Egypt, in addition to the nature of its landscape were the principal factors that affected on the uncommon style of art and architecture in Qubbetel-Hawa necropolis.

Multiple architectural elements were added to tombs in Qubbetel-Hawa such as ramps in front of tomb entrances to facilitate the transport of the sarcophagus from the river to the tomb and to ease the access to the tomb by the relatives of the deceased.

Some tombs in this necropolis are characterized with an uncommon nature of the architectural setting such as tombs QH 35, QH 35d, and QH 35e that are linked visually by sharing some architectural elements. Furthermore, one of the most extraordinary architectural designs in Qubbetel-Hawa necropolis is digging QH31, QH32, and QH33 in the same alignment. Some governors of Elephantine used to build their funerary complexes in the same alignment to be a burial area of the same ruling family, which identifies the close social connections and the mutual support with each other. Besides the unique architectural nature of QH33 complex

that was accomplished to witness summer and winter solstice alignment. Witnessing the summer and winter solstice inside one complex of QH33 indicates the existence of well-trained individuals in provincial courts such as Elephantine, they might receive sophisticated religious and technical training. In addition, the exceptional constructive program of QH33 complex represent the architect's clear awareness about the cycle of the sun.

In fact, the difference of style in Qubbetel-Hawa tomb programs includes two different aspects: the use of various styles together within the same tomb and the use of non-Memphite styles for individual scenes. Some tombs in this necropolis are characterized with an uncommon nature of the artistic style such as using the panel system instead of adding figures in registers on tomb walls and the awkward proportions of figures. This unique style was the best choice for artisans because of the labor shortage and the lack of well-trained artisans. It may seem that the new artists of Qubbetel-Hawa received a well technical training from the Memphite artists, but they lacked the artistic skill.

Unlike the other private tombs that included various types of daily-life scenes which were usually depicted on the walls, daily life scenes in Qubbetel-Hawa were used on a limited scale such as fishing, fowling, bullfights, crafts, and agricultural scenes. The decorative program of Qubbetel-Hawa tombs is based on family, offering, and ritual scenes which were usually depicted on pillars with awkward proportions.

Unfortunately, some tombs in Qubbetel-Hawa necropolis were not finished because of the small ruling time of governors to achieve their work. However, unfinished tombs are more interesting than other completed ones, because they give us information about the complete process of building and steps of tomb decoration.

Despite that Qubbetel-Hawa necropolis included elite tomb, it is noticeable that tomb owners and artisans had some flexibility in

shaping and decorating their tombs, instead of following the standard elite tomb design model. To sum up, the unique artistic and architectural style of Qubbetel-Hawa cemetery shows a great transition of old practices and adding new innovations.

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