Early Kushite Tombs of South Asasif

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The necropolis located in the South Asasif area, south of Qurna on the Theban West Bank, is not well-known, having been practically lost by the beginning of the 20th century, and only recently re-discovered and re-explored (fig. 1). The importance of the necropolis for the history of private tomb decoration is difficult to overestimate, as it contains the tombs of the Mayor of Thebes and Fourth Priest of Amun Karabasken (TT 391), and that of the First k-priest of Amun, Karakhamun (TT 223). These are the earliest known Kushite decorated tombs in the Theban necropolis, built during the reign of Shabaqo-Shebitqo.

The site was initially located and visited in the early 19th century by explorers such as John Gardner Wilkinson, Robert Hay and James Burton. Their notes and drawings are the principal records of the state of preservation of the tombs at that time, documenting their ruinous condition, the weakness of the bedrock in the area, and ongoing decay. Karl Richard Lepsius, who must have seen the tombs in the early 1840s, left more comprehensive records, although it is difficult to say how much of the decoration was still intact at that time. The name and some of the titles of Karakhamun were first recorded by Lepsius, as well as a few fragments of his tomb’s decoration, including the standing figure of Karakhamun’s brother, a scene of Karakhamun in front of Ra-Horakhty and a goddess of one of the Hours of the Night.

The most recent observations on the remains of the tomb of Karakhamun were made by Diethelm Eigner in the mid-1970s. Eigner photographed a few fragments of relief decoration in the Second Pillared Hall, still visible at that time, and noted that the tomb was being used as a quarry, and was thus likely to soon disappear. Different parts of the tomb were used as living quarters, stables, workshops, and quarries. Numerous floods further undermined the

1 The work described is being conducted by the South Asasif Conservation Project directed by the author under the auspices of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), Egypt. The author want to express gratitude to SCA and Zahi Hawass for his personal involvement and help with the project, Salima Ikram (American University in Cairo) and Richard Wilkinson (University of Arizona), Günter Dreyer (German Archaeological Institute), Eugene Cruz-Uribe, the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (USA), Jack Josephson, Magda Saleh, Anthony T. Browder, and the Friends of the South Asasif.
2 Drawings by Hay show remains of some of the tomb’s architectural features, see British Library Mss. Add. 29 848, 77, Abb. 16. Wilkinson's observations made around the same time do not leave much hope that anything would remain intact for a length of time. Describing his visit to the tomb he mentions bringing down ‘half of a doorway by merely placing [his] hand against it previous of entering it’, see Wilkinson, MSS, v. 176; Eigner, Die Monumentalen Grabbauten der Spätzeit, 41–2; PM I/1, 324.
3 LD III, Text, 288, pl. 282d.
4 Ägyptisches Museum 2110, see Schäfer and Andrae, Die Kunst des alten Orients, fig. 450 (lower); Hamann, Ägyptische Kunst, fig. 314; PM I/1, 318 (plan), 324.
5 Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, 17, 41–2, figs. 15, 16, pls. 14B, 20A, plans 9, 28.
6 Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, 41.
tomb’s condition, which subsequently collapsed in the mid-1990s. A modern village built in the middle of the necropolis then concealed the remains of the tomb.

The tomb of Karabasken was visited by Hay who sketched its plan despite being unimpressed by the remains; Wilkinson noted that it contained ‘nothing remarkable’. Lepsius recorded the name and titles of Karabasken from the entrance to the first pillared hall, but it is impossible to know whether Lepsius could see further areas of decoration. By 2006, numerous floods had covered the tomb courtyard with a 4m thick layer of debris, while the vestibule and pillared hall were buried beneath 2.5m of deposits. A sondage in the courtyard identified at least six consecutive flood layers. The accessible part of the tomb of Karabasken was occupied by villagers and used as a stable. As a result of such misuse the decoration of the upper part of the walls and doorframes was badly damaged, and in some areas the décor had been chiseled off and replaced with large scale Arabic graffiti.

The owners of the South Asasif tombs are not very well known. Little is known of Karabasken and his family. Kitchen suggests that he held the office of Mayor of Thebes and Fourth Prophet of Amun from about 725 to 705BC, which makes him an appointee of Piye, and later, Shabaqo. His appointment reflects the Nubian policy of installing their own representatives in Thebes, despite the apparent loyalty of the Theban officials. Karabasken’s titles suggest that he was a forerunner of Mentuemhat’s family. Most scholars consider Karabasken an immediate predecessor to Mentuemhat, though Bierbrier proposed Karabasken preceded Montuemhat’s grandfather.

We know even less of Karakhamun and his family. He did not appear to have any important administrative positions and his priestly title, First k-priest of Amun, does not imply a particularly elevated rank. His name, evidently Nubian in origin, has led to the tomb being dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, a dating supported by its architecture. Karakhamun’s serpentine shawabti is of typical ‘Nubian’ type, with facial features suggesting a date prior to 725BC.

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7 Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, 16, 40–1, figs. 14, 15, pl. 14A, plans 8, 28.
8 LD III, no. 96, 37.
9 These dates make Karabasken the successor of the last Djed-Khons-ef-ankh (D) of the Nakhtefmut family, see Kitchen, Third Intermediate Period in Egypt, 382, Table 14.
10 Karabasken was seen as the immediate predecessor to Mentuemhat by Leclant (Recherches, 389), Vittmann (Priester und Beamte, 99, 100, 171) and Eigner (Monumentalen Grabbauten, 40).
11 Bierbrier proved that Karabasken preceded his father or most probably grandfather, see Bierbrier, Late New Kingdom in Egypt, 95 and Bierbrier, BiOr 36, 306–9. The date 725BC given to Karabasken by Vittmann (Priester und Beamte, 171) leads to the conclusion that Karabasken preceded Mentuemhat’s grandfather.
12 Karakhamun and his family are omitted from Kitchen (Third Intermediate Period in Egypt) and Vittmann (Priester und Beamte), the most comprehensive studies on the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period chronology.
13 Leclant, Recherches, 179.
14 Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, 41–2. Records from the 19th century allow us to reconstruct the plan of the tomb as a variant of the Kushite type similar to the tomb of Karabasken (TT 391): one east-west axis, entrance on the east side of the court, no porticoes in the court, one or two pillared halls. The tomb of Harwa (TT 37), from the time of Taharqa, is the first Twenty-fifth dynasty tomb that offers elaboration of this plan, providing a transition to Twenty-sixth dynasty type, with bent axis and introduction of the colonnaded porticoes in the court.
to the reign of Taharqo, perhaps during the time of Shabaqo. The stylistic details in the representations of Karakhamun’s face, recently found in the tomb, point to the reign of Shebitqo. His tomb is the largest in the southern part of the Asasif, incorporating two pillared halls and multiple burial chambers. Karakhamun may have had close connections to the royal court or the royal family itself, given the lack of particularly elite titles. Further exploration of the tomb should clarify both the date, and aspects of the tomb owner’s identity.

The tombs of Karabasken and Karakhamun attest to the appearance of a new tomb type in Theban funerary architecture, with entrance pylons, large courts, and shrines – a clear departure from the New Kingdom tomb with transverse hall. These new ‘temple-tombs’ in the South and North Asasif first appear during Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties, and represent a return to monumental funerary architecture after a hiatus during the Third Intermediate Period.

Archaeological work in the tombs of Karabasken and Karakhamun started in 2006. Although the outlines of the main architectural elements in the tomb of Karabasken were visible, the total lack of decoration on any visible surfaces left us with little hope that the tomb could be reconstructed (fig. 2). Other negative factors were the poor quality of the grainy and friable bedrock, and its weakened condition. It is evident that during the initial cutting of the first pillared hall, the builders had to replace the stone in the weakest areas with denser limestone from elsewhere on the plateau. In addition, the surface of the stone is extensively water damaged, further increasing the instability of the tomb.

Work to date has revealed that the tomb of Karabasken is a single axis east-west oriented structure, with entrance from the east. It consists of an open (solar) court, pillared hall and a cult chamber provided with six niches. The rear wall of the solar court was never decorated and the frame of the door recess appears to be completely destroyed. The walls and the ceilings were blackened by soot from later cooking fires (fig. 3). Trenches and trial cleaning of the surface of the walls and pillars in different areas indicate that the tomb was left largely unfinished and undecorated. Some sections of the tomb bear traces of preliminary drawings for column lines. The shallow and uneven form of the niches in the cult chamber indicates that they were also never completed; unfortunately, the decoration of the false door or cult niche on the west wall is totally destroyed, if it was ever finished. Only traces of a cavetto cornice are still visible in the middle of the west wall. Remains of another unfinished cornice, with preliminary red lines painted atop the doorframe, are visible on the west wall of the pillared hall.

A major discovery in the tomb of Karabasken emerged with the removal of the 2m-thick layer of debris, and modern mud brick structures, around the door-recess in the west wall of the court (fig. 4). This excavation exposed the lower part of the doorframe with two

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15 Aubert, 199, pl. 54, fig. 129.
16 Aston in Strudwick and Taylor, Theban Necropolis, 146.
17 Arnold, Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian Architecture, 120.
18 Two previously published photographs of the tomb of Karabasken provide clear evidence of its decaying state, see Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, pl. 14A, and Naunton, in Tiradritti, L’Enigma di Harwa, 87.
19 Also known as a “Tornische”: Eigner, Monumentalen Grabbauten, 120–3; Arnold, Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian architecture, 76–7. Arnold describes this element in Late Period tombs as often decorated with reed matting and having ‘the appearance of the primeval sanctuary’.
relatively well-preserved images of Karabasken, with name and titles inscribed above. The 2m high door is inscribed with the Offering and Appeal to the Living formulae, though the carved surface is deteriorated and flaking from salt damage, caused by the moist environment. Dust and impact damage further added to its poor condition. Numerous fragments of inscriptions found in the debris could be reattached to their positions upon the walls, following cleaning and consolidation by the South Asasif Conservation Project.

Karabasken is depicted in the style and iconography of the Old Kingdom (fig. 5). He is seated on a lion-legged chair, its short back decorated with a papyrus umbel, and wears a short pleated kilt and priestly pelt vest. The latter is held by a sash tied over his shoulder with a large elaborate knot. A double amulet, consisting of two overlapping drop-shaped elements on a long cord, is the only contemporary element of his attire. This amulet returned to popularity in the Kushite and Saite Periods, though most scholars see it as an archaizing reference to an Old Kingdom version. Although occasionally attested in the Middle and New Kingdom, the double amulet becomes an essential part of the tomb owner’s attire only in Kushite and Saite tombs. In fact, Karabasken is likely to be the earliest known example. The amulet’s symbolic meaning, and reasons for its popularity in the Late Period, remain unclear.

Karabasken’s stylistic and iconographic preferences could have been influenced by his activities in Thebes. He probably had to supervise the building projects of Shabaqo in the temples of Karnak, Luxor and Medinet Habu. Images of Shabaqo in Luxor temple, carved in distinct Old Kingdom style, could have reinforced Karabasken’s stylistic choices.

Based on 19th Century records, Eigner reconstructed the plan of the tomb of Karakhamun as a large structure with two pillared halls, side rooms and a large shaft on the western side of the second pillared hall, with multiple burial chambers. By 2001, the tomb of Karakhamun could only be identified by a large crack in the bedrock to the east of the tomb of Karabasken (fig. 6). Local inhabitants informed us that the Abd el-Rasul family had once lived in the deteriorating tomb, part of which was still standing until its total collapse in the 1990s. Later, the site of the tomb was used as a rubbish dump.

The project commenced fieldwork in the summer of 2006, when preliminary assessment showed that the crack must have been a section of collapsed bedrock above the remains of the tomb’s first pillared hall (fig. 7). The entrance structures and open court had become covered by modern houses. A primary goal of the first season was to determine if any traces of the tomb architecture or its decorative features had survived. Reaching the original ceiling level about 3m below present ground level, it was clear that the caving in of the ceiling had caused the collapse of the walls and tops of pillars. A trench in the eastern section of the hall, dug in an effort to explore the condition of the walls and pillars, yielded no relief decoration on the walls, nor vestiges of standing pillars.

The first small fragments of in situ relief decoration were found on the north wall almost 2m below ceiling level, but the east wall proved more important. Divided by a doorframe, it

21 Variations of the double amulet in the Late Period are discussed by Russmann, *Relief Decoration in Theban Private Tombs*, 324–35.
23 Mysliwiec, *Royal Portraiture*, pls. 28–9, 30a.
had the remains of two symmetrically opposed offering scenes of Karakhamun, seated at an offering table, with an offering list above. The two-register composition to the right displays a procession of offering bearers in the second register, and performance of offering rituals in the register below. Almost completely destroyed on the south part of the wall, this scene is unexpectedly well preserved on the north section (fig. 8). The importance of this find was two-fold: it proved that some parts of the tomb still remain in situ, and it expanded the corpus of known high-quality reliefs from the Kushite era.

As with Karabasken, Karakhamun is depicted with features of Old Kingdom iconography. He has a broad shouldered torso, narrow waist, legs with heavy musculature, closely cropped hair, and bare feet. He sits on a bovine-legged chair with its legs resting on a double pedestal. The chair’s short back, and papyrus umbel behind the seat, are typical of Old Kingdom iconography. He is depicted in a pleated kilt and a broad collar without a pelt vest. His round head has full cheeks, and a nose with distinctive Kushite folds at its sides (fig. 9). Protruding lips with small ridges of flesh at the corners, and a short chin, are features shared by many Kushite reliefs. Yet the style of carving of Karakhamun’s face allows a more precise date when compared with royal relief images. The iconography of the eyes is an important indicator of date. Karakhamun’s eyes are large, slightly slanted, with an elegantly carved thin upper rim extending as a short pointed cosmetic line (figs. 9, 10). In contrast, faces of Shabaqo in Luxor temple have plastically rendered brows and long cosmetic lines widening at the corners. His nose and lips are also different from those of Shabaqo, which feature a large straight nose and lips protruding forward almost as far as the nose. Karakhamun’s nose is shorter than that of Shabaqo with a tip slightly bent up; furthermore, the lips are fuller, rounder and less protruding. The face of Karakhamun lacks the energy and exaggeration of Shabaqo’s features: it is more harmoniously composed and serene. The shape of Karakhamun’s eyes and elongation of the neck endow his face with elegance and sophistication and bring it closer to depictions of Shebitqo. The best preserved relief image of this king is in the chapel of Osiris-Hekadjet at Karnak, and displays the features which may have inspired Karakhamun’s reliefs.

The decoration of the tomb of Karakhamun re-introduces and re-interprets a few ancient motifs derived from the iconography of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. One of these is placing the tomb owner’s dog under his chair in the offering scene (fig. 11). The dog on the north section of the east wall is one of the most beautiful images found in the tomb. It is carved in sunk relief with sharpness, precision, and sophisticated modeling, particularly noticeable on the muzzle, chest, and hind leg area. The animal’s powerful musculature resembles the treatment of Karakhamun’s legs. The elongated eye is rimmed with a long cosmetic line almost reaching the collar; the dog’s long slender nose is slightly exaggerated. Upright pointed ears, and a long tail twisted into four coils, complement the image of the dog.

25 For example, an image of Iasen in his Giza mastaba (G2196), see Simpson, Mastabas of the Western Cemetery, pl. 33.
26 Russmann, Representation of the King.
27 Mysliwiec, Royal Portraiture, pls. 28–9. This traditional eye iconography is termed ‘hieroglyphic’, see Bothmer in Cody, Egyptian art. Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer, 449.
28 Shabaqo’s features are thoroughly analysed in Russman, Representation of the King, p. 13
29 Mysliwiec, Royal Portraiture, pl. 34.
of Karakhamun. Another dog image from the south section of the east wall survives only in small fragments.

Another influential archaizing feature re-introduced by Karakhamun is a sacred oil jar placed under the chair of the tomb owner. The north section of the east wall shows a jar for hknw-oil covered with a lotus flower. Though the south section of the wall is almost completely destroyed, numerous fragments of the damaged relief decoration found amongst the debris allow the reconstruction of a substantial part of it. The second offering scene had an image of a hknw-oil jar under Karakhamun’s chair as well. Both scenes also include a group of jars containing oil labelled as hitt nṯ ḣnw, under the offering table. It appears that the tomb of Karakhamun displays the earliest Kushite example of a sacred oil jar placed under the chair of a tomb owner. This convention became a key feature of Late Period private tomb decoration. Before the latest discoveries in the tomb of Karakhamun, the earliest known examples of this iconography were found in the tombs of Mentuemhat (TT 34) and Petamenophis (TT 33). The placement of the sacred oil jars under the tomb owner’s chair emphasizes the concept of receiving power for resurrection and rebirth in the afterlife through being anointed with seven sacred oils.

Representations of offering bearers in the tomb of Karakhamun display an original interpretation of Old Kingdom iconography. One of the examples is a female offering bearer in a dress supported with a shoulder strap with an elaborate knot (fig. 12). A strap knot is a popular feature of Old Kingdom garments, which traditionally appeared on divine or royal garments, fecundity figures, and personifications of estates in royal temples. Offering bearers in Old Kingdom private tombs wore smooth-strapped dresses. After a long interval, a knot of this type reappears in the Third Intermediate Period on royal and divine garments. Prior to the discoveries in Karakhamun, the earliest Late Period representation of an offering bearer dress with a strap knot in a private tomb was attested in the tomb of Mentuemhat. Now Karakhamun provides an earlier example of the re-use of this royal feature in a private tomb. Whether the Old Kingdom meaning for this knot was still understood in the Late Period is unknown.

The types of offerings, and manner in which they are held by the bearers, in the tomb of Karakhamun also reflect Old Kingdom iconography. For example, a fragment of a figure of a female offering bearer found in the tomb displays a traditional manner of holding a duck by grabbing its legs and pressing it against the chest with another arm (fig. 13).

Another scene of an offering bearer leading a large bird is also a reference to Old Kingdom iconography and its revival in contemporary royal Kushite tombs. The scene originally located on the north-east pilaster of the first pillared hall was found in several fragments. The remains allow the scene to be reconstructed as an offering bearer leading a bird by a leash attached

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30 For the discussion of images of sacred oil jars in the Late Period tombs, see Pischikova, JARCE 31, 65–9.
32 W.S. Smith, History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom, pls. 29, 53a.
33 For example, Steindorff, Das Grab des Ti, pl. 113; Davies, Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethetep, pls. 15–16.
34 For the garments of Iuput II and a Kushite image of Amun-Re, see Fazzini et al., Ancient Egyptian Art in the Brooklyn Museum, no. 69; Gruse, Karnak, 67.
35 Russmann, JARCE 34, 23, fig. 1.
to its leg (fig. 14); it is difficult to identify the bird due to the missing areas. The treatment of the feathers of the wings as rounded scales is characteristic of the images of ostriches, though the beak is rather reminiscent of that of a stork or crane. The iconography and style of carving show the influence of Old Kingdom private tomb decoration, such as the scenes of offering or hunting an ostrich, or a tribute-bearer carrying such a bird. Ostrich images were first introduced in Old Kingdom tomb decoration and later appeared in Middle and New Kingdom tombs. Furthermore, Karakhamun’s offering scene is reminiscent of that upon an ivory plaque from the el-Kurru burial of Shabaqo, in which an offering bearer leads an ostrich. The two scenes are very close stylistically, which may reflect a common Old Kingdom inspiration, or the influence of contemporary Kushite funerary art, on Kushite monuments in Egypt.

In addition to re-interpretations of ancient motifs, the tomb of Karakhamun introduces a few innovations. One of these can be observed because the tomb was never completed. Part of the decoration in the first pillared hall remained at a preliminary stage and some sections, although carved and painted, still retain traces of grid lines on the background (fig. 15). Lepsius recorded an unfinished standing figure of Karakhamun’s brother covered in grid lines. What attracted his attention was the fact that the figure was drawn with a 21-square grid instead of the traditional eighteen. As Lepsius dated the tomb of Karakhamun to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, he did not recognize this fact as an early example of the new grid. Recent excavation in the tomb of Karakhamun brought to light numerous carved and painted fragments with traces of grid lines. The only complete scene with grid lines found to date shows three overlapping figures of deities from the top of pillar four, in the north aisle of the first pillared hall. Reconstructed from numerous fragments, this scene confirms Lepsius’s observation that the decoration of the tomb was based on the new 21-square grid system. In the discussion of the later grid system, Bietak and Reiser-Haslauer named Mentuemhat as the earliest private tomb utilizing the new grid. It now appears that Karakhamun should be considered the earliest private tomb known to use the reformed grid system.

The whole program of the decoration of the first pillared hall can be seen as an influential innovation. The tomb of Karakhamun is the earliest known Kushite private tomb to adopt traditional subjects of New Kingdom royal tomb decoration such as the Books of Day and Night. Texts of the twelve Hours of the Day and twelve Hours of the Night were placed on eight pillars, with three Hours on each pillar. At present, that which can be most fully reconstructed is the Eleventh Hour of the Day, from the fourth pillar in the north aisle. The reconstruction made on the ground includes more than a hundred fragments. Karakhamun’s example was often followed in later Kushite and Saite tombs, including the tombs of Harwa

36 Klebs, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches*, 65–73.
38 Dunham, *El Kurru*, fig. 20g.
39 LD III, pl. 282d.
40 Robins follows Lepsius in dating Karakhamun to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, see Robins, *Proportion and Style*, 160–61, fig. 7.2. Lepsius also noticed a new grid system used in the tomb of Harwa, LD III, Text, 245–6. The grid system in the tomb of Harwa is discussed in Russman, *Relief Decoration in Theban Private Tombs*, 125
and Pabasa.\textsuperscript{42}

Unfortunately the beautiful tomb of Karakhamun did not have a chance to remain in its original condition for very long. Even in the early Twenty-sixth Dynasty, an attempt was made to re-use the tomb for the vizier of Upper Egypt under Psamtik I, Nespakashuty (Nespakashuty D).\textsuperscript{43} The name and titles of Karakhamun were covered in plaster or cut out of the walls and pillars. The gaps were filled with limestone plaques that were to be inscribed with the name of the new owner. Most of the new ‘name plaques’ found in situ and in debris are uninscribed, showing that the usurpation was never completed. They measure 20–22cm in length, 9–11cm in width, and 4–5cm in depth. Two of them have the name of the new owner written in red paint. They bear the name and titles of Nespakashuty D. It is not surprising to learn that he attempted to usurp the tomb of Karakhamun because the tomb of his mother, Irtieru (TT 390), was adjacent to it. Nespakashuty undoubtedly wanted to be buried next to his mother.\textsuperscript{44}

Nespakashuty also commenced re-carving the lintel of the entrance to the second pillared hall. This work remained unfinished, perhaps because the tomb started showing signs of instability when disturbed. The tomb had not been carved deeply enough into the limestone plateau to ensure its structural integrity,\textsuperscript{45} and the tomb builders had to use numerous blocks as patches, to compensate for the weak bedrock. Repair work on the ceiling, probably contemporary to the building of the tomb, is attested in several places. The destruction of the tomb of Karakhamun was progressing gradually. In the Graeco-Roman Period the tomb was used as a faience workshop; constant burning on the floor made the limestone of the walls extremely brittle. Coptic ostraca and papyri are evidences of the use of the tomb by Coptic monks. The most recent re-use was by the inhabitants of Qurna.

The tombs of South Asasif still require much excavation and conservation work to demonstrate their original beauty, but it is already clear how important this area is: the tombs presented here add to our understanding of the earliest stage of the Kushite revival of large-scale private funerary monuments. Kushite archaism was based primarily on references to Old Kingdom style and iconography, but ancient patterns are not simply copied, but edited and adjusted to suit contemporary tastes and ideas.\textsuperscript{46} It created a new style that influenced Egyptian art of the Late Period. Numerous new features and stylistic trends, attested in the tombs of Karabasken and Karakhamun, were adopted in the Kushite and Saite tombs of

\textsuperscript{42} The tombs of Harwa and Pabasa are unpublished. For the royal tomb decoration, see the works of Piankoff, for example Piankoff, \textit{ASAE} 40, 283–9; Roulin, \textit{Le Livre de la Nuit}.

\textsuperscript{43} For Nespakashuty D and his tomb, see PM I/1, 387–8; Pischikova, \textit{MMJ} 33, 57–101.

\textsuperscript{44} For the tomb of Irtieru, see PM I/1, 440–1. The tomb of Irtieru is part of the South Asasif Conservation Project. It was found under the modern houses in 2001 and since then has been partially excavated and restored. Results of the work in this tomb will be featured in a forthcoming issue of \textit{Ancient Egypt} magazine.

\textsuperscript{45} The condition of the tomb of Karakhamun probably forced Nespakashuty to change his plans and concentrate on the tomb at Deir el Bahri (TT 312) where he was probably buried, see Pischikova, \textit{MMJ} 33, 57–101.

\textsuperscript{46} It is important to consider that the past was never entirely forgotten and the ‘Kushite Renaissance’ cannot be separated from the traditions of the Ramesside and Third Intermediate Periods. Despite the preference given to the Old Kingdom, Kushite art reflects the Middle and New Kingdom traditions as well, see Fazzini, \textit{Egypt: Dynasty XXII-XXV}; Taylor in Shaw, \textit{The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt}, 330–69.
Bibliography

Fig. 1: South Asasif necropolis, aerial view. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

Fig. 2: Tomb of Karabaskan (TT 391) in 2006, before excavation. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.
Fig. 3: Tomb of Karabasken. Entrance to the pillared hall in 2006 before excavation. Photo: Katherine Blakeney.

Fig. 4: Tomb of Karabasken. Entrance to the pillared hall, after excavation. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

Fig. 5: Karabasken, depicted in the entrance to the pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.
Fig. 6: Tomb of Karakhamun (TT 223) in 2006, before excavation. Photo: Katherine Blakeney.

Fig. 7: Tomb of Karakhamun. First pillared hall, during excavation in 2008. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

Fig. 8: Tomb of Karakhamun. Offering scene, east wall of the first pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.
Fig. 9: Head of Karakhamun, part of an offering scene on the east wall of the first pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

Fig. 10: Figure of Karakhamun, upon a fragment of pillar from the first pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/online_journals/bmsaes/issue_12/pischikova.aspx
Fig. 11: Dog of Karakhamun, depicted in an offering scene, on the east wall of the first pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.

Fig. 12: Offering bearer with a shoulder knot, from a pilaster in the first pillared hall. Tomb of Karakhamun. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.
Fig. 13: Offering bearer with a duck, upon a pilaster from the first pillared hall. Tomb of Karakhamun. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik.
Fig. 14: Tomb of Karakhamun. Offering bearer with a bird, upon a pilaster from the first pillared hall. Photo: Matjaz Kacicnik
Fig. 15: Tomb of Karakhamun. Procession of deities with grid squares, upon a pillar from the first pillared hall. Photo: Katherine Blakeney.