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**TOMB OF KHETETI AT KŌM ES-SULTĀN**

BY  
ROSTISLAV HOLTHOER

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On the eastern bank of the Nile, immediately to the south of the amazing *qubbas* of *Zawiyet el-Meiteen*, the huge modern necropolis of the town of *Minya*, lies the mound of *Kŏm es-Sultān* or *Kŏm el-Ahmar*. The masses of its debris are hiding the ruins of an ancient town, which has been known as *Hebenu* in antiquity.

In the northern part of the *kŏm* is the ruined step pyramid of an unknown king. Being the only monument of its kind on the eastern bank of the Nile, its secret still puzzles the minds of archaeologists today.

Further to the north are the remains of an enclosure wall of mud-bricks and a monumental staircase leading to the ruined temple of Ramesses II.

On the slope between the edge of the eastern mountain ridge and the *kŏm* lies the necropolis of Hebenu. Its tombs, apart from that of *Nefer-sekheru* which is of a later date, go back to the VI. dynasty (Porter and Moss, 1934, pp. 134-139). The necropolis has quite recently suffered much damage caused by quarrying activities at the end of the last century. Today only two of its tombs are protected by iron gates.

When working in the Finnish Expedition to *Deir Abu Hennis* in November 1978, the author together with the late Professor *Jussi Aro* had the opportunity of witnessing the *vanitas vanitatum* on the spot. Fearing possible additional damage to the monuments in question, we decided to record the unprotected texts, which had avoided destruction. This is how the texts of the two stelae of tomb No. 12 were copied (Porter and Moss, 1934, p. 137). Later we found out that our copies did not correspond with the published accounts of the tomb, and Professor Aro encouraged me to carry out their documentation. In January 1983 I had the chance to revisit the site and to complete the necessary measurements and obtain additional information.

The present article is dedicated to the memory of my teacher, inspirator and colleague *Jussí Aro*, whose sudden death in the spring of 1983 deprived me of a friend and of the possibility of fruitful discussions, for example concerning the results of the latest documentation of tomb No. 12.

The first to leave any documentation of this tomb was *Nestor L'Hôte*, who during his trip to Egypt in 1838-39 produced some descriptions of its decoration. Being unpublished, these descriptions have not been accessible to me. The tomb was more thoroughly described by the famous German archaeologist, *Richard Lepsius*, who visited it in August 1843 during his expedition of 1842-45. In his *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien* (1849-59, hence abbreviated LD) he published a map of the site and tomb No. 12 (LD I:57), and a copy of a text (LD II:110r). A check of the measurements proved his plan to be correct, apart from the existence of two burial shafts, which were discovered and found empty by *Weill* in 1933 (*Varille*, 1938, p. 7). These shafts are added to Lepsius' plan in Fig. 1. The text copied by Lepsius is reproduced on Fig. 2. As already pointed out by *Prisse D'Avennes* (1847, p. 7, XVbis., No. 4) and confirmed by collation with the existing *Abklatsche* in the Academy of Sciences of the GDR, Lepsius' copy is wrong, and should be divided in two parts. The corrected texts are reproduced on Fig. 3 and read both: *smr w't(y) tp(y) hr nsw Httí*, "Sole Companion, Foremost under the King, Kheteti".

The text volume to LD I and II, which was posthumously published by *Naville* and *Sethé* (1904, hence abbreviated LD Text, pp. 64f.), has many mistakes and ambivalent descriptions. In order to avoid further misinterpretations the following description is given.

Tomb No. 12 consisted originally of a forecourt, a pillared hall and two inner halls as well as a sidechamber with a burial shaft, which was designated by Lepsius as a separate tomb, No. 13 (Fig. 1). Today all the rooms with the exception of part of the pillared hall and the forecourt are filled with rubble and boulders, so that no measurements can be taken.

The facade is towards the Nile and has a length of 2.86 m. It is divided by a doorway, 1 m. wide. LD Text states that on the right and on the left sides are representations of the deceased. Today the left half of the facade is completely destroyed. Its right half has the remains of a relief showing a man, dressed in a short apron and holding a staff and scepter, walking towards the left. Only the lower part of the representation is preserved (Figs. 4 and 9). In front of him is a vertical column of text: ..... *nsw Httí*, "... Royal ....., Kheteti",

stating the titles and the name of the owner of the tomb. LD Text states that above the representations on the facade were the texts copied by Lepsius (Figs. 2 and 3). They could, however, also refer to other representations, e.g. on the thicknesses of the first doorway leading to the pillared hall. The representation of the lefthand thickness is lost. On the righthand thickness are the remains of two registers of decoration (Figs. 5 and 10). The lower register shows traces of a man, turned to the left, walking behind cattle. In the upper register are the scanty remains of a huge seated figure of a man, turned towards the right and holding a staff. This is probably the representation documented by Nestor L'Hôte (MSS. 20396, 242 verso /bottom/) as deceased seated on either side of doorway with offering texts (Porter and Moss, 1934, p. 137, where this description is erroneously given for the "entrance to Inner hall (probably)").

In the pillared hall, no traces of pillars are visible today. The wall, parallel to the facade, has three stelae, two inscribed, A and B, to the right, and one uninscribed, C, to the left of the doorway. In the floor on either side of the doorway is a rectangular burial shaft. Stela A (Figs. 6 and 11) is small and shaped like a false door. It is 0.58 m. wide and has a preserved height of 0.56 m. Its state of preservation is very poor. A figure of a man walking towards the left is recognizable on the right doorpost. In front of him are the remains of a column of text stating his name, *Httī*, "Kheteti". Traces indicate that a similar representation, but turned in the opposite direction, once adorned the left doorpost. Immediately to the right of stela A is stela B (Figs. 7 and 11), also shaped like a false door, but much larger than the previous one. Its width is 0.85 m. and its estimated height is 1.18 m. Despite what LD Text claims, it does not belong to the same man as A. It seems evident that the authors of LD Text mixed up the two stelae, rendering the description of the larger one for the smaller one and giving wrong names: *"Im inneren sind 2 Stelen, von denen die linke kleinere an der linken Seite dieselbe Inschrift (i.e. Sole Companion, Foremost under the King, Kheteti) trägt, drüber Anubis (Es gingen den Titeln also wohl die Worte "geehrt von Anubis" voran; die rechte Seite hat āmaxu xr nb.f Xttá)"*. On the inner doorpost, on either side of the door, are the remains of a vertical column of text, — to the left: *..... htp*, "(Khnum)-hotep", and to the right: *šps-nsu Hnm-htp*, "Nobleman of the King, Khnum-hotep". On the outer doorposts are representations of a man with a short wig and apron, walking inwards holding a staff and a scepter (like the man on the facade, cf. above). The figure on the left doorpost is

almost completely destroyed. Above the man to the right is a vertical column of text: (*imꜥꜥw*) *hr NN. Hnm-ḥtp*, "Revered before NN., Khnum-hotep". The name of the god is not preserved, but the existing traces would suit a jackal with hanging tail mounted upon a shrine, i.e. Anubis as proposed by LD Text. On the lintel is a partially preserved horizontal text with large hieroglyphs: *imꜥꜥy* . . . . ., "Revered . . . . .". It can be restored as: *imꜥꜥy (hr nb.f)*, "Revered (before his lord)", there being too little space for the insertion of the name of the deceased on the same line. The top of this stela is completely destroyed. On the other side of the doorway is a third stela C (Fig. 12). It is shaped like a false door too, but unlike the previous stelae it lacks inscriptions and figures. Instead it bears traces of red paint.

To judge from the preserved decoration of the facade, tomb No. 12 belonged to a man Kheteti. The evidence of two burial shafts and the presence of another stela, in fact larger than that of the owner, point to the existence of a second owner, a man called Khnum-hotep. Could it be possible that the unpreserved left half of the facade originally bore a figure of Khnum-hotep? It was perhaps Khnum-hotep who adorned the left thickness of the first doorway. The name Khnum-hotep is not unique at Kōm es-Sultān. In tomb No. 14, situated nearby, the same name is found spelled exactly in the same way as on stela B (Varille, 1938, Pl. XVIIc and LD II:111c). From other texts of the same tomb, it becomes evident that the name was originally Khnum-hotep-hepi and a nickname for Ny-anh-Pepi (Varille, 1938, p. 2) and therefore not identical with the man mentioned in tomb No. 12.

As an *excursus* a stela may be mentioned, without number and stated provenance, observed and copied by the author in the temporary museum of the town of Minya in 1984. Stylistical similarities tie it to Kōm es-Sultān (cf. Fig. 8). This false door stela is dedicated to a Khnum-hotep, which could be identical with the second owner of tomb No. 12.

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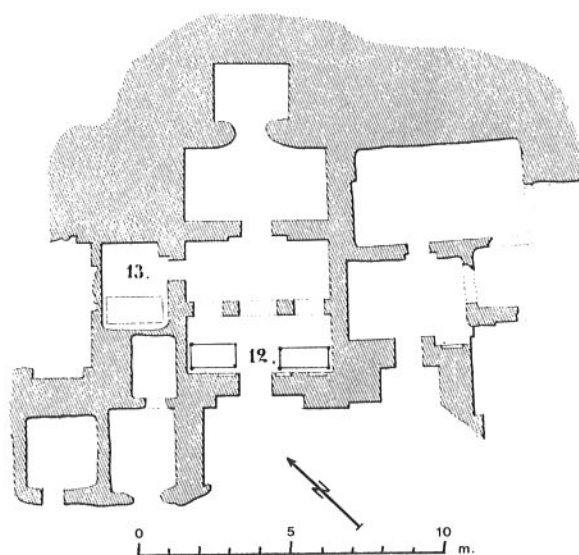


Fig. 1. Tombs Nos. 12 and 13. Extract from Lepsius' map of the site of Kōm es-Sultān. The two burial shafts in tomb No. 12 are added to the original drawing.



Grab 12.

Fig. 2. The text (now destroyed) copied by Lepsius.



Fig. 3. The proper arrangement of the text on Fig. 2. After the *Abklatsche* in Berlin-GDR.

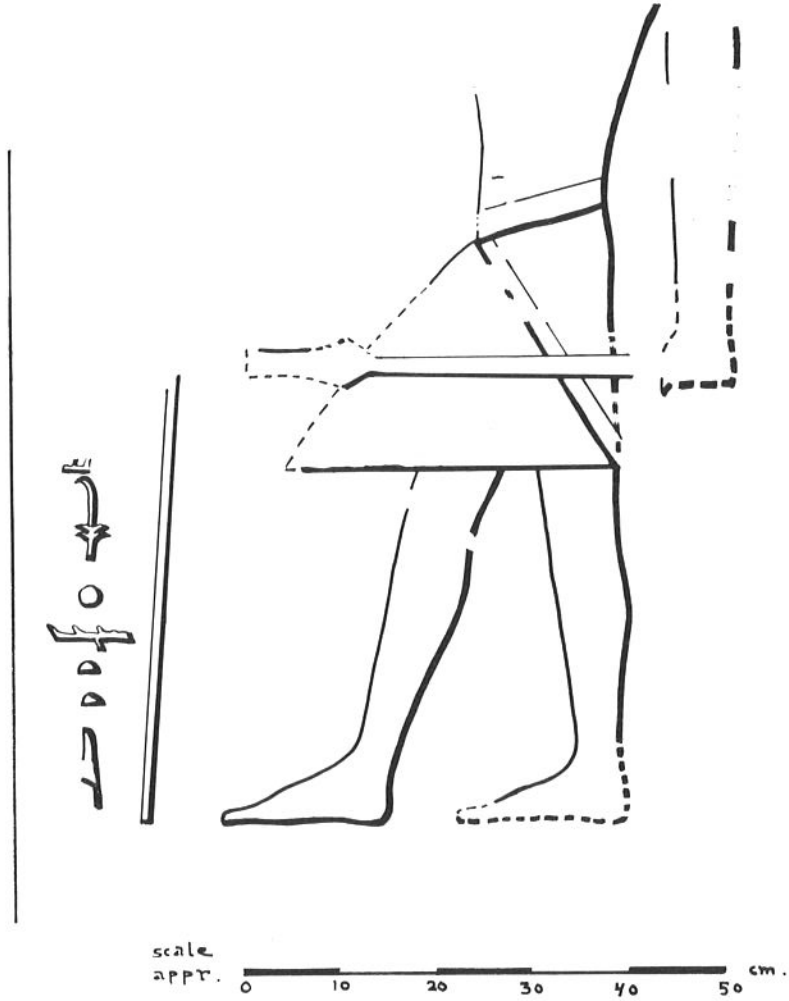


Fig. 4. Line-drawing of the reliefs on the right half of the facade.



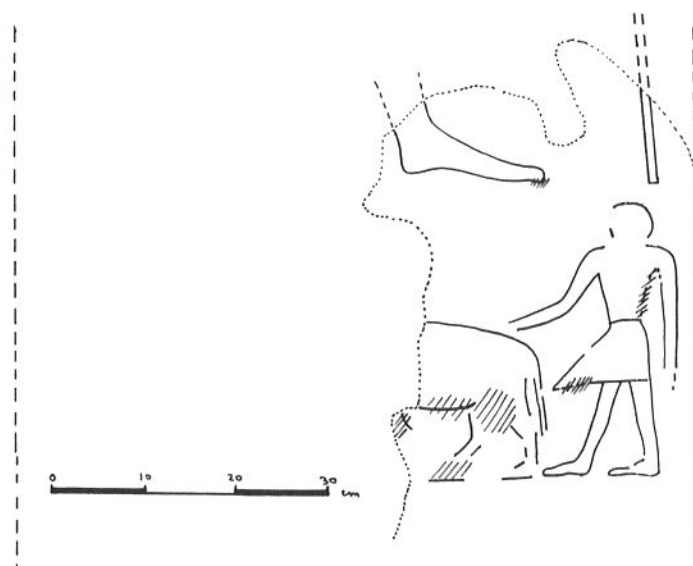


Fig. 5. Representations on the right thickness of the first doorway.

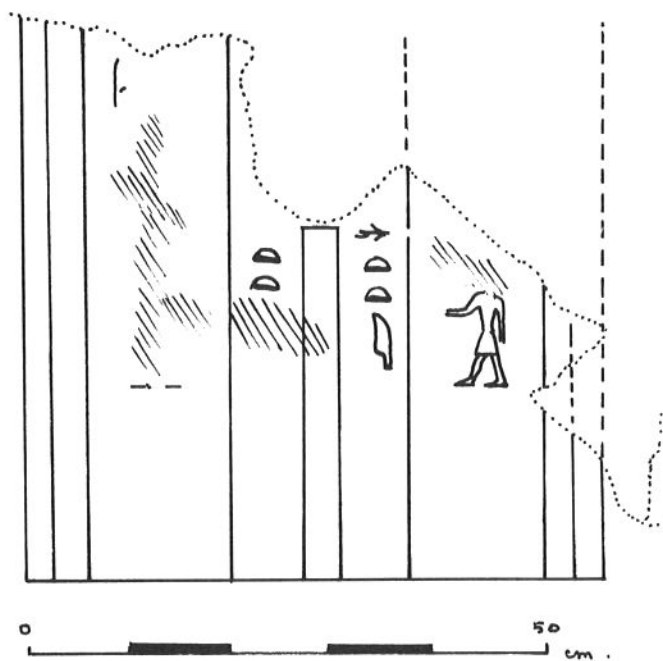


Fig. 6. Line-drawing of stela A.

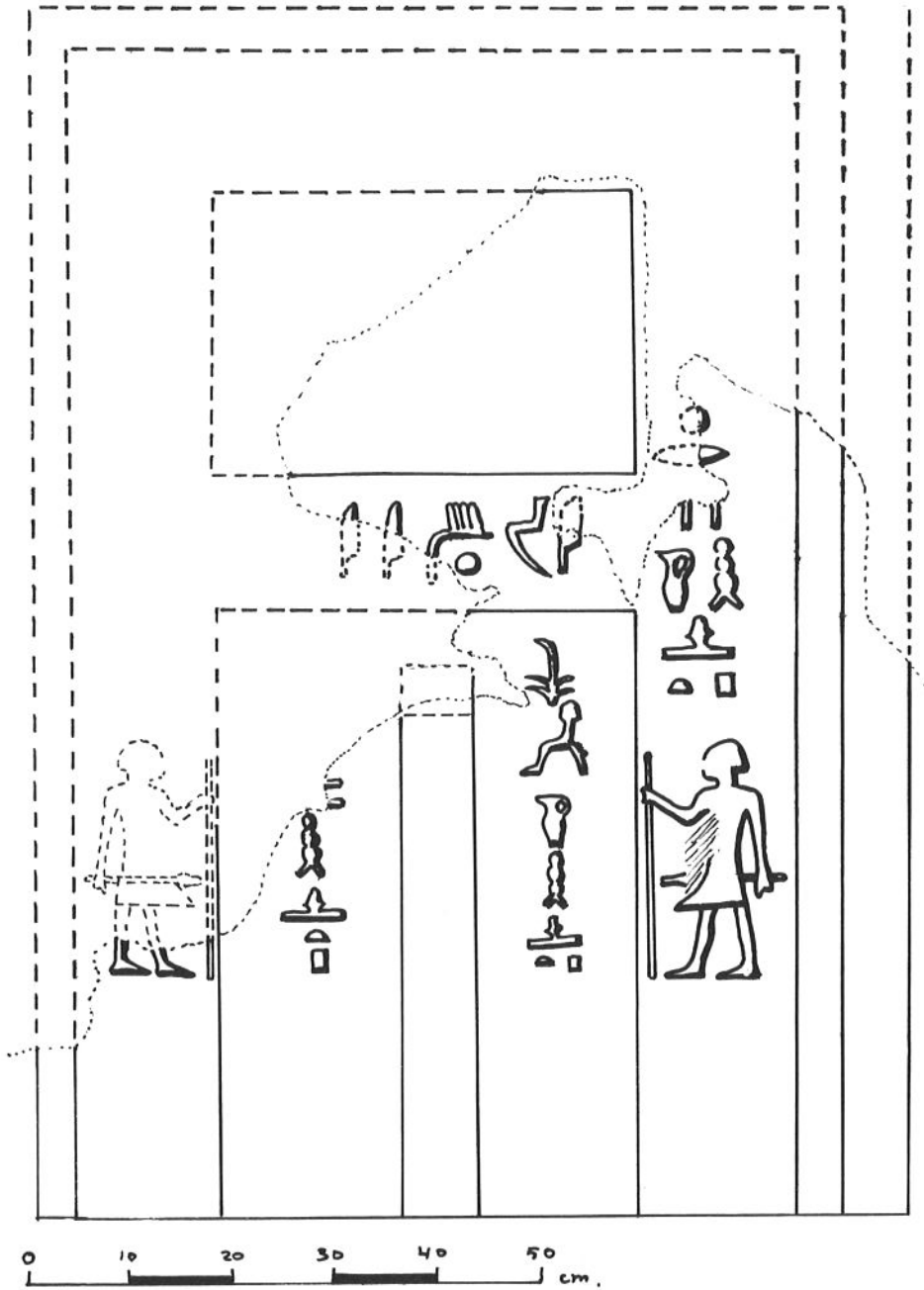


Fig. 7. Line-drawing of stela B.

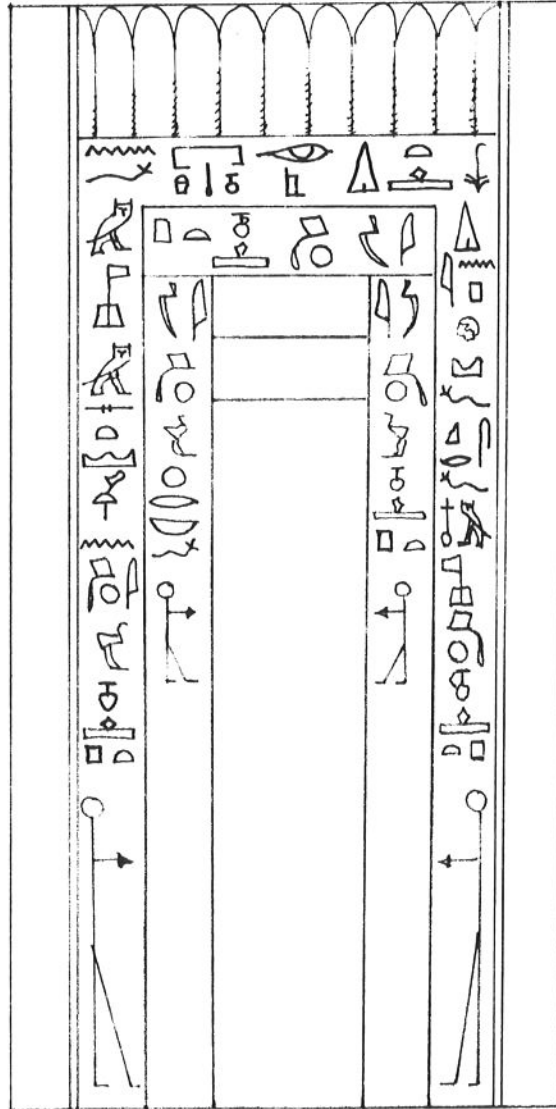


Fig. 8. The stela of Khnum-hotep in the temporary museum of Minya. The proportions of this hand copy are approximate.



Fig. 9. The right side of the facade of tomb No. 12. Reinforcement by the author.



Fig. 10. Remains of the decoration of the right thickness of the first doorway. Reinforcement by the author.

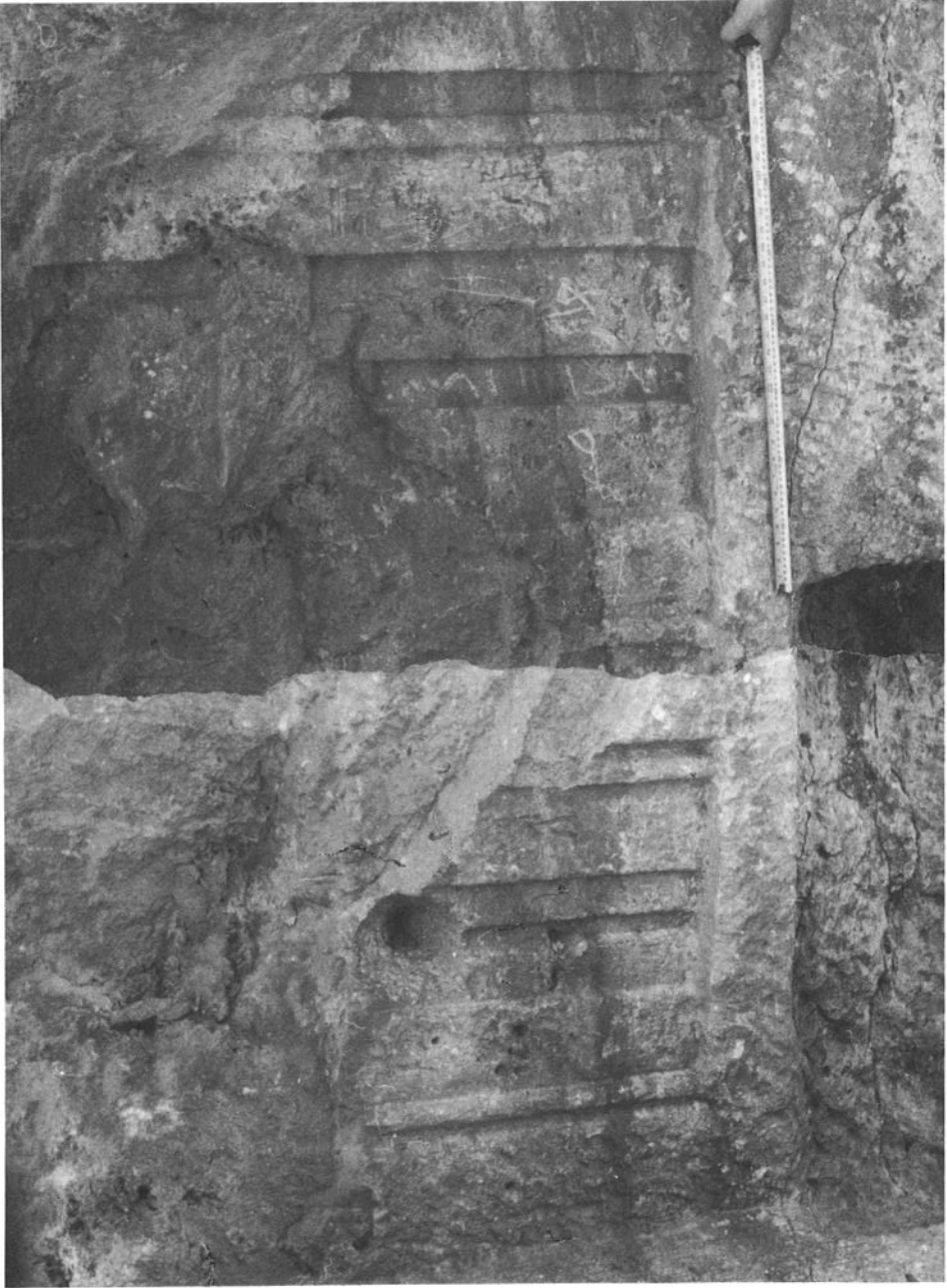


Fig. 11. The stelae A and B in the pillared hall. Note the burial shaft in the foreground.

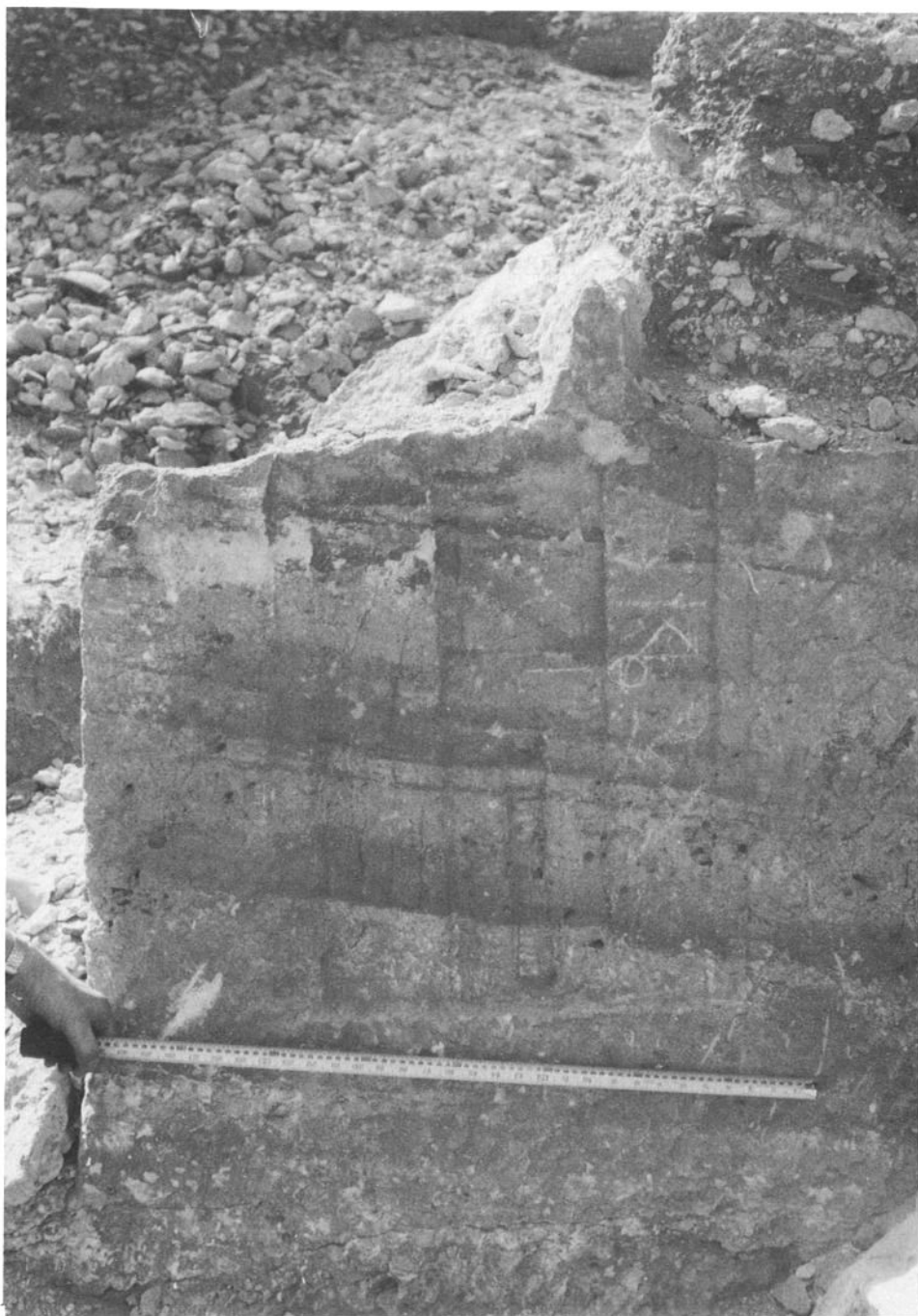


Fig. 12. The unscribed stela C in the pillared hall.

