The Unidentified Temple Scene in TT 55

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Abstract:

Many temples' representations in Theban private tombs are left unidentified due to the lack of inscriptions beside the temples' representations, and sometimes the scene is incomplete or demolished. The lack of identification of these temples causes a lack of the tomb owner's biography that left a Bazzel in his life; the identification of the temples' representations could help in understanding the relationship between the tomb owner and the temple represented in the tomb; moreover, it could indicate a possible job role in his career life. One of these unidentified temples' representations is the one depicted in TT55 of Ramose, which dates to the reign of King Akhenaten and is located in Sheik Abd El-Qurnah's necropolis. Thus, this paper aims to identify this scene through a deeper investigation of the unidentified representation of the temple to know to which temple this representation belongs in this tomb and to try to understand the relationship between the tomb owner and the temple. To achieve this aim, the researchers studied the iconographic representation of the temple, translated all the associated inscriptions, and compared the whole scene context to other parallels that were represented in Tell El-Amarna Necropolis, which date back to the same period that Ramose's tomb dates to. By doing so, this paper proposed a possible identification of the temple representation in TT 55, which helped in understanding the reason behind the representation of the temple in Ramose's tomb and the great role of Ramose at Thebes during the radical reign of King Akhenaton of the 18th Dynasty.

Keywords: Temple representations- Ramose, TT 55- 18th dynasty- Iconographic Sources- Structure Scenes- New Kingdom

Introduction:

The ancient Egyptians paid great attention to their tombs. The walls of each tomb were elaborately decorated. Thus, they have a wealth of ancient Egyptian art from the time they were built. Private tombs thoroughly record ancient Egypt's secular and religious life. Concerning preserving a record of daily life in ancient Egypt, private tombs are more critical than royal tombs (Ghaly and Ibrahim, 2017). The scenes depict the high-ranking leaders' historical, theological, and social backgrounds. Tomb scenes are regarded as one of the most important resources for researchers to examine. '*the artwork, art style, craftsmanship, art workshops, everyday routines, burial rites, rituals, offerings, and religion of each region*' (Ghaly and Ibrahim, 2017).

A wise ancient Egyptian father advised his devoted son, *"Take care of your tomb, for the home of death is also the abode of eternal life".* Generation after generation adapted this wise advice, which indicates the tomb's importance in Ancient Egypt (Gardiner and Weigall, 1913). Death is the only connection between this life and the eternal life beyond death. It is not surprising that the tomb

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was named in Old Egyptian (*pr-nḥḥ*), which means "*home of everlasting*" (Kanawati, 1988). Each tomb owner should have compiled a list of pictorials and scenes he would like immortalised in the netherworld. According to ancient Egyptian beliefs, the process of regaining consciousness after fainting is analogous to the resurrection of the dead. After coming to life, the individual is expected to inquire about everything (Ghaly and Ibrahim, 2017). Thus, they have recorded their lives upon their tombs' walls: careers, daily life, titles, names,...etc., and any significant event in their lives to have them all in the afterlife (Sadek and Lecture, 2010).

They equipped their tombs with anything (scenes, materials) to ensure the deceased's eternal existence (Nash, 1909; Kanawati, 2001). Besides, high officials profited from having locations near royal cemeteries and funeral temples, as kings had a significant role in connecting people with deities throughout the ancient Egyptian culture (Gabolde, 1995). They not only located their tombs near the temples but also represented them in their tombs. Temples are one of the most significant structures in ancient Egypt. Of course, they show the prestige and high status of the tomb owner; they represent their association with these temples by representing them on their tombs' walls (Mohammed, 2020). Their representations of these temples have great importance because most of them are now destroyed for many reasons; reusing, erosion factors, and others, so we cannot be sure about their original structure.

Nevertheless, temple representations in Theban private tombs offer significant iconographic accounts for these temples' original structures (Mohammed, 2020). These representations could help in reconstructing some temples' pylons and layouts. Most of the temple scenes were identified with the accompanying inscriptions of the temple scenes. Nevertheless, a few temple scenes were unidentified for two reasons: the absence of the accompanying texts and the destruction of some parts of the temple scenes (Mohammed, 2020).

The unidentified temple scene is located within the tomb of, *Ra-ms* (Rank, 1935), Ramose, TT 55, which dates to the reign of King Amenhotep IV of the 18th dynasty (PM, 1960). The tomb is located in Sheik Abd El-Qurnah, in the plain, between hills and the Ramesseum; north of TT 57, south of TT 53. Ramose was the town's governor and the king's vizier (Gardiner, 1992). The scene is represented on the west wall, the north side of the hall (fig.1). The tomb of Ramose is left unfinished. Moreover, the tomb is unique in having two styles of art; paintings and reliefs. Furthermore, the tomb represents two phases of art; the art before the Amarna period and the art of the Amarna Art; this is obvious in the themes expressed within the tomb (Davies, 1941). The research is mainly based on identifying unknown temple scenes inside the tomb by investigating the context of the scene and similar ones in different tombs, in addition to analysis of the iconography of the temple representation.

Methodology:

To achieve the paper's aim, we have used the historical and descriptive approach that aims for a complete, detailed investigation of the unidentified temple scene in TT 55; the researchers have studied the iconographic representation of the temple, translated all the associated inscriptions, and

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compared the whole scene context to other parallels that were represented in Tell El-Amarna Necropolis, which date back to the same period that Ramose's tombs date to.

The unidentified temple representation:

Ramose is shown leaning down, receiving a flower from the priest of the deity Aten temple. The inscriptions that communicated between Ramose and the priests are not recorded. The temple is represented by its low entrance pylon. The pylon's portals are opened, and the sun god Aten appears in the sky, beaming his rays down to bless or receive the offerings placed there (fig. 1) (Davies, 1941).

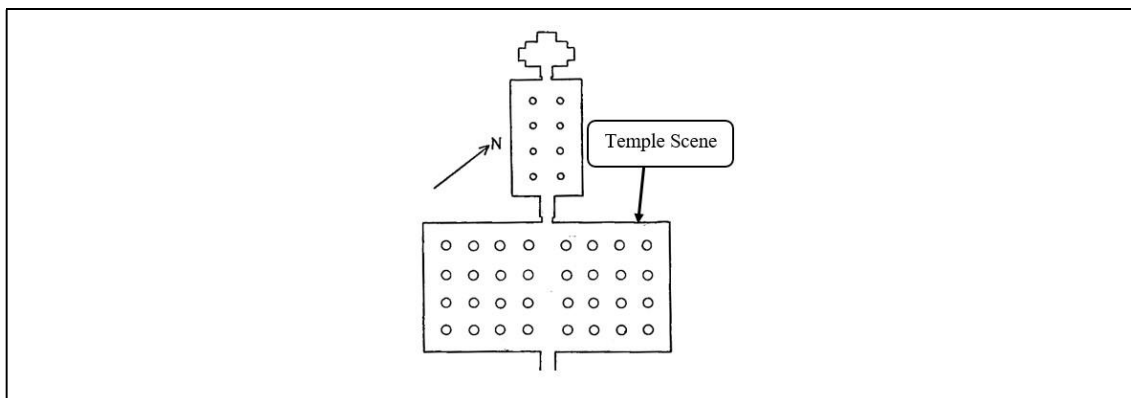Fig. 1: The representation of the temple of Aten in TT 55

After: Davies, N. de Garis. *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose.* Pl., Pl. XXXVIII

Scene Context:

The temple scene is on the west wall of the tomb's northern side of the columned hall. It has two registers; the first register represents the deceased while being rewarded and accompanied by attendants and courtiers. The second register described the deceased while receiving courtiers and foreign delegates (Nubians, Asiatics, and Libyans). He was followed by the temple scene, representing the deceased, while he received bouquets from the temple's priests (PM: 1960) (fig. 2).

Fig. 2: The Layou of the tomb (TT 55) and location of the temple scene.

After: PM., Vol.1, p. 106

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Hypotheses of identification:

The absence of the accompanying inscription of the temple scene due to the poor state of preservation of the tomb makes it challenging to identify which temple of the god Aten is represented here. It might be the temple of God Aten at Karnak complex "*gm pꜣ ỉtn*" because *Davies* has suggested that Ramose may stay in his post as the governor of the town (Thebes) "*ỉmy-r nỉwt*" (Davies: 1941). Davies defended his supposition as Ramose has not been mentioned in Tell Amarna. Moreover, Akhenaten would need Ramose to continue in his post to control Thebes after the immigration to El Amarna (Davies: 1941). Therefore, Ramose may receive this bouquet in the temple of Aten at Karnak Complex "*gm-pꜣ-ỉtn.*"

Nevertheless, the temple's pylon represented in TT 55 looks like that of the grand temple of God Aten in Tell El-Amarna (Fig. 4). The pylon's iconography is like that illustrated in Akhenaten's tomb and his high officials' tombs in Tell El-Amarna. We have investigated similar temples' scenes in Tell El-Amarna tombs, and we have noticed that there is a pattern for the reward scene of the tomb owner, which is widely represented in Tell El-Amarna Tombs; the artist, in most cases, represented the temple and palace on the same wall; one on each side of the wall and in between them. The procession of the tomb owner is depicted; sometimes, the parade starts from the palace where King Akhenaten rewards the high official (the tomb owner), then the procession moves towards the temple of God Aten and meets with foreign delegations; when he reaches the temple, the high official offers offerings to the god Aten as a kind of gratitude. The theme was first represented in TT 55 of Ramose of the early reign of King Akhenaten. Moreover, the accompanying inscriptions beside the temple are the same as those beside the palace (Fig. 3), as illustrated later in this paper.

Fig. 3: The temple and palace scenes context in Tell el-Amarna tombs, and TT 55.

The same wall (in most cases): palace and temple scenes		
Palace Scene	**The Procession**	**God Aten's temple scene**
*The accompanying **inscription** is (almost) **identical** to that accompanying the **Palace** scene*	*The direction of the procession goes from the palace to the temple and vice versa*	*The accompanying **inscription** is (almost) **identical** to that accompanying the **Palace** scene*

The context of the temple scene in TT 55 is similar to the one mentioned earlier: a palace, most probable Malkata palace,[1] as *Davies* suggested (Davies: 1941), King Akhenaten accompanied by his wife Queen Nefertiti, the former rewarded Ramose. After rewarding Ramose, he leaves the palace, is accompanied by courtiers, and attends the temple of God Aten (unidentified temple).

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[1] For more information about Malkata palace. See, Shubert, Steven B. "Thebes, Malkata*" Encyclopedia of The Archaeology Of Ancient Egypt*. Edited by Kathryn A. Bard, and Steven Blake Shubert. Routledge, 2005, pp. 980983.;O'Connor, David. "Malqata." *Lexikon der Agyptologie III,* edited by Wolfgang Helckand, and Wolfhart Westendorf, LÄ, Vol 3, 1980, pp. 1174-1177.

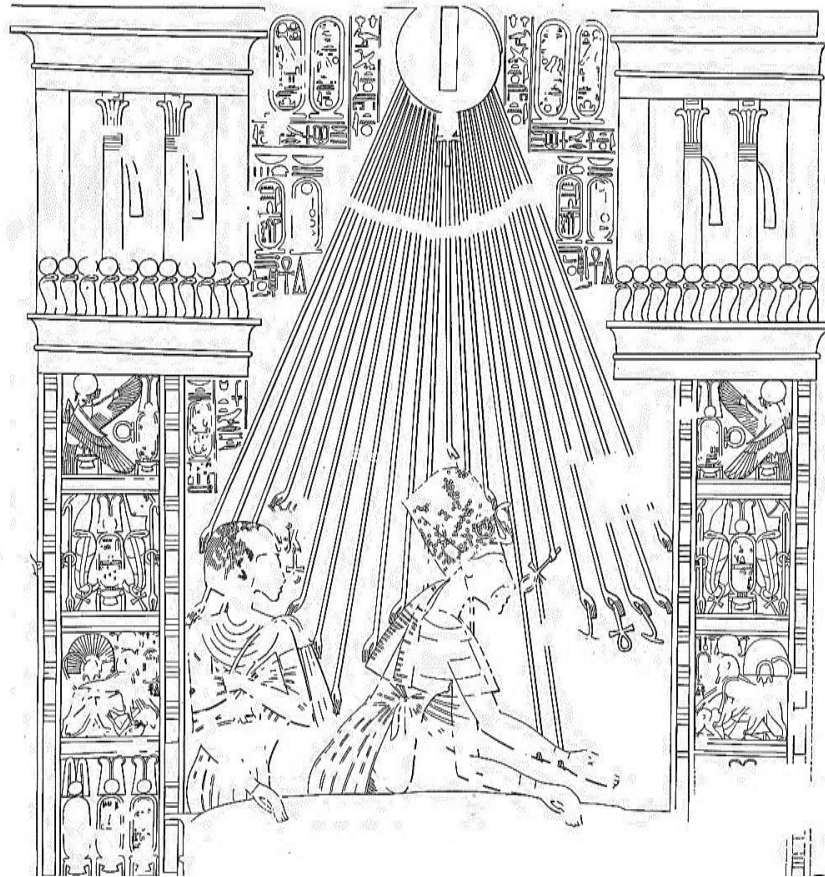By: Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University

Therefore, the context of the temple scene in this tomb is like those in the Tell El-Amarna tombs[1]. The accompanying inscriptions beside the palace scene, which is the counterpart scene to the temple scene in TT 55, can be read as follows: *itn ꜥnḫ wr imy ḥb nb pt ꜥꜣ ḥry ib gm pꜣ itn m pr itn*," " *life for the god Aten, lord of the festival, lord of the great sky, Aton is founded in the temple of Aten*" (Fig.4). Unfortunately, the accompanying inscriptions beside the temple scene are now missing because the wall scenes have partially fallen.

Fig 4: Akhenaten and Nefertiti at the window of the appearance in Malkata palace (TT 55).

After: Davies, N. de Garis. *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose.* Pl. XXXIII.

As mentioned before, we noticed that the accompanying inscriptions to the palace scene are the same as those accompanying the temple scene; for example, in the tomb of Ay in Tell El-Amarna, the accompanying inscriptions to the temple and the palace can be read as follows: *itn ḥd wr imy ḥb nb šnw nb pt nb tꜣ m pr itn m ꜣḫt itn*' "*Aten, the great white, lord of the festival, lord of the circuit. Aten, lord of Aten, lord of the sky, lord of the land, in the temple of Aten, in Akhenaton*

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[1] The context of reward scene and visiting the temple scene were counterpart scenes during reign of King Akenaton. See, Davies, N. de Garis. *The Tombs of Panehesy and Merira II*. London, 1905, p. 37, PL. 35, 36; Davies, N. de Garis. *The rocket tombs of Tell El Tell El-Amarna*. Vol, 6. (London: EES, 1908). Pl.29.
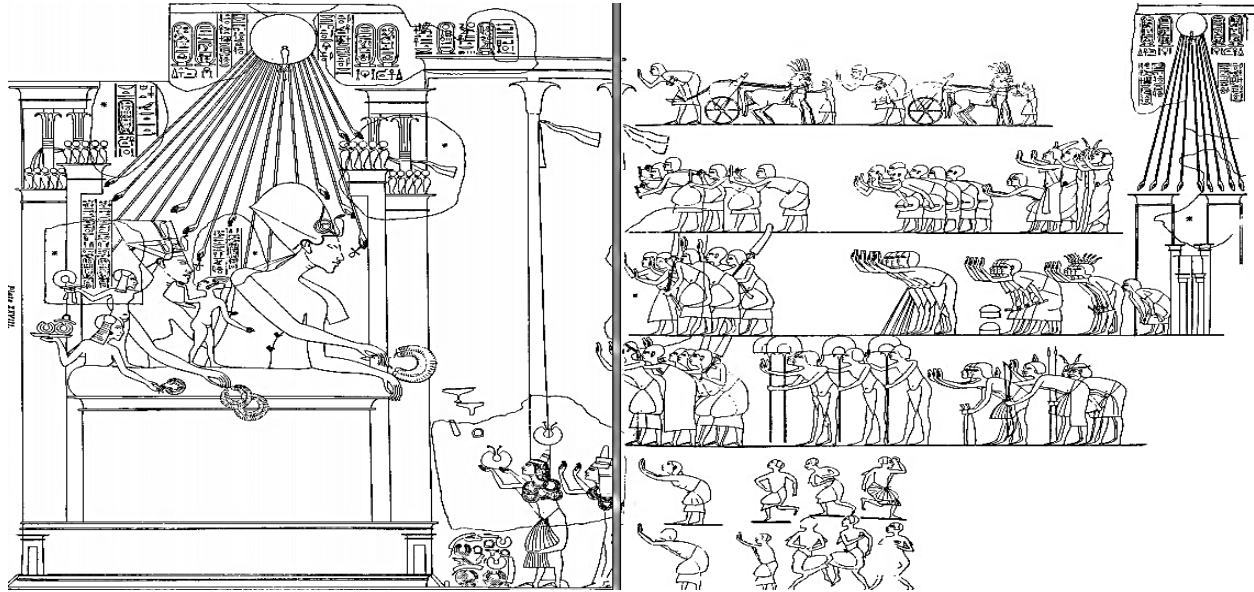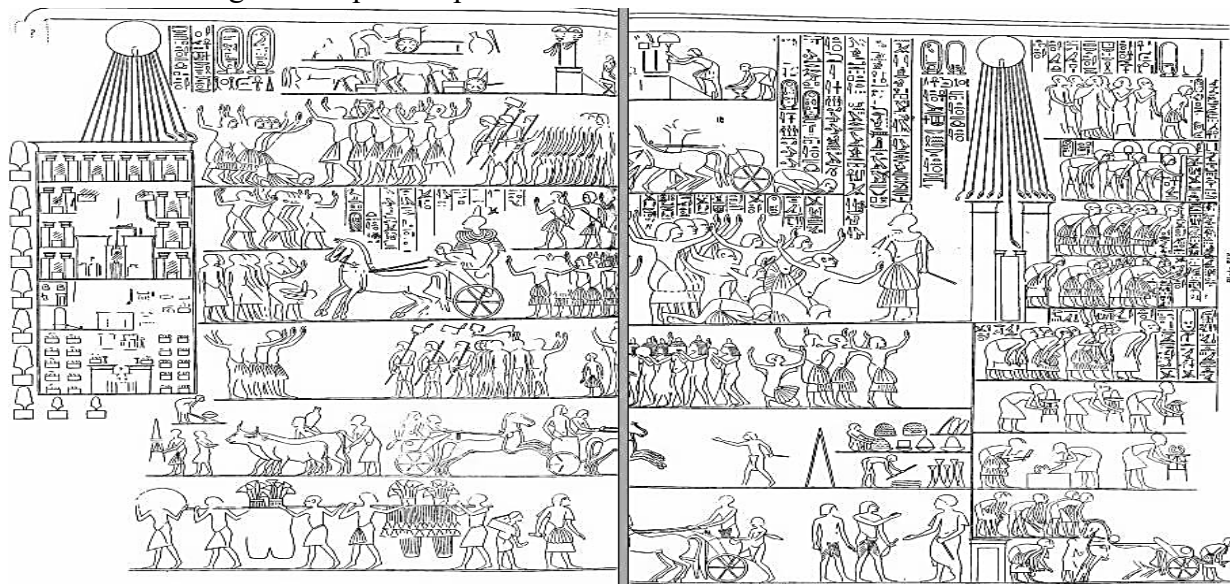
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(Tell El-Amarna)" (fig. 4). The same pattern is repeated in the tomb of Tutu at Tell El-Amarna; the accompanying inscriptions are the same for the temple scene and its counterpart palace scenes; the text can be read as follows: *"ỉtn ꜥnḥ wr nb ỉmy wr nbt šnwt, ỉtn nb pt nb tꜣ m pr ỉtn m ꜣḫt ỉtn"* *Life for the god Aten, the lord of the festival, lord of the circuit, lord of the sky, lord of the land in the temple of Aton in Akhetaten (Tell El-Amarna) (Fig. 5)"*

Fig. 4: Temple and palace in the tomb of Ay in Tell El-Amarna.

After: Davies, N. de Garis. *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose.* Pl. XXXIII.

Fig. 5: Temple and palace scene in Tutu's tomb in Tell El-Amarna.

After: Davies, N. de Garis. *The rocket tombs of Tell El Amarna.* Vol, VI.1908. Pl. XX

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The scenes and their context are again represented in Meryre II's tomb at Tell El-Amarna (Davies: 1905). Davies suggested that the palace depicted in Ramose's tomb is Malkata palace (Davies: 1941). Moreover, he indicated that Ramose might stay in his post as the governor of the town (Thebes) "*ỉmy-r nỉwt*" (Davies: 1941). Therefore, the scene event must have happened before Akhenaton's movement to Tell El-Amarna. Furthermore, the name of King Akhenaten in the palace scene in TT 55 was written as "*ỉmn-ḥtp nṯr ḥkꜣ wꜣst*" which is his birth name before moving to Tell El-Amarna.

Thus, based on the pattern identified in representing the palace scene and its counterpart scene, the temple scene (fig1, fig.3, fig.4, fig.5), in addition to Davies' suppositions, we have come to conclude that the accompanying inscriptions of the palace in the tomb of Ramose (fig.4), must be the same accompanying inscriptions to the temple scene (fig. 1). Therefore, all the hypotheses mentioned above strongly suggest that the unidentified temple scene in Ramose tomb is the Gem-Pa-Aten -"*gm-pꜣ-ỉtn*"- temple of god Aten at Karnak complex. So, the temple scene can be read as follows; Ramose is represented while being rewarded at Malkata palace by King Akhenaten, and then, Ramose is giving offerings and showing gratitude to the god Aten in his temple Gem-Pa-Aten - "*gm-pꜣ-ỉtn*"- at Karnak complex. If this is true, then it confirms the assumptions of Davies of the palace as Malkata palace and his proposition of Ramose as continuing his post at Luxor after the abandoning of Akhenaton to Tell al-Amarna, which highlights the tremendous role Ramose played during his life, and Akhenaton's role.

Conclusion:

Temple representations are one of the widely represented scenes during the New Kingdom; their representations in the tombs indicate the tomb owner's high rank and highlight an important event in his life. Furthermore, temple scenes are of great importance as they could be used in reimagining how temples were in ancient Egypt and give us a chance to reconstruct structures and pylons of demolished temples represented in the tombs. Moreover, temple representations can help identify one's significant roles during his life. Some temples' representations are left unidentified. The absence of the accompanying inscriptions beside the temple scene makes it hard to identify the temple scene, just like the temple scene in TT 55. This paper has studied this scene in TT 55 by investigating the context of the scene, the titles, and the history of Ramose, comparing the temples' scene and its context to similar scenes and their context in Tell El-Amarna's tombs; moreover, considering Davies' suggestions for the palace represented inside the tomb as Malkata palace, and his supposition of the continuation of Ramose in his occupation as governor of the tomb, and the supposition of the researchers that the accompanying inscriptions to the temple scenes are the same for the palace, it can be concluded that the unidentified temple scene in TT 55 most probably is a representation for the temple of god Aten (*gm-pꜣ-ỉtn*) that located North of Karnak complex, which confirms Davies supposition of Ramose continuation in his post in Luxor, and shows the significant role he played at that radical time of Egypt's history, and confirms Davies supposition of the represented palace as Malkata palace.

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