

Chapter Three

The Royal Tombs of San

The Discovery

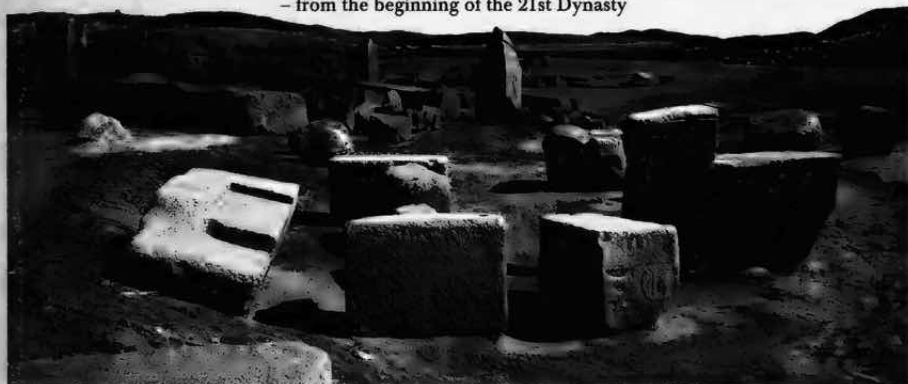
San el-Hagar – ‘San of the Stones’ – is the most desolate place I have ever visited. The eastern delta road forks off the main highway to Ismailiya at the provincial capital of FAKUS and heads northwards towards the Mediterranean coast. After about half-an-hour’s drive the rich green of the delta cultivation begins to fade imperceptibly into grey-brown salt flats and, almost without realising it, you find yourself approaching an immense range of hills on the horizon. These hills are no natural feature. Stretching as far as the eye can see to the east of the crumbling tarmac road are the remains of the once mighty city of San – the biblical ZOAN, called ‘Tanis’ by the Greek writer-travellers who visited Egypt in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods.

This extraordinary place has always fascinated me. I have spent many a dusty hour wandering over its inhospitable terrain – something akin to a martian landscape – trying to imagine what lies deep beneath my feet. Research has shown that Tanis had endured for nigh on a thousand years – from the beginning of the 21st Dynasty

FAKUS: Phacusa (Grk.), Pa-Kesan (Egy.) = ‘The Goshen’ of Genesis.

ZOAN: Tsoan (Heb.), Djanet (Egy.), Tjanni (Coptic).

98. The ruins of the great Temple of Amun at San el-Hagar/Tanis.



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AUGUSTUS CAESAR: 30 BC-AD 14.

MONTET: (1885-1966).

BYBLOS: the Greek name for the port of Gubla (Akk.), Kopen (Egy.), Gebail (Arab.).

OLD KINGDOM: Dynasties 3 to 6, c. 2650-2152 BC.

MIDDLE KINGDOM: Dynasties 11 (from Montuhotep II) & 12, 2007-1759 BC.

(1069 BC) down to the reign of AUGUSTUS CAESAR when the city was finally relinquished to the depredations of time. Since then, through virtually the whole of the last two millennia, the open plain surrounding the sprawling mound has been populated only by roaming herds of wild boar and the occasional transient Bedouin encampment. Life in this part of Egypt has been very hard for the fellaheen of the little village of San, which has existed, just to the north-west of the mound, only since the middle of the last century.

San seems to represent a wholly other world. The visitor senses an age which has long since faded away in other parts of Egypt: the era of Napoleon and his great expedition of soldiers, scholars and artists; of early Nile exploration (Amelia Edwards); or of Flinders Petrie and his lonely excavation of Tanis during the winter of 1884. Even though archaeological work at the site has been underway (in fits and starts) for the best part of a century-and-a-half since Mariette first pitched his tent here in 1858, the place remains to this day an atmospheric reminder of the romantic days of Egyptology with its petrified forest of broken obelisks and colossal statues of Ramesses the Great lying scattered from horizon to horizon in chaotic splendour. There is little sign here of the manicuring of tourist sites now so typical in the Nile valley proper.

It was to 'San of the Stones' that yet another French archaeologist, Pierre MONTET, came in the late 1920s. He had previously been excavating the site of BYBLOS on the coast of modern Lebanon (ancient Phoenicia) just to the north of Beirut. There, between 1921 and 1924, his team of archaeologists had unearthed considerable evidence to suggest close political and cultural ties between Egypt and the rulers of Byblos during the late OLD KINGDOM (OK) and MIDDLE KINGDOM (MK).

99. Area of the First Pylon of the Amun temple at Tanis with the royal necropolis in the foreground. The standing obelisk (1) marks where the pylon once stood. To the left is the tomb of Shoshenq III (2), whilst the tomb complexes of Psusennes I (3) and Osorkon II (4) are in the centre foreground.





Montet (then Professor at Strasbourg University) had become very interested in exploring the huge site of San el-Hagar/Tanis in the eastern Nile delta because he believed that it might provide him with further archaeological evidence for links between the Levant and Egypt which could corroborate and expand upon his findings in MIDDLE BRONZE AGE Byblos.¹ What his excavations actually turned up was an Egyptological sensation from an entirely different era.

Montet, accompanied by his wife and a small team of four colleagues, began work at Tanis in the winter of 1929. Over the next ten years the French archaeologists, armed with scores of workers from the village of San, were principally preoccupied with the uncovering of the main temple at Tanis dedicated to the god AMUN. It was not until early 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, that their astonishing discovery began to take shape in the south-west corner of the great enclosure which formed the sacred precinct of Amun. There, on the 25th of February, the workmen uncovered a 'pavement' of large limestone blocks which, when tapped with Reis Mohamed's cane, produced a hollow sound indicating a cavity below. Two days of clearing later, Montet entered the tomb of King OSORKON II (Tomb I):

At exactly 2 o'clock, I had the earth and stones blocking the entrance removed, and went down into a square chamber with walls covered with figures and hieroglyphics; this led into another chamber with a large sarcophagus emerging from the earth which filled three quarters of two rooms. The

100. The main area of the royal necropolis (excluding the tomb of Shoshenq III which is off to the left) at Tanis looking east. (1) Tomb I of Osorkon II; (2) Tomb II of Pimay; (3) Tomb III of Psusennes I; (4) Tomb IV of Amenemopet; (5) Tomb VI, occupant unknown; (6) SW corner of the First Court of the Amun temple; (7) Central section of the temple.

MIDDLE BRONZE AGE: From the second half of the 11th Dynasty to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, c.2000-1550 BC.

AMUN: 'The Hidden One'. State God of the New Kingdom whose principal centre of worship was at Thebes.

OSORKON II: 22nd Dynasty, reigned 874-850 BC.

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101. The main burial chamber of Tomb I with the giant granite sarcophagus of Osorkon II taking up most of the room.

TAKELOT II: 22nd Dynasty, reigned 850-825 BC.

TAKELOT I: 22nd Dynasty, reigned 889-874 BC.

102. Lid of the granite sarcophagus of Harnakht which had been specially adapted to fit into the confined space at the western end of his father's burial chamber. The original feet of the lid have been cut off, reducing the length of the sarcophagus.



cartouche is that of Osorkon ... Everyone is overjoyed. I had Hassanein's team come with all the carts so that we could clear this remarkable structure as quickly as possible – its discovery rewards all our year's efforts.²

The complex of underground rooms entered by Montet on the 27th of February 1939 contained the remains of a number of royal interments. In the main granite-lined burial chamber (burial 3 – see p. 99) was the huge sarcophagus of Osorkon II containing the skeletal remains of a man and a woman – presumed to be the pharaoh and his queen. Their burial had been plundered at some unknown time in the past. Embedded in the rear wall of the king's chamber was the smaller mummiform quartzite sarcophagus of Osorkon's ten-year-old son – the High Priest of Amun, Harnakht, whose burial was virtually intact, the robbers failing to remove the lid of the coffin because it had been jammed in place within the recess during the original burial of the boy priest.

In the antechamber of the tomb (burial 12) was another large granite sarcophagus. This was empty, having been pillaged of its contents in antiquity.

There were two other side rooms in the complex, one of which contained the burial of a King Hedjkheperre Takelot (burial 1). During the half-century which followed Montet's discoveries at Tanis this pharaoh has always been identified as **TAKELOT II**, son and successor of Osorkon II; however, it has now been cogently argued that the burial in fact represents the mortal remains of Osorkon's father, **TAKELOT I**.³ The remaining side chamber (Chamber C – the first to be entered by Montet) was empty but its walls were covered in finely cut scenes of King Osorkon II performing the rituals associated with the Book of the Dead.

All over the rest of the walls of the tomb complex were similar reliefs depicting King Osorkon II in the afterlife. The tomb was clearly primarily the 'House of Eternity' of the 22nd Dynasty pharaoh Usermaatre Osorkon (II) and the secondary burials were either of his direct family or represented

a subsequent incursion into the vault to bury a later ruler from the same Dynasty (the empty sarcophagus of burial 12).

Further clearing of the sand and debris in the vicinity of Osorkon's tomb revealed a second major underground vault – this one with no signs of intrusion by tomb robbers. On the 17th of March Montet descended into the tomb of King Akheperre PsUSENNES (I) (Tomb III), via the entrance shaft, to herald 'a day of marvels worthy of *The Thousand and One Nights*'. Traversing a short low passage he was greeted by the extraordinary sight of a silver hawk-headed coffin lying on a stone pedestal occupying the right side of a small chamber. All around, scattered haphazardly, were hundreds of ushabti figurines decorated in blue FAIENCE. In another corner of the room were three sets of CANOPIC VESSELS and a large terracotta jar leaning against the wall. A closer inspection of the pedestal revealed two other shattered wooden coffins containing the crumbling bones of their royal occupants. The silver coffin lying between these two anonymous corpses contained the mummy of King Hekakheperre SHOSHENK (II) – a

PSUSENNES I: Psabakhanu (Egy.), reigned 1039-991 BC.

FAIENCE: A general term for glazed earthenware.

CANOPIC VESSELS: Four large jars containing the viscera of the mummy.

SHOSHENK II: 22nd Dynasty, reigned 890-889 BC.



103. Part of the north interior wall of Chamber C (see p. 99) in Tomb I which carries a scene of Osorkon II making an offering to Osiris, god of the dead. The cartouches of the king can be seen in front of his head. The blocks upon which this relief is carved form part of the exterior north wall of Tomb I which has been cut back in order to accommodate the southern extension to Tomb III. All the relief decoration in Tomb I belongs to Osorkon II and there is no evidence of earlier carving which would suggest construction by a ruler of the 21st Dynasty.

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104. Pierre Montet about to open the silver hawk-headed coffin of Shoshenk II, discovered in the antechamber of Tomb III at Tanis.

106. Opposite page: The magnificent likeness of King Psusennes I from his silver innermost coffin. Cairo Museum.



LIBYAN PERIOD: Normally considered to be Dynasties 22 to 24.

SIAMUN: 21st Dynasty, reigned 978-959 BC.

HAR-PSUSENNES II: 21st Dynasty, reigned 959-945 BC.

MERENPTAH: 19th Dynasty, reigned 1213-1203 BC.

AMENEMOPET: 21st Dynasty, reigned 993-984 BC.

SHOSHENK III: 22nd Dynasty, reigned 825-773 BC.

previously unknown pharaoh of the LIBYAN PERIOD. The coffin of the newly discovered Shoshenk was opened in the presence of King Farouk on the 21st of March 1939. The other two sets of royal remains were not identified until recently when a detailed analysis of the ushabti figurine inscriptions found in the chamber produced the names of King Netjerkheperre SIAMUN and King Tjetkheperre HAR-PSUSENNES II.

In the left wall of the small chamber was an opening through which Montet scrambled to find an empty, unused sarcophagus intended for a son of Akheperre Psusennes – Prince Ankhefenmut. No-one knows to this day why he was unable to occupy the place of burial prepared for him by his father (burial 6).

War was declared in Europe on the 1st of September 1939, but Montet continued to work in the recently discovered tomb in search of the hidden burial chamber of Psusennes I – the original tomb owner whose inscriptions adorned the walls of the small antechamber containing the three burials so far discovered. On the 16th of February 1940 part of the western wall of the antechamber was dismantled, revealing a pair of large granite plugs blocking the entrances to two burial chambers. The right plug was the first to be removed, surrendering to Montet the intact burial of King Psusennes (burial 5) replete with alabaster canopic jars, a full set of four hundred ushabtis, gold and silver vessels of all shapes and sizes and a magnificent pink granite sarcophagus which the 21st Dynasty ruler had usurped from the tomb of MERENPTAH in the Valley of the Kings. Inside this exquisite monument lay the mortal remains of the pharaoh, encased in a smaller black granite anthropoid coffin which itself protected a solid silver coffin. The mummy wore a magnificent solid gold funerary mask bearing a gently smiling countenance – an image of supreme confidence which belied the troubled times of his reign.

Following the clearance of the burial chamber of Psusennes, the second sealed passage was deprived of its granite plug (on the 16th of April) to reveal the intact burial of another 21st Dynasty pharaoh – the little known King AMENEMOPET (burial 4). His burial was poorer than that of Psusennes I but, even so, Montet's team recovered canopic vessels; gold and silver



105. The golden funerary mask of King Shoshenk II. Cairo Museum.

libation vases; an alabaster jar taken from the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of the Kings; a less elaborate sarcophagus usurped from a 19th Dynasty noble; and, within it, the badly decomposed mummy of the king wearing a crude gold funerary mask in his likeness. Montet was able to determine that the chamber and sarcophagus were originally intended for Queen Mutnodjmet, the wife of Psusennes I, but for some unknown reason it was King Amenemopet who had been interred in the queen's burial vault.

Four other tombs were found in the Tanite royal necropolis in the same season: Tombs II and VI were uninscribed and empty but for a few fragments; Tomb IV was a small sepulchre containing a sarcophagus inscribed with the cartouches of King Amenemopet (this tomb probably represented his original place, or intended place, of burial); Tomb V was the two-chambered tomb of King SHOSHENK III.

All the treasures from the five burials found in the tomb complex of Psusennes were transported to the Cairo Museum by the beginning of May 1940 and have been on display near to the Tutankhamun collection ever since (apart from the brief interlude when some objects went on a tour of Europe in 1987 and 1988, exhibited in Paris and Edinburgh).

Montet returned to France on the 10th of May 1940 to wait out the rest of the war – the hostilities in North Africa preventing any further work at San. He was back in 1945 in order to witness the giving up of the final major secret of the royal necropolis at Tanis.

It was during this post-war return of the French expedition that a full survey of the tombs was finally undertaken by Alexandre Lézine. The new architect for the archaeological team soon determined that the known interior of the tomb complex of Psusennes did not appear to correspond with the exterior dimensions of the whole structure. The south-east corner had enough space for another room but no doorway was visible from inside the antechamber. Further excavations, involving the removal of one of the giant limestone roofing slabs, revealed a hidden chamber which contained the intact burial of General Wendjebaendjed, Commander of the Egyptian Army – a close companion of King Psusennes who had been honoured with a burial close to the body of his lord and master. This supplementary interment provided another wealth of exquisite treasures.⁴



108. Opposite page: Plan of the burial complexes of Tombs I, II and III (after Montet and Lézine) showing the locations of the burials.

SMENDES: Nesbanebdjed (Egy.), 21st Dynasty, reigned 1069-1043 BC.

KAPES: Wife of Takelot I.

107. Inscription (in box) at the entrance to Tomb I stating that the burial complex of Osorkon II was made by Kapes (Osorkon's mother) for the king.



The Puzzle

When Alexandre Lézine undertook his survey of the royal burial ground at Tanis, just after the Second World War, he began to uncover some rather perplexing features relating to the architectural structures he was investigating. These features seemed to suggest to him that the tomb complex of Psusennes I was built after that of Osorkon II. Now this is entirely contrary to the chronology currently in use, according to which Akheperre Psusennes I died in 991 BC whilst the reign of Usermaatre Osorkon II came to an end one hundred and forty-one years later in 850 BC. The archaeology at Tanis and the chronology devised by the historians appeared to contradict each other.

The chronology of the royal tomb structures at Tanis is a fairly complex subject but absolutely essential to tackle here if we are to succeed in making our first step towards rediscovering the real history behind the Old Testament narratives.

The Cutaway

The first and most obvious curiosity which came to the attention of Montet and Lézine was the point of contact between the tombs of Osorkon (Tomb I) and Psusennes (Tomb III). The area we are dealing with here lies between the letters A and B on the plan. You will note that the south wall of Tomb III, where the two secondary burial chambers of Wendjebaendjed and Ankhefenmut (burials 7 and 6) are located, appears to cut into the north exterior wall of both the antechamber and Chamber C belonging to the Osorkon burial complex. If you set aside the requirements of the conventional chronology this looks fairly straightforward: if part of the structure of Tomb I was removed in order to accommodate a change of plan in respect of Tomb III then clearly Tomb III (of Psusennes) must have been constructed after Tomb I (of Osorkon). But, as we have noted, Psusennes built his tomb over a century before Osorkon was on the throne of Egypt – according to the conventional chronology.

Montet and Lézine had to find a solution to this enigma. Their best effort was to argue that Tomb I was indeed standing when Psusennes built Tomb III, but that Osorkon was not the original builder of Tomb I. Osorkon would then have usurped Tomb I from its original 21st Dynasty owner – perhaps SMENDES, the predecessor of Psusennes I. The problem is that evidence for this earlier builder of Tomb I is somewhat elusive. Indeed, Lézine himself was forced to admit that their 'solution' was inconsistent with the evidence of his own eyes:

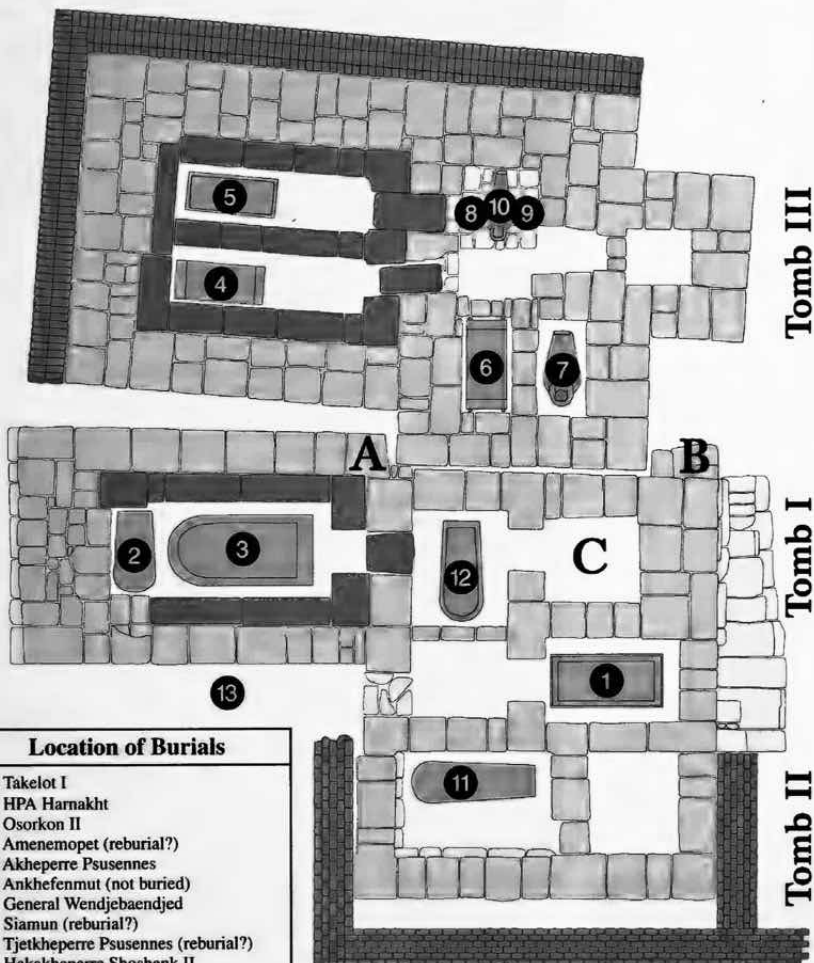
The interior decoration [of Tomb I] is of the period of Osorkon II. This king nowhere scratched out the cartouches of a predecessor in order to substitute his own. One could therefore conclude that Osorkon built this tomb.⁵

What is more, one inscription,⁶ found in the antechamber, states that Tomb I was built on the instructions of Queen KAPES as a gift to her son, King

The Tanite Tombs



0 5
Metres



Location of Burials

1. Takelot I
2. HPA Harnakht
3. Osorkon II
4. Amenemopet (reburial?)
5. Akheperre Psusennes
6. Ankhefenmut (not buried)
7. General Wendjebaendjed
8. Siamun (reburial?)
9. Tjetkheperre Psusennes (reburial?)
10. Hekakheperre Shoshenk II
11. Anonymous but reused by Pimay
12. A King Usermaatre Shoshenk
13. Anonymous royal burial

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109. View of the Tomb I cutaway looking west with the superstructure of Tomb III (right) slightly darkened for clarification.



Osorkon.⁷ Montet and Lézine's 'original tomb' theory thus starts to look shaky even before we consider any additional arguments.

Because the archaeologists had found no textual evidence in the tomb for an earlier king, Montet and Lézine, insisting that Osorkon II *had* to be later than Psusennes I, were forced to argue⁸ that the original version of Tomb I was dismantled to its foundations by Osorkon and then rebuilt on exactly those same foundations so that the interior walls could be decorated with fresh scenes depicting the 22nd Dynasty pharaoh. The questions which immediately come to mind are:

- (a) Why go to all that effort? Osorkon could have simply removed the cartouches of the original owner of the tomb by cutting back the reliefs and having his own cartouches carved over the top. This technique of recutting PALIMPSEST inscriptions was regularly employed throughout the history of Egypt whenever one pharaoh wished to usurp the monuments of his predecessors.
- (b) Another obvious point is why would Osorkon have built his tomb at exactly the same spot when he could have constructed it in open ground nearby – thus avoiding the difficulties created by the existing tomb of Psusennes? It is also much easier to dismantle a building at one location and use the materials from that structure to erect a new monument on a virgin site nearby. To erect a structure at exactly the same location as the original requires the moving of the stone blocks to a storage area until the whole of the first structure is removed. Then the workers have to transport the blocks back again to begin building the new monument – a doubling of the effort.
- (c) In addition, if Montet and Lézine's theory is accepted, one would assume that Osorkon reused the original stone blocks of the earlier tomb, simply turning the inscribed surfaces to the outside in order to give himself nice clean interior walls for his own reliefs (again a technique often employed in the building of Egyptian monuments), but, in the case of Tomb I, there is absolutely no sign of any original 21st Dynasty inscriptions on the exterior surfaces of the stones.

PALIMPSEST: Palimpsestos (Grk.) meaning 'rubbed smooth again'.

110. Detail of the north-east corner of Tomb I showing the cutting back of the tomb wall, leaving its blocks wrapped around the southern wall of Tomb III. The south-east corner block of Tomb III (1) seems to have been specially cut around a block of Tomb I (2) in order to neatly interlock the two structures (outlined).



- (d) You can also see that at point B on the plan the east wall of Tomb I juts out northwards beyond the rest of the wall surface between A and B. Why would Osorkon rebuild the east wall of his tomb like this? It serves no obvious architectural or constructional purpose. The only logical interpretation of this jutting-out wall is that the north façade of Tomb I had to be cut away (not rebuilt) so as to accommodate the extension to Tomb III. This strange feature is thus explained: the north-east corner of Tomb I was left as it was simply because its removal was not required. Besides, by leaving the end of the east wall in place, the workmen cutting back the north wall of Tomb I were being very practical – the section intentionally left standing could act as a retainer wall to prevent the collapse of sand into the trench.



111. Close-up of the cutaway looking east. Tomb I (Osorkon) is on the right and Tomb III (Psusennes) is on the left (darkened). The lines indicate the area which the roof of Tomb III may have occupied prior to the French operation to gain access to the chamber of Wendjebaendjed in 1945. This space may either have been filled by a stone roof slab or simply built up with mudbricks to create a continuous surface between the two tombs.

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112. Close-up of the cutaway looking west with the original line of the north wall of Tomb I indicated by the shading and lines.

Adzes: Hoe-like implements used for breaking up soil or planing back wood. Adzes come in all different sizes and are still in use today in the Middle East. The adze was also represented in the hieroglyphic sign *setep* which had the meaning 'choice' or 'chosen'.



113. The light of a torch picks out a demonic figure from the underworld carved in the antechamber of Tomb III (Psusennes I).

114. The two entrances to the burial chambers of Tomb III with Psusennes on the right and Amenemopet on the left. The entrance to the latter had been modified after a change in the tomb plan was made during building.



All the above points indicate that the cutting back of the north wall of Tomb I took place after Osorkon was buried in his tomb complex. Tomb I was never usurped by Osorkon from an earlier 21st Dynasty ruler and he did not rebuild the tomb one hundred and forty-one years after the construction of Tomb III. It was Osorkon II's wall all along which the workmen of Psusennes I attacked with their chisels and ADZES.

The published report on the construction of Tomb I by Lézine fails to provide a satisfactory solution to the cutaway problem and gives the impression that Montet's architect was never really convinced by his own 'usurped-tomb' theory. The passage of time and a fresh archaeological reinvestigation of the Tanite burial ground by Philippe Brissaud (the current Director of the French mission at Tanis) has done little so far to assuage that original doubt.⁹

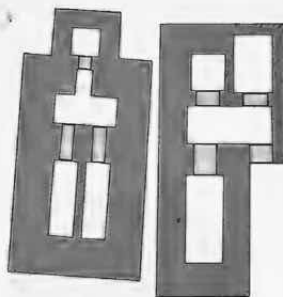
A Change of Plan

Having reviewed the cutaway itself from the outside it is now time to visit the interior of Tomb III. First you will have to negotiate the rickety old ladder which takes us down to the bottom of the entrance shaft – watch your head as you shuffle through the short passage which leads to the antechamber of Psusennes' tomb – now, you can stand erect again. If you pan your torch across the wall immediately in front you will see the two open passages leading to the burial chambers of Amenemopet (left) and Psusennes (right). Further to your right is the recess where the silver coffin of Hekakheperre Shoshenq lay (with his two disintegrated companions), and, to the left side of the antechamber, the square hole in the wall which leads through to the chamber of Ankhefenmut. Take a peek inside and you will see the empty sarcophagus still occupying virtually the whole of the tiny room. Indeed, the interior of this part of the Psusennes complex gives an impression of everything being jammed into a restricted space.

First let us take a closer look at the passage leading to the sarcophagus chamber of King Psusennes (burial 5): you will observe that it forms an exact right angle to the north-south axis of the antechamber. Now examine the passage which leads to King Amenemopet's burial chamber (burial 4): here it is quite obvious that the relative positions of antechamber and passage do not form a true right-angle as might be expected – instead the passage veers slightly to the south creating an angle of approximately 80° . The question is why was this modification to the entrance passage of Amenemopet's burial chamber undertaken?

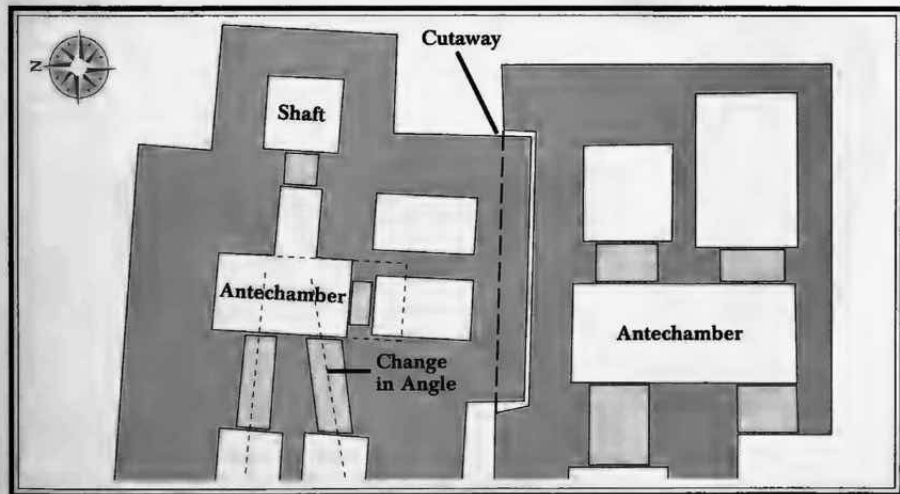
The answer lies in finding the correct interpretation of the sequence of building operations involved in constructing Tomb III. It looks as if the two subsidiary burial chambers (burials 6 and 7), located on the south side of the antechamber, were built only as an afterthought, following the completion of the two main burial chambers (burials 4 and 5). They were not part of the original design concept of the tomb. It was this subsequent addition of chambers for burials 6 and 7 which led to the cutting back of the north wall of Tomb I and which resulted in the internal modifications to the structure of Tomb III. These latter modifications involved a reduction in the floor area of the antechamber on the south side (in order to accommodate the additional chambers) which, in turn, required an adjustment to the angle of the passageway into Amenemopet's burial chamber – bringing its entrance northwards into the now smaller antechamber. Figures 115 and 116 visualise the original ground plan and the subsequent modification.

This later adjustment to Tomb III has thus brought us to another possible explanation for the strange chronological anomaly of the cutaway in the north wall of Tomb I. Is it feasible that the modification of Tomb III – which required this removal of part of the adjacent wall of Tomb I – was



115. The original plan of Tomb III (left) as it would have appeared if the modifications to its south side had not taken place.

116. The eastern half of Tomb III showing the difference in angle between the two main burial chamber entrance passages. The dotted line indicates the original plan of the antechamber before the addition of the two extra burial chambers to the south.



undertaken not at the time of Psusennes but rather after Osorkon had built his own tomb (one hundred and forty-one years later), thus solving the anomaly at a stroke? Unfortunately this is not a viable explanation either because of the evidence from the intact burial of General Wendjebaendjed discovered by Montet in Tomb III (burial 7). A number of Wendjebaendjed's burial artefacts bear inscriptions which demonstrate that the General was a contemporary of King Psusennes. It is clear that he had been given the singular honour of burial near to his monarch. One of the treasures from the burial chamber is a silver dish bearing the following dedication:

The Dual King, Akheperre-setepenamun, the Son of Re, Paspakhanniut-meryamun (i.e. Psusennes I). That which was given as a royal gift to the Overseer of the Estate of Khons in Thebes, Neferhotep; the *hem-netjer* priest of Khons; the Overseer of the Army; the Chief of the Archers of Pharaoh; the Overseer of the *hem-netjer* priests of all the Gods; Wendjebaendjed, true of voice, of the Estate of Osiris, Lord of Busiris.¹⁰

At best, this permits us to argue that the supplementary burial chambers in Tomb III might have been added to the structure within a generation of the burial of Psusennes himself – no later. This would still leave well over a century between the construction of the new Tomb III extension and the building of Tomb I by Osorkon II. Thus the chronological anomaly remains.

The Temple Pylon

There is another archaeological feature which puts the final nail into the coffin of Montet and Lézine's 'earliest tomb' theory. Let us for the moment try to imagine the sequence of events involved in the construction of King Psusennes' tomb. For the purpose of our discussion we will assume that a royal tomb (Tomb I) is already standing to the south of the building site. The workmen have already excavated a large deep building-trench adjacent to the north side of Tomb I, the latter acting as the south face of the trench (see Fig. 120). They then erect a mudbrick retainer wall along the north and west sides of the new cutting to prevent it from refilling with sand in a sudden collapse. Now they have three neat vertical sides to the trench with a sloping ramp leading from the open eastern side, down which the building blocks for the Tomb III construction can be easily conveyed. They begin to build the two main burial chambers (one for the king, the other for his queen). The first task is to place the outer limestone blocks against the vertical inner faces of the mudbrick retainer walls; then they sheathe the burial chambers themselves with their granite lining. Now comes the sudden change of plan with the king's instructions to add two further burial chambers for his son, Prince Ankhefenmut, and for his devoted servant, General Wendjebaendjed.

We can imagine the discussion between the architect and his foreman as to where they should place the two new chambers. They finally decide to hack away a large chunk of Tomb I to squeeze the extension into the south side of Psusennes' tomb – but why? Would it not be so much easier,



117. The Wendjebaendjed silver dish which carries the inscription naming Akheperre Psusennes as his sovereign. Cairo Museum.



118. The gold funerary mask of General Wendjebaendjed. Cairo Museum.

you ask yourself, to build the extension on the north side of the ante-chamber thus avoiding all that hard labour? Something must be preventing the Egyptian workmen from doing so. But what is this other structure which already exists on the north side during the building operations of Psusennes? To find out we need to return in time to the French excavations of 1940.

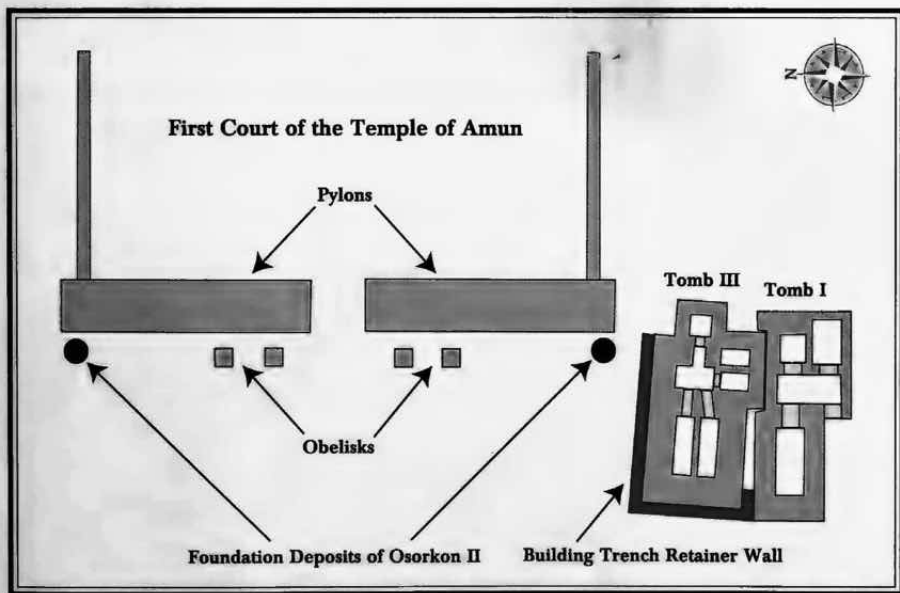
Soon after Montet's team had discovered the tomb of King Psusennes, they came across a foundation deposit in a shallow sand-pit beneath a one-metre-thick mudbrick wall. The wall was located just a metre or so from the northern retainer wall of the trench which contained the tomb of Psusennes. This new wall and an identical one eighty-five metres further to the north represented the remnants of the north and south side walls of the great First Court of the Temple of Amun, between which the First Pylon would have once stood. Sadly, all the limestone blocks which once made up that imposing façade have been long since quarried away by the LIMESTONE BURNERS who thrived upon the ruins of Tanis during the Roman Empire and EARLY ISLAMIC periods.¹¹

In spite of the now missing stone pylon, the lime burners did leave the hard granite obelisks and colossal statues (which were of no use to them) standing in front of the shattered remnants of the old façade – so we can be certain that the great gateway into the First Court stood exactly at the spot between the two mudbrick walls unearthed by Montet. Thus it was the south-west corner of the temple court which stood just a metre from the pit prepared for Psusennes' tomb – and this was the structure which

LIMESTONE BURNING: Limestone was used to produce lime for the cement industry which serviced the city builders of the first millennium AD. Tanis, with its abundant supplies of neatly cut limestone blocks, lay at the mouth of the Tanitic branch of the Nile, close to the Mediterranean coast and the sea-going trade routes to the population centres of the Roman and Islamic worlds. The exploitation of Tanis as a 'quarry' was therefore long and exhaustive.

EARLY ISLAM: From Caliph Omar to the rise of Ahmed Ibn Tulun, Umayyad and Abbasid periods, AD 639-868.

119. Simplified plan of the proposed location of the First Pylon in relation to the royal necropolis.



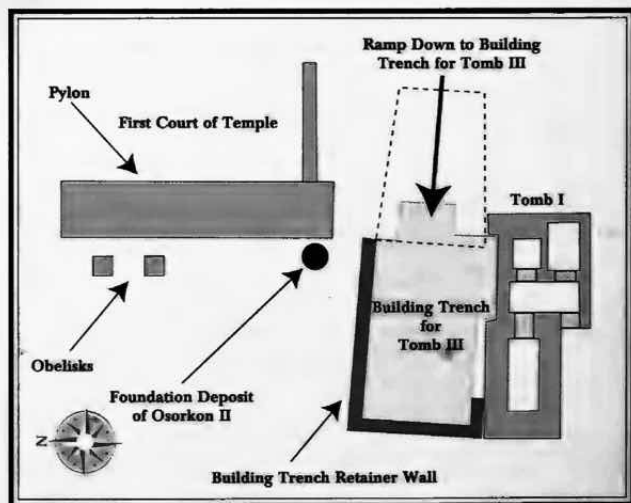
prevented the construction of the two extra burial chambers on the north side of the antechamber of Tomb III. If we acknowledge that this was the actual situation facing Psusennes' workmen, we can begin to understand the true purpose of the mudbrick retainer walls which were erected on the north and west sides of the trench. Their main function must have been to prevent the compacted sand foundation beneath the temple from slipping into the building trench. Without the safety wall, any sand slippage would have undermined the south wall of the court and risked the collapse of the great façade. Psusennes' men knew this was too big a risk to take.

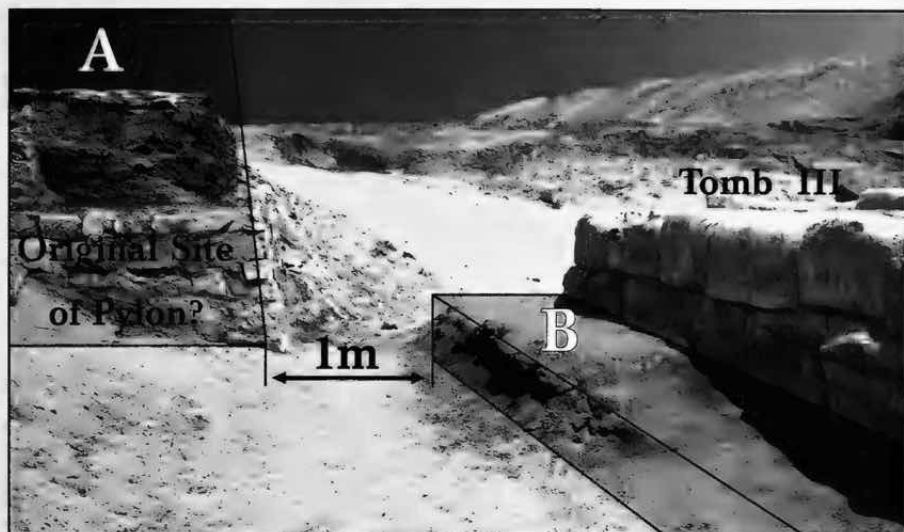
Now we can understand why the architects of Psusennes chose to dismantle part of the older Tomb I rather than expand the king's new tomb structure northwards. But who built the First Court of the Temple of Amun at Tanis?

When Montet discovered the foundation deposits beneath both the northern and southern court walls, the pits produced collections of small faience goblets and plaques bearing the cartouches of King Osorkon II – the pharaoh buried in Tomb I. So Osorkon was also the builder of the First Court of the great Temple of Amun at Tanis. For me, this clinches the case for Tomb III being built after Osorkon had constructed his Tomb I. This must be what happened:

- Psusennes decided to add two chambers to his own tomb complex after he had begun the construction of the main burial chambers of Tomb III;
- But he could not build the additional chambers on the north side of his tomb because the First Court of the Temple of Amun, constructed by Osorkon II, was already standing there;

120. The construction technique for Tomb I, as suggested by Montet and Lézine, which involved the digging of an east-west trench in the sand bank. This trench was then lined with a mudbrick sleeve wall to prevent collapse whilst the limestone blocks, pre-cut for the tomb, were assembled within the construction pit.





- Thus the building operations of King Psusennes of the 21st Dynasty were restricted on both north and south sides by structures of the 22nd Dynasty. Arguing that there was an earlier 21st Dynasty tomb to the south of Tomb III does not help resolve the conundrum when the additional factor of the temple wall is brought into play.

The evidence seems to be incontrovertible: Osorkon II of the 22nd Dynasty built his tomb and added to the Temple of Amun before Psusennes I of the 21st Dynasty began the construction of his own tomb within the sacred enclosure at Tanis. Therefore King Osorkon II could not have died one hundred and forty-one years after King Psusennes I as is currently believed. The implication of this is that the chronology of the Third Intermediate Period is in error by at least this number of years.

Conclusion Three

The burial of King Osorkon II at Tanis took place before the burial of King Psusennes I. Given that the former was a king of the 22nd Dynasty and the latter was a king of the 21st Dynasty, the archaeological evidence from Tanis tends to confirm that the two dynasties were contemporary for a considerable number of years. The order of burial of the two kings indicates that the number of years currently allocated to the TIP should be reduced by at least one hundred and forty-one years.

121. The relationship between the mudbrick wall (A), which may have defined the south-west corner of the Amun temple, and the mudbrick sleeve wall (B), constructed to prevent sand slippage into the building trench of Tomb III (and therefore undermining of the First Pylon). Brissaud argues that wall A may be of a later date than Tomb I, based on his analysis of brick sizes. He may be correct, but this does not explain away the foundation deposits of Osorkon II which demonstrate that the 22nd Dynasty king did construct a pylon or court wall at this location.

122. Following page (above): The smashed remains of the inner court of the Amun temple at Tanis. In the centre background one of the two granite columns can be seen which bear the cartouches of Siamon on their bases.

123. Following page (below): The gateway of Shoshenq III which leads into the sacred enclosure of the Amun Temple at Tanis. In front of the gate various statues of Ramesses II can still be seen, having been re-erected there by the TIP rulers of Tanis. These statues had previously stood in Pi-Ramesses.