During a recent attempt to locate stray fragments of a particular Theban tomb I came across part of a painted banquet scene in the Louvre. It represents three standing girls facing left towards a heap of food offerings and four unguent jars, beyond which the deceased couple were originally seated. The foremost girl holds out a shallow drinking bowl, and the two behind her accompany the act by playing the double oboe and the large boat-shaped harp. To the right is part of the guests’ corner in two registers, the men being served by a male servant, and the women below by girls. The accompanying text relates to the tomb owner and his wife, to whom the offering was presented:

'To your kau! Spend a pleasant day when you enter your tomb, and rest in it through time, in the course of every day.'

One peculiar detail of the picture is that the persons appear to be completely bald. As this is entirely out of keeping with the importance of wigs/hair in such scenes, the explanation can only be that the black colour of the hair has vanished.

The fragment was mentioned by de Rougé in the second supplement to his 1877 catalogue, and later by Perrot and Chipiez and by Boreux. It is included in Porter and Moss, but unfortunately without being linked to the tomb to which it obviously belongs, references to one and the same piece occurring in different places. There can in fact be no doubt that Louvre D 60 is identical with the scene described under tomb no. A 22. The painting was seen in situ, presumably in the 1820s, by Hay, Burton, Rosellini, Wilkinson, and Champollion, the last of whom copied the name of the tomb owner, the scribe and counter of grain (in the house of Amun?), Neferhabef, and that of his wife, Esi. Only part of the scene described by those who visited the tomb seems to have come to the Louvre, in that the 'guests, man with long flute', women
with castanets and... male harpist', quoted by Porter and Moss, have disappeared, apart from the tip of the instrument of the harpist. When Champollion visited the tomb it was 'dans un état presque complet de destruction' (12). The fragment belongs to the upper part of a wall - according to Champollion the right rear wall of the hall in a tomb that was presumably T-shaped. Below there was a third register, and maybe a fourth, and to the left Champollion recorded the deceased couple. To the right (and below?) there was a great number of guests.

The location of tomb A 22 was in the area of Dra' Abd El-Naga, somewhere between the brick pyramid (el-Mandara) marked Q on Wilkinson's map (13) and Deir el-Bakhit, marked N, and, according to Hay, 'on the side of a hill facing north' (14). Wilkinson described five tombs in this area (IT 157 and 158, A 22, A 25, and A 25), but more are sketched in on the map. Tomb A 22 was probably one of these.

Notes

1) N 3319. A photocopy of the relevant 'fiche' was obtained for me at the Louvre by T. Holm-Rasmussen, and a photograph of the fragment were kindly provided by Mlle E. Fontan of the Louvre. The fragment is painted on mud coated with white and measures 59 x 87 cm. It seems to have been restored in modern times: the bowl of the male servant has been redrawn so as to be shown at an oblique angle. For the date of the tomb to which presumably the fragment belonged I would suggest mid XVIIIth dynasty, 10) without clarification.

2) For another example of the curiously shaped loaf of bread in the centre cf. M. de G. Davies, The Tombs of Two Officials of Thutmose the Fourth (1973), pl. 5, cf. p. 6, note 2.


4) Cf. A.M. Calverley, The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos, IV, pl. XVII, where most of the colours remain, but the face of Anubis has not a trace of black.

5) Notice des monuments... au musée du Louvre, P. 210 (no. 60).

6) Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité, I (1882), pp. 791-2, pl. XII.

7) èAntiquités égyptiennes, I (1932), p. 132.


10) For references cf. note 9.