BANI HASAN AND SPEOS ARTEMIDOS

Two groups of tombs dug into the rock about 8 miles (13 km) south of the town of Minya. The first group consists of hypogea of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties and derives its name from the neighboring village, Bani Hasan, which perpetuates the name of an Arabic tribe that established itself there before spreading throughout the region.

The second group is about 2 miles (3 km) from the first, in a valley called Valley of the Anchorites. Its mouth is close to a temple built by Thutmose III and known as Speos Artemidos since the Hellenistic period. (A general introduction is provided by Martin, 1971, pp. 61-64, and Meinardus, 1965, pp. 261-62, and 1977, pp. 368-69.)

At Bani Hasan, the Greek and Coptic inscriptions and the graffiti were noted by the traveler F. Granger (1745, p. 130). They were brought to the notice of the public by two English archaeologists, A. H. Sayce (1881-1882, pp. 112-23) and P. E. Newberry (1894, pp. 65-68). An account of the monastic installations in these tombs is given by A. Badawy (1953, pp. 66-89). The tomb of Nuternekht (tomb 23) has on the north wall a Coptic alphabet, and for this reason, it has been thought that it perhaps served as a school. Tomb 28 was once a church, for it bears on the ceiling and on the east wall the traces of an apse. A door has been opened up to effect communication between this and tomb 30.

At Speos Artemidos, we must distinguish the speos itself and the tombs or quarries that surround it from a wadi about a mile to the south, the caves of which were inhabited by a colony of anchorites. The former has been described by J. Capart (1930, p. 180). The graffiti inscribed on these walls were published by R. Holthoer (1976, pp. 97-99) and M. Martin (Martin, et al. 1971, pp. 79-81). Martin estimates that the colony of monks came to install itself in Speos Artemidos and the neighborhood at the beginning of the fifth century, by reason of the form of the crosses engraved on the walls.
The installations in the wadi are perfectly preserved, with traces of the external constructions. It is difficult to decide whether they were used by cenobites or hermits.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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