The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC)

Contributions on archaeology, art, religion, and written sources

Volume I

Edited by

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Middle Kingdom Studies 1
To hybrid creatures
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Three Burials of the Seventeenth Dynasty in Dra Abu El-Naga

José M. Galán, Ángeles Jiménez-Higueras

Abstract

The Spanish mission working in and around the tomb-chapels of Djehuty and Hery (TT 11-12) in Dra Abu el-Naga has been excavating for the last four seasons southwest of Djehuty’s courtyard, where the last houses of the modern village stood until they were demolished in the winter of 2006-07. Seventeenth Dynasty burials have been unearthed 3 m below ground level, some still undisturbed, one of them including a rishi-coffin and two belonging to children. The recent discoveries help to better understand the burial customs and the organisation of the necropolis at that time, and the successive use of this area from the Eleventh Dynasty down to the Third Intermediate Period.

Introduction

A Spanish mission has been working since January 2002 at the foothill of the central area of Dra Abu el-Naga, in the area where the rock-cut tomb-chapels of Djehuty and Hery (TT 11-12) are located.¹ Hery must have lived under kings Ahmose and Amenhotep I, acting as overseer of the granaries of the king’s mother and royal wife Ahhotep. He could have been related to the royal family through his mother, Ahmes, who is referred to as *hrw-nswt.*² The inner walls of his funerary monument (c. 1510 BC) were entirely decorated in high quality relief. Djehuty lived about fifty years later, acting as overseer of the treasure and overseer of the works carried out by the craftsmen and metal workers for queen Hatshepsut. The walls of his tomb-chapel (c. 1460 BC) were also decorated in relief, even the façade and part of the left sidewall of the open courtyard.³

The courtyard of Djehuty’s monument is larger than expected, extending the rock-cut sidewalls with mud-bricks that reach 3 m high near the façade and end 34 m away from it in two pylons 68 cm high.⁴ At mid distance from the façade, the left sidewall makes an abrupt twist towards the inside, i.e. to the right. This unorthodox and unaesthetic feature could be due to the presence of a mud-brick structure, which would have been considered significant enough to avoid running over it or being dismantled by Djehuty’s workmen. It ended up being a small offering chapel on behalf of the person(s) buried down the funerary shaft that opens right in front of it. The associated inscribed stick-shabtis and linen bear the name Ahmose/Ahmose-Sapair (see section ‘Archaeological context’ below).

When the modern village of Dra Abu el-Naga was entirely demolished in the winter of 2006-07 and its people relocated in new houses in the village of New Gurna, the Spanish mission applied and obtained from the Supreme Council of Antiquities an extension of the site to the left/southwest of Djehuty’s courtyard. Once the debris was removed and the area cleared, in January 2011 excavations commenced in the area, which was labelled ‘Sector 10’. The following seasons unearthed, 3 m below the ground level of the modern houses, a number of Seventeenth Dynasty burials (c. 1650-1550 BC) consisting of funerary shafts and mud-brick offering chapels, but also coffins placed unprotected on the ground and ensembles of votive pottery vessels (Figs. 1-2). The discovery of part of the necropolis used by the royal family and courtiers of the Seventeenth Dynasty helps to understand the pos-

² GALÁN, MENÉNDEZ, JEA 97, 143-66.
³ GALÁN, in GOYON, CARDIN (eds.), Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists, 777-87; GALÁN, in MAGEE, BOURJAU, QUIRKE (eds.), Sitting beside Lepsius, 155-81; GALÁN, in GALÁN, BRYAN, DORMAN (eds.), Creativity and Innovation, 247-72. See also JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, in GALÁN, BRYAN, DORMAN (eds.), Creativity and Innovation, 273-95; ESPINEL, in GALÁN, BRYAN, DORMAN (eds.), Creativity and Innovation, 297-335.
⁴ GALÁN, in MYNÁROVÁ, ONDERKA (eds.), Théby: Mesto Bohu a faraonu, 89-101; GALÁN, in MOLINERO, SEVILLA (eds.), Tercer congreso ibérico de egiptología, 249-63.
Fig. 1 – Aerial view of site: Sector 10 to the southwest left of the long courtyard of Djehuty’s tomb-chapel (TT 11), in Dra Abu el-Naga
Fig. 2 - Plan of Sector 10, including the main Seventeenth Dynasty structures and artifacts
José M. Galán, Ángeles Jiménez-Higueras

Fig. 3 - Drawing of the funerary shaft UE 1007, including the rishi-coffin of Neb, and that of the eleven-year-old boy (UE 1006) above it
sible reasons behind Djehuty’s choice of this particular spot for building his tomb-chapel, more than five hundred metres away from most of his colleagues, high officials of Hatshpsut-Thutmose III’s administration, who were buried south of Deir el-Bahari, between el-Assasif plain and the hillside of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna.

The present study focuses on three burials and their respective coffins, dating to the Seventeenth Dynasty. All three have reached us undisturbed since antiquity. One of them includes a well preserved *rishi* coffin, which was removed from its original tomb and re-buried inside a shaft at an uncertain time. The other two were found in their original place, lying on the ground, and belong to two infants. Each burial is interesting on its own merits, but the relationship between them and their archaeological context makes them even more significant. They offer us a glimpse of the burial customs, organisation and use of the necropolis at that particular time, and the overlapping with earlier, Middle Kingdom burials, rock-cut tombs and shrines that were already falling into decay. They also help to better understand the location of Eighteenth Dynasty rock-cut tombs in the area, the activities of looters during the Twentieth Dynasty and the subsequent inspection and reorganisation of the necropolis by the priests of Amun during the Third Intermediate Period.

**The funerary shaft UE 1007**

In February 2014, the mouth of a funerary shaft, labelled UE 1007 (Figs. 2-3), was brought to light 10 m southwest of Djehuty’s open courtyard. Its curb is made of solid mud-bricks (29 x 15 x 10 cm), joined by a layer of whitish and dense mortar. It measures 3.05 x 1.60 m and the opening 2.60 x 0.95 m. It is slightly tilted, following the descending hill-slope towards the valley. Its northern end is built into the *gebel*, which has been cut down 0.45 m and filled in with a row of mud-bricks laid lengthwise. The southern end is twice as thick and the mud-bricks go down 0.98 m until reaching the bedrock. At the inner face of the four sides, the mud-bricks are coated with a layer of fine plaster and whitewash. The junction of the plastered mud-bricks with the sloping bedrock is very carefully done. The rock-cut walls were left rough and on the west side three holes are still visible, each half metre apart to help climbing up and down the shaft.

The east side of the curb is partly broken and some of the missing mud-bricks were found inside, 0.30 m deep. They fell on and were covered by a compacted layer of clean sand, slightly orange and humid, probably of alluvial origin, reaching 1.25 m in depth (stratum A in Fig. 3), which indicates that the shaft was at that moment only partly filled and its upper part remained opened for some time. At this upper layer, together with the fallen mud-bricks, there was a lock of hair tied up with a string, probably to be used as an extension (no. 2122 in Fig. 3; Fig. 4).

Further down, there is a stratum (B) composed of more fallen mud-bricks, small branches, pieces of wood, fragments of a fine quality rope and pottery sherds, below which the sand turns into whitish gravel (C) with several big stones. At a depth of 1.80 m, below a thin layer of sand and small stones (D), there is a new layer of fallen mud-bricks (E). The following stratum (F) included two sandstone blocks and three smaller fragments, two of which were part of a ribbed cornice with preserved polychrome decoration. At a depth of 2.55 m, the middle section of a much eroded moulded pottery *shabti* was found (no. 2144; Fig. 5). It can be dated to the Third Intermediate Period, probably to the Twenty-first Dynasty.

The next metre down consisted of a thin layer of sand and small stones (G) resting on top of gravel (H), containing small fragments of sandstone, two of them with polychrome decoration, and small pieces of wood, linen, rope, pottery sherds, vegetative remains and a few bones. At a depth of 3.20 m, the left half of a wooden statuette (no. 2165; Fig. 6), 25.5 x 6 x 6 cm, was found close to the southern end of the shaft. It is a kneeling feminine figure, probably Isis or Nephthys, in a mourning posture, sitting back on her heels and with her (missing) articulated arms bent forward. Her hair is covered by a soft bag-like *khat*-kerchief, with a short tail hanging down the back. The carving seems to be of good quality, coated by a whitewash, and there are traces of gold foil on her face, ears and neck. The outline of her dress is traced in red. It seems reasonable to date it to the Third Intermediate Period, which

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5 Hair-locks in a funerary context are common; see Tassie, *PIA* 7, 59-67; Tassie, *PIA* 11, 27-46; Valdesogo Martín, *El cabello en el ritual funerario.*

6 We are grateful to Jean-Luc Chappaz for reassuring our dating.


8 Dating suggested by Salima Ikram. Compare with D’Au-
fits well with the date of the shabti fragment found above. These two objects seem to indicate that the shaft was cleared and refilled in the Twenty-first Dynasty or slightly later.

The shaft ended up measuring 3.80 m deep, and at the bottom there are three strata of dusty earth and small stones (I), gravel (J), and limestone chips of various sizes, sandstone fragments and vegetative remains (K). The floor is slightly pitched towards the southern end, where the burial chamber is located. Its entrance is 1.35 m tall and it takes up the whole width of the shaft. It was found closed at the top with mud-bricks, some of them half broken and carelessly piled up without mortar, but with mid-size stones and rubble between them. The average size of the mud-bricks is 33/31 x 15 x 9/7 cm.

Opposite the burial chamber, at the northern end and 0.30 m elevated from the shaft’s floor, there is an irregularly hewn niche, 1 m tall and 0.89 m deep, with a small rock-cut step inside. It seems to be an unfinished second burial chamber, since it opens almost at the same level as the southern one, and if it had been completely hewn down to the bottom its entrance would have had approximately the same size. Funerary shafts built in this area and at this time period usually have one or two confronted burial chambers, as it is the case in UE 1005 (see plan in Fig. 2), which has a second chamber also with a rock-cut step that reduces by half a metre what would have been its planned height (1.60 m), making it clear that the chamber was left unfinished and that the step is just part of the process of cutting the rock.

When approximately half of the closing wall of the burial chamber was removed, an inscribed limestone fragment (no. 2166; Figs. 7A-B), measuring 28 x 28 x 12 cm, was found. It seems to be the upper right corner of an architectural structure carved on both sides. The inscription runs along one of the sides of the lintel and of the jamb(s) framing a small arch. The signs are incised and filled with a blue/green paste. The lines framing the text are coloured in red and spaced apart 3.6 cm (lintel) and 4.7 cm (jamb). The preserved text says: “[...] Ptah-Sokar-Osiris lord of Abydos may he give incense and ointments, and all kind of proper and pure things [on which a god] lives [...]”. The palaeography seems to be characteristic of the Seventeenth Dynasty (see below).

The limestone block was used as part of the base for the closing wall, and for that purpose it was placed horizontally over the gravel that formed the lower stratum of the shaft and that slid inside the burial chamber, filling half of it. Thus, the closing wall was not built starting from the bottom of the shaft, but on top of half a metre of debris, indicating that the shaft was not completely cleared then and, therefore, that the closing wall was not part of the first burial, but of a later re-use of the shaft. When did the later closing happen? According to the findings of the shaft, it seems reasonable to date the re-burial in the Third Intermediate Period.

The burial chamber measures 2.80 x 1.40 m. The back

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Fig. 5 - Third Intermediate Period moulded pottery shabti (no. 2144), found in the shaft UE 1007; Fig. 6 - Fragment of a wooden figurine (no. 2165), found at the entrance to the burial chamber

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9 It resembles the freestanding shrine of Montuhotep’s princesses; see NAVILLE, The XIth Dynasty Temple, 22-3, pls. 11-20.
wall was smoothed, while the side-walls and the ceiling were left rough, the latter even being slightly vaulted. The floor of the entire chamber was cut down 0.50 m. Near the entrance, the chamber is 1.85 m high, while at the rear end it is only 1.40 m, due to the downward slope of the ceiling. Shafts in this area and of this time period usually have a short step up to the entrance of the burial chamber to make things easier for the stonecutters. On the other hand, more elaborate early Eighteenth Dynasty burial chambers may have a step down to enter into the burial chamber (see Djehuty’s TT 11), maybe intending to prolong and emphasise the descending path towards the hereafter. Now, since the average height of a burial chamber is closer to 1.35 m (1.85 m may be considered too high), it seems plausible that the purpose of the half-metre deep recess in the floor would have been to accommodate the coffin on a lower level so that only the lid would remain visible just above or flush with the chamber floor. This feature is clearly attested in the burial chamber of shaft UE 110 (see plan in Fig. 2), tentatively assigned to the “king’s son”, Intefmose (see below), whose floor has a rectangular recess (2.45 x 0.90 and 0.75 m deep) right in the middle to accommodate a coffin and leave its lid visible at floor level.

The whitish gravel that slid from the shaft inside the burial chamber covered the entire area, sloping down inwards (1 m high at the entrance and 0.5 m at the back). It contained a number of broken mud-bricks, probably resulting from breaking the original closing of the chamber. The earth is darker near the entrance (N) due to the crumbling of the mud-bricks. At the back (O) the material is more numerous, including pottery sherds, linen bandages and a linen bundle wrapping human bones, as well as a few wooden fragments and vegetative remains mixed up with gravel.

Near the entrance, the upper stratum (M) contained numerous mid-size limestone chips, together with sandstone fragments, two of them with polychrome decoration and one with traces of an incised inscription. Two sandstone fragments coming from the same piece preserve part of an incised relief scene, coloured in blue/green, depicting the forehead of a king wearing a conical Upper Egyptian crown with uraeus. The cartouche with the royal name is vertically inscribed on one of the fragments (no. 2177; 12.5 x 15 x 4.5 cm; Figs. 8A-B), preceded by what looks like the lower half of the nfr-sign, as part of the royal epithet ntr-nfr, “the good god.” Inside the cartouche, the signs rˁ and nb are clearly visible, but a third sign can only be guessed. It seems to be a vertical sign, centred, standing by itself and with a narrow top. The most plausible option is to read it as hpt, making up the name nb-hpt-rˁ, the throne name of King Montuhotep II. The earliest extensive use of sandstone in Thebes, mainly coming from the area of Gebel es-Silsilah and Shatt er-Rigal, is associated with the second half of the Eleventh Dynasty when Thebes became the royal residence under Montuhotep II. Thus, this inscribed fragment, together with the numerous sandstone blocks and fragments found inside and around the shaft, may indicate that there could have been a relevant, maybe royal, monument in this area of Dra Abu el-Naga built

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11 For other possible royal names that could stand for Neb-?-Ra, see von Beckerath, Handbuch, 303.
12 Aston et al., in Nicholson, Shaw (eds.), Ancient Egyptian Materials, 54-6; Klemm, Klemm, Steine und Steinbrüche, 177-201.
under King Montuhotep II. Moreover, a big and well-cut rectangular sandstone slab (72 x 41 x 18 cm) was unearthed in the middle of the burial chamber.

Along the middle of the chamber, a well preserved and still closed rishi-coffin was found with its head to the entrance and resting on top of the layer of limestone chips (L) that covers the debris. It was pushed inside without caring that the chamber was partially filled with rubble and mixed up material. However, it was done quite carefully, since the facial features and the colourful painting of the lid did not suffer much. There was not a single modest piece of funerary equipment accompanying the coffin. This unusual circumstance, together with the fact that the coffin was left resting on top of the debris coming in from the shaft, seems to indicate that it is not the original burial, but a later re-burial. It matches the evidence indicating that the shaft had been cleared and refilled, and that the entrance had been re-opened and closed again probably in the Third Intermediate Period, as mentioned above.

The coffin’s original burial place is unknown, although one may assume that it would have been located in this area of Dra Abu el-Naga (if not in this same shaft, having been removed and deposited inside again for unknown reasons). The circumstances around its removal and re-burial in the shaft where it was found are also difficult to grasp. If it took place in the Third Intermediate Period, it might be associated with the inspection of the necropolis by the priests of Amun at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, and with the later safeguarding and relocation of coffins under the Twenty-first or Twenty-second Dynasty. Although not directly associated with the shaft, excavating the debris in the nearby courtyard of Djehuty’s tomb-chapel (TT 11), we found fragments of four necropolis-seal impressions, which indirectly attest the priests’ activity in this area. It is thus possible that the priests of the Twenty-first/second Dynasty would have rearranged the burials that had been robbed, and cared not only for the members of the royal family, but also for high positioned private individuals whose tombs had been disturbed, probably like that of the coffin’s owner.

The rishi-coffin of Neb

The coffin (object no. 2175) measures 2.00 x 0.50 x 0.41 m (Figs. 9-13; Pls. xviii-xx). The box is made of a single sycamore log, thicker at both ends (8 cm) than at the sides (4 cm), leaving a hollow space of 1.84 x 0.42

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13 Of approximately this time period is the intact burial discovered below the courtyard’s left side-wall and floor of Djehuty’s tomb-chapel (TT 11), included in the plan of Fig. 2; see Galán, EA 35, 32-5; Galán in Oppenheim, Goëlet (eds.), Studies in Honor of Dorothea Arnold.

14 See Smith, MDAIK 48, 193-231; and more recently, Warhendi, Hendrickx, in Claes, de Meulenaere, Hendrickx (eds.), Elkab and Beyond, 75-125. For a general view, Grajetzki, Burial Customs, 61-5.

15 Maspero, Une enquête judiciaire à Thèbes; Winlock, JEA 10, 217-77; Peet, The Great Tomb-Robberies. It has to be remembered that the priests of Amun inspected the tomb of Ahmose-Sapair in year 16 of Rameses IX, and supposedly found it undisturbed (somewhere in Dra Abu el-Naga). Later on, at some unspecified time, the prince’s mumified remains were removed, placed inside a child’s coffin dating to the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (CCG 61064+61007), with an identifying docket written on its lid (there is only one group of signs legible (!): [Ahmose-Sa]pa[r]), and the coffin ended up re-buried in the Deir el-Bahari cachette (DB 320); Daresy, Cercueils des cachettes royales, 9-10; Smith, Royal Mummies, 22-5, pl. 19; Reeves, The Valley of the Kings; the decline, 253. See below n. 45.

16 Galán, Memnonia 19, 171-3, pl. 28.
The outer side of the box, including its ends and base, was coated with a thin layer of fine whitish mortar and then completely painted black. The visible top of the box’s thickness has traces of red paint and three pierced tenons inserted at each side to fix the lid to the box by fitting them into sockets and passing acacia dowels through them. The inside of both box and lid were left rough and undecorated.

The lid is anthropoid in shape, representing the deceased mummmified, with the legs and feet, arms and hands wrapped together with the body, leaving only the face visible. It was carved out of a single sycamore log, except for the prominent foot and head ends, which were carved separately and joined to the lid by a fine whitish mortar. The entire face, including the ears, lips and a pointed nose, is moulded in very fine lime mortar. The skin is pale yellow and the eyes are painted (not inlaid) as if they were glazed. The extension of the eye lines is green, probably aluding to kohl used as cosmetic. The eyebrows and hair are also green/blue. The latter turns into a striped band hidden behind the protruding ears and then runs along and below the chin. No false beard was ever attached to the chin.

The outer side of the lid was also coated with a thin layer of fine lime mortar, over which the polychrome decoration was applied. The headdress consists of a round-top feathered head cloth, with three horizontal stripes at both sides of the neck, alternating green and yellow. Two lappets hang down over the chest, decorated with a peculiar geometrical pattern in dark yellow that seems to imitate the braiding of a mat or fabric. The upper half of the body’s torso is adorned by an usekh-collar made out of tubular faience beads alternating green and dark yellow, completed by pendentive drop-shaped beads (Pl. xix). On both shoulders there is a schematic and awkward depiction of a hawk’s head or Eye of Horus, acting as the finials of the collar. There is no painted figure of a vulture or cobra over the chest.

From the top of the head down to the soles of the feet the lid’s decoration imitates feathers, with a pair of wings stretched along both sides. Over a pale yellow background, three types of feathers overlap, weaving a dense plumage. Most of them make up a shawl of short drop-shaped feathers, coloured in green, red and dark yellow. Others are round-topped elongated feathers, displayed one next to each other and creating a zigzag pattern that combines the same three colours. Each wing ends in pointed green feathers with black tips. At the level of the ankles, there is an area free of feathers where the decoration depicts the wood grain of the coffin using red lines painted in concentric circles, over which there is a painted image of a net of faience barrel green beads linked by smaller spherical red ones (Pl. xx).

Running down the axis of the lid’s lower half, over of the legs and overlapping the...
other decorative motifs, is a band that alternates yellow, green and red stripes, interrupted by a central bright yellow column, measuring 83 x 4.6 (top)/5.5 (bottom) cm. In the centre is a vertical inscription (Fig. 10) with the hieroglyphs fully coloured in light green/blue (i.e., turquoise, following the Middle Kingdom tradition on rectangular coffins). Because the signs were written with a thick painter’s brush, some of them seem carelessly traced and adopt peculiar shapes. They do not stand out from the background because they were not outlined in black. On the contrary, the signs on most rishi-coffins were not coloured, but only traced in black with a thin brush. The inscription, as expected, consists of a brief offering formula:

A boon that the king grants, and (also) Osiris lord of Abydos may he give an invocation offering of unguents and incense, beef and fowl, alabaster and linen, unguents and incense, every offering of provisions and everything proper and pure on which a god lives, (for) the ka of the Osiris Neb

– The tracing of the sign for Osiris, as well as the tracing and grouping of the three signs for Abydos, is similar to the way these are written on the limestone fragment found at the entrance of the burial chamber (see above), albeit they are written in reverse on the coffin. The hill-sign in the middle looks like a ‘U’, followed by the leg-sign with an elongated foot that makes it look like an ‘L’.

– The group prt-hw, “invocation offerings”, omits the second sign, and instead of opening the offering list with “bread and beer”, the scribe wrote the signs for “unguents and incense” flanking prt, which are repeated below, with just a small variation in the shape of the unguent jar. The reference to unguents and incense, ntr snTr, among the offerings is common for this time period, and they seem to be mentioned also in the limestone fragment.

– The construction ‘nh(t) ntr im, “on which a god lives”, has the first two signs misplaced and reversed.

– The inscription ends with what seems to be the name of the owner, preceded by <n> k3 <n> wsir, “for the ka of the Osiris...”, but without any title indication. Despite having some free space, the name is not followed by the epithet “true of voice”, which is a common feature in rishi-coffin inscriptions. Indeed, a high percentage of rishi-coffins never had the owner’s name written, leaving a blank space at the bottom of the column, or filling in the space with the signs mn, standing for “whoever”.

The text on Neb’s coffin has a number of common features with the rishi-coffin of Teti, “commander of the ruler’s crew”, found at an uncertain date and location in Dra Abu el-Naga, and kept in the Cairo Museum at least since 1913 (TR 19.11.27.5),[22] and also with the rishi-coffin found on December 23rd 1862, in Dra Abu el-Naga north by Luigi Vassalli, numbered 71.[23] Teti’s inscription shows the order of signs in the construction ‘nh(t)

Fig. 11 - Detail of the upper half of the lid. Note the three kinds of feathers, and the Eye of Horus acting as finial of the wekh i-collars.
Fig. 12 - Detail of the lower half of the lid. Note the representation of wood’s veins by red concentric circles, a net of faience beads over it

17 Galán, in Frood, McDonald (eds.), Decorum and experience, 119-26.

19 Not only is the dative-<n> missing, but also the genitive-<n> between k3 and the name of the beneficiary, since the indirect genitive here seems to be common practice in offering formulae of this time period.
20 The anthroponym determinative is commonly omitted, but the epithet ntr snTr is written most of the times.
21 MINIACI, Rishi Coffins, 34, n. 223.
22 MINIACI, Rishi Coffins, 129-30, 140-2, 230-1 (no. RT05C), pls. 2.a, 3.a.
23 MINIACI, in BETRO, DEL VESCO, MINIACI (eds.), Seven Seasons, 41-3; TIRADRITTI, in MARÉE (ed.), The Second Intermediate Period, 329-42, pl. 115; MINIACI, Rishi Coffins, 60, 118-20, 314 (RT02VA). Note that Vassalli’s copy of the inscription ends with several horizontal strokes that, following after k3 wsir, may stand for mn m3'-hw, “(for) the k3 of the Osiris Men, true of voice”, “Men” being a fictitious name to fill in the blank, see above n. 21. Tiradritti (336) and Miniaci (60), however, do not record any further signs after wsir.
The mummy of Neb

Neb (object no. 2187) has been jostled about in his coffin and lays slightly on his left side with the left leg slightly flexed and the head almost resting on the left shoulder. A badly decomposing light beige linen shroud with a fringe at either end covers the body, secured by knots at the shins (Fig. 14). Beneath are brown bandages that are wrapped spirally around each limb. It is unclear if the colour is due to the application of oils/resins or if the linen was darker. Over the bandages ties of the same material seem to secure the legs at the knees and ankles, and it is possible that a similar tie is present below the shoulder and at the wrists. There are surprisingly few layers of bandages, perhaps only four, under the shroud. The flesh is not preserved and the bones are relatively clean; they are in roughly the correct anatomical position, albeit loose. It is possible that no evisceration

27 Tracking down the areas in Dra Abu el-Naga north that were excavated by Auguste Mariette in 1857-59, and by Vassalli in 1862-63, and for the transcription of a passage from a letter written by Vassalli to Mariette mentioning the area where he was working, see MINIACI, QUIRKE, EVO 31, 8-9; MINIACI, RISHI COFFINS, 54-60.

28 The study of the wrapping and human remains is still in process, conducted by Salima Ikram and Roxie Walker.

24 MINIACI, RISHI COFFINS, 27, 36-7, 118-20, 212-3 (tT01BM).
25 The same motif decorates the nemes-headdress of King Sekhenra Wepmaat Antef (Louvre, E 3019); MINIACI, RISHI COFFINS, 118-20, 268-69 (tT01P). Miniaci describes it as “stylised feathers”, but the pattern looks more like folded textile.

Fig. 13 - Rishi-coffin of Neb, found inside the burial chamber. The outer side of the box is entirely painted black

ntr im also altered (but differently to that of Neb’s), and it skips the dative-n before the reference to the owner’s k3. Vassalli’s hand copy of the inscription on coffin no. 71 has exactly the same text as Neb, even with the same spellings and the same display of signs, until reaching the construction ‘n3pl(t) ntr im’, which also has the order of signs altered (but different to that on Neb’s and Teti’s coffins), and, as in Neb’s inscription, the preposition-n is missing before and after the k3-sign.

Neb’s decoration has also a number of common features with the rishi-coffins of Teti and Vassalli’s no. 71. In turn, these three private coffins can be related to the royal rishi-coffin of King Nubkheperra Intef found in Dra Abu el-Naga by Giovanni d’Athanasi in 1827, and now kept in the British Museum (EA 6652). All four share a distinctive decorative motif: at the ankles, where the wings do not reach, a net of faience barrel and spherical beads is shown spread over concentric circles that imitate wood grain (Figs. 12, 13; Pl. xx). Moreover, the geometrical pattern depicted on the lappets of Neb’s coffin (Figs. 9, 11; pl. xix) was also recorded by Vassalli on no. 71, and is the same motif that decorates the nemes-headdress of the royal coffin. Actually, between the lappets and the feathered headdress, Neb and Vassalli’s no. 71 show the same three horizontal stripes alternating green and yellow. The similarities of the decorative devices of this group of rishi-coffins can be used to date them all to the “first phase of the late Seventeenth Dynasty”, in line with Miniaci.

Neb’s coffin was re-buried 110 m southwest from the base of the pyramid of King Nubkheperra Intef, supposedly very close to its original burial ground. Unfortunately, there is no clue as to where in Dra Abu el-Na-
took place, although this is difficult to determine given the condition of the body. Some sorts of oils/resins were used in the preservation of the body, as attested by staining and scent.

The mummy, as it is lying today, is 1.65 m tall. The skull and sacrum are definitely male (Fig. 14). Ante-mortem tooth loss, especially in the mandibular molars, plus notable wear on remaining dentition suggests middle age, somewhere in his mid-to late forties. There is an unusual feature in the x-ray of his skull, which needs further investigation.²⁹

The trabecular bone in his left scapula is abnormal in appearance. The cortical bone in his femurs and tibiae seems thin for someone of his height, and the right leg seems denser than the left, but this could be a consequence of the two bones lying at slightly different angles relative to the x-ray film.

Some of his vertebrae also seem asymmetrical. Two of his lumbar vertebrae (L2 and L3) are fusing along the left side, with marked exostosis (bony outgrowths) and bridging, which suggests again someone no longer young. He has no bony outgrowths on his calcanei or

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²⁹ It probably will end up being an extra fold of the linen.

Fig. 14 - Neb's mummy resting inside the coffin, and x-ray of the body
distal tibiae and fibulae that would suggest a hard life with much weight-bearing walking.

**The burial of an eleven-year-old boy**

The stratum (UE 1001) that covers the funerary shaft in which Neb was re-buried consists of loose and whitish earth, mixed up with gravel and small size limestone chips, and big rounded stones scattered here and there. Only 37 cm above the shaft’s curb and about the same distance from its north-western corner, an anthropoid wooden coffin (UE 1006; object no. 2102) was found lying on the ground without any kind of protection covering it, and without a single piece of funerary equipment nearby (see plan in Fig. 2; drawing in Fig. 3, and Fig. 15). It seems that a pit was dug in the ground, big enough to deposit inside the coffin resting on its left shoulder, with its head south and facing west. A few mid-size stones and mud-bricks were placed at the eastern side against the coffin’s back to level the sloping ground and fix the coffin sideways in order to prevent it from rolling down. Underneath, there was a layer of very thin sand, probably resulting from running rainwater, which also left a crust of whitish thin mud over the coffin that looks like mortar. The bottom of the burial pit reached a pinkish stratum right above the bedrock. At the base of the coffin, fragments of a well-braided string were found, probably used to tie the box and lid together. However, it did not serve its purpose, since there was a 1 cm aperture and a considerable amount of sand found its way in, most of it accumulating at the head end.

The wood of the coffin has suffered from humidity, particularly its foot end, which is now missing from below the knees down. Its length was approximately 1.20 m, but what remains today is 90 x 29 x 25 cm, the box’s interior being 22 cm wide at shoulder-level. The coffin was cut out of a single log of sycamore, and rudely carved (Fig. 16). The squared headdress, sharp facial features and prominent chest, combined with the absence of crossed arms or the outline shape of the shoulders, reminds one of the stick-šabtis common in Seventeenth/early Eighteenth Dynasty burials at Dra Abu el-Naga. Despite the fact that it was never decorated, not even whitewashed, it could be classified as pertaining to the ṛishi-coffin type.

The body was deposited inside the coffin on its right side, and since the coffin was placed on the ground on the left side, the body twisted and ended up resting on its back and facing up. A mat made of as yet uniden-

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**Fig. 15** - View of Sector 10, with the coffin of the eleven-year-old boy lying on the ground sidewise. Shaft UE 1007 is not yet visible. At the back, the mud-brick chapel UE 1002 aligned with its shaft (UE 1010).
tified plant fibres was laid over the feet, and extended to the torso, covering at least half of the ribs (Fig. 16). The body itself was wrapped in at least eleven different qualities of linen, the study of which is still pending. The limbs were not wrapped separately, and several pieces of cloth were just placed on the body and among the bandages to provide bulk and protection. At least seven layers of linen fabrics of different quality were used to wrap most of the body, with knots being used to lengthen or secure the bandages, wherever necessary. The best quality linen (tentatively identified as the shroud) was used externally. The head, generally the most protected part of the mummy, only boasted five layers of textile. Some short dark brown silky hair was noted on the skull. The body (object no. 2103) belongs to an infant male. Some of the bones ended up misplaced prior to the re-

Fig. 16 - Coffin and mummy of the eleven-year-old boy (UE 1006)

Fig. 17 - Coffin of the five-year-old child lying sidewise and fixed with stones
covery, a vertebra having been found at the feet. Despite missing several vertebrae, his estimated height would have been around 1.30 m. Based on dental eruption\textsuperscript{32} the child would have been eleven years old at the age of death. He exhibits a mixed dentition. With the exception of the canines, premolars and third molars, presumably within their crypts, the extant permanent teeth all exhibit minimal wear, \textit{i.e.}, grades 0 to 1 based on the method in the Arizona State University Dental Anthropology System (\textit{Turner et al.}, in \textit{Kelley, Larsen} (eds.), \textit{Advances in Dental Anthropology}). Also based on the latter system, he has simple crown and root morphology with one exception: Grade 3 and 2 metaconulid (\textit{i.e.} cusp 7), a high frequency sub-Saharan trait, is present on both lower first molars. This feature is suggestive of potential south to north gene flow. None of his teeth exhibit caries, linear \textit{enamel hypoplasia}, or other pathology. He had excellent oral health. The child was covered in royal purple coloured patches (Munsell 2.5R 2/2), probably caused by a fungus.

The coffin of the eleven-year-old boy was found undisturbed, apparently unseen by the people that cleared the nearby shaft and re-buried Neb’s coffin in it. Its discovery shows how the area had remained unaltered since the Saite Period (a mummification deposit with pottery of this period was found at the top of the funerary shaft UE 1010), or since the Twenty-first Dynasty and Third Intermediate Period, when this area of the necropolis was heavily looted, reused and then rearranged by Amun priests. Unexpectedly, the houses and inhabitants of the modern village of Dra Abu el-Naga that were standing three metres above the child’s coffin until January 2007 did not damage the ancient necropolis.\textsuperscript{33} Thus, this is not the only intact infant burial unearthed in Sector 10: in February 2013 another coffin was found 9.5 m to the north, also resting sidewise on the ground (see plan in Fig. 2, Fig. 17).

The burial of a five-year-old child

The coffin was, again, cut out from a single log of sycamore and hollowed out inside (\textit{pl. xxii}). The anthropoid lid was carved with much more detail than the other one, indicating the shape of the eyes, mouth and nose (its tip is now broken), except for the ears that are not shown. The headdress has a rounded top, with two lappets going down over a protruding chest. The junction of the neck and shoulders is indicated by an incised horizontal line crossing the lappets and running on both sides. The foot end sticks out, but not excessively. The coffin was coated with a light whitewash, but it was not over-painted or inscribed.

It measures 93 x 29 x 24 cm, and its interior 85 x 21 cm. The thickness of the box varies between 3.2 and 4 cm and it seems to have unevenly applied red paint or red wash on it, with two holes at the end of each side to fix in four dowels that were attached to the lid, so that they would remain joined together. However, there was an aperture of 1 cm and some sand consequently entered in.

The mummy was placed inside the coffin deliberately sideway (\textit{pl. xxii}), since the width of the inner space is 21 cm and the width of the mummy’s shoulders is 19 cm. This feature seems to be a transitional stage from Middle Kingdom practices to those of the New Kingdom. The body was deposited on its left side, and since the coffin was placed on the ground also on the left side, the corpse ended up facing down, most probably by accident.

Inside the coffin, the mummy\textsuperscript{34} was covered with three to four layers of bandages, with those closest to the body being denser and of better quality. There was more linen on the head and this too was of superior quality. The bandages were covered and further secured with ties located at the neck, hips, knees and ankles, with one knot on the head. Although the bandages hold the shape of the body, much of the flesh has vanished and the bones show through in several places. The flesh on the torso is preserved. The mummification of the child was basic to say the least. Through the dentition shown in the x-ray, an age of about 3-4/4-5 years old can be estimated. The infant’s sex, though, is difficult to ascertain at this early age.

The coffin was found with its head end to the northwest and facing north (west?)\textsuperscript{35}. In order to keep it lying sidewise, it was fixed with mid-size stones placed against the chest and the back (Fig. 17), similar to how it was done for the other infant’s coffin. And yet again, the coffin was not covered with any kind of protection, and not a single piece of funerary equipment was found around it.

Other \textit{rishi}-coffins were interred without any kind of protection or superstructure, like the one found by Petrie north of Dra Abu el-Naga, at the other side of the road to the Valley of the Kings,\textsuperscript{36} and indeed this circumstance is not exclusive to burials of this period.\textsuperscript{37} At this point,\textsuperscript{38} the study of the wrapping and human remains is still in process, conducted by Salima Ikram and Roxie Walker.

\textsuperscript{32} The dental study was conducted on the site by Joel Irish.

\textsuperscript{33} Topographical data taken in 2003. When the houses were demolished and after the debris was cleared, the ground level in 2012 was 2.50 m above the coffin.

\textsuperscript{34} It has to be kept in mind that the magnetic north/north-west corresponds to the ideal or ideological west for the ancient Egyptians.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Petrie, Qurneh}, 6-10, pls. 22-9.

\textsuperscript{37} Excavating the open courtyard of Djehuty’s tomb-chapel (TT 11) we have unearthed unprotected burials, with the coffin lying on the ground and very little or no funerary equipment,
it has to be remembered that even the gilded coffin of
Queen Ahhotep was found lying on the ground, appa-
rently without any protection, just buried in rubble; and
one year earlier, in December 1857, Mariette’s work-
men had discovered in the same area of Dra Abu el-Na-
ga north the coffin of Kamose, last king of the Seven-
teenth Dynasty, also lying on the ground and resting on
its right side.\(^{38}\) Even coffins deposited inside rock-cut
tombs were occasionally placed sidewise, as recorded
by Carter in el-Birabi, to the south of Dra Abu el-Naga.\(^{39}\)

Going back to the coffins of the two infants, both
were found within the same stratum, UE 1001.\(^{40}\) This
second coffin lay half a metre higher up than the former,
but this is only due to the northwest-southeast sloping
down of the hillside. Very near the latter, a huge pottery
deposit of about 2,000 vessels was unearthed (see plan
in Fig. 2). Most were lying to the northwest, 90 cm higher
than the coffin, nevertheless all the pieces can be dated
to the Seventeenth/early Eighteenth Dynasty. It does not
seem to have been part of a funerary equipment thrown
outside the tomb by looters (as is the case for the pot-
tery around the shafts UE1005 and 1010), but the way
the vases were piled up seems to indicate that they were
votive offerings. Thus, the pottery deposit is most proba-

38 MÉNIAUX, Rishi Coffins, 54-6; WINLOCK, JEA 10, 260.
39 CARNAROT, CARTER, Five Years’ Explorations at Thebes, 62,
pl. 53(3), Pit Tomb No. 32: “Second chamber – a Rishi coffin be-
longing (?) to the original burial. It was found lying on its right
side in a space on the floor especially cleared for it, and was
bound at head and foot with palm fibre cords”.\(^{40}\)
40 Note that the rishi-coffin found by Petrie was accompanied
by a rectangular whitewashed box containing the burial of an
infant (see above n. 36). On infant burials, see MÉSKELL, Private
life, 79-83; DUNAND, ed., Naissance et petite enfance
dans l’Antiquité, 13-32; TRISTAN, in NENNA (ed.), L’Enfant
et la mort dans l’Antiquité II, 15-59. Note that “published cem-
tery data record very few infant and juvenile burials”, as re-
marked by RICHARDS, Society and Death, 66, and see also 97,
169-70, 174; and note the conclusion by the archaeologists ex-
cavating in the South Tombs Cemetery at Amarna, that “there
is no sign that any one area was zoned off for infant burials”, in
KEMR, JEA 99, 2-14. We are grateful to Andrés Diego Espinel
and Francisco L. Borrego for their comments and bibliograph-
ical references on this topic.

30 cm above it, a sandstone block was found, bearing
a relief scene showing “Hathor, chief of the necropolis’
mountain”, being approached and adored by a missing
figure, identified as “…the king’s son”, Intefmose. Be-
hind the standing figure of the goddess and looking in
the opposite direction, a male standing figure is wear-
ning the white crown, preceded by the inscription “King
of Upper and Lower Egypt”. Unfortunately, the block,
probably part of a lintel, is broken where the royal name
must have been carved. The inscribed block was thrown
away by looters who must have vandalised and broken
into pieces a sandstone structure near by. A second in-
scription, this time on a limestone stela, dedicated to the
“king’s son” Intefmose was found in the vicinity, which
seems to indicate that his tomb must be in this area.

Archaeological context

At the same level on the hillside as the two inscriptions
of Intefmose mentioned above, a funerary shaft was exca-
vated (UE 110; see plan in Fig. 2), at the bottom of
which a third inscription was found. It is the base of an
octagonal limestone obelisk, with an offering formula
dedicated “to the ka of the king’s son, Intefmose, true
of voice”. The obelisk could have fallen down from the
entrance of the mud-brick chapel built to the northwest
of the shaft, and may be used as circumstantial evidence
to tentatively identify this complex as the tomb-chapel
of the Seventeenth Dynasty prince Intefmose.\(^{41}\)

A similar mud-brick tomb-chapel complex was exca-
vated only three metres away from the shaft where Neb
was re-buried (UE 1002 and 1010; see plan in Fig. 2). It
was robbed in antiquity and, consequently, some of the
material associated with its original owner was found
thrown inside the chapel and around the shaft’s curb,
but also at its bottom end. The inscribed objects seem
to point out that the owner was called Ahmose-Sapair:
three stick-shabti bear the name ‘Ahmose-Sapair’ writ-
ten in hieratic; a fourth has an offering formula written
along six horizontal lines in cursive hieroglyphs, dedi-
cated “to the ka of Ahmose”; a fifth one has a shorter
offering formula also dedicated “to the ka of the king’s
[son, Ahmose]” (the vertical inscription ends on the fig-
ure’s right side and is blurred). A sixth stick-shabti,
the one found at the bottom of the shaft, has the name Ah-

41 Prince Intefmose was known until now through (1) a shab-
ti kept at the British Museum (EA 13329), see e.g. WINLOCK,
Rise and Fall, pl. 47, where king Sobekemsaf is also men-
tioned; and through (2) a scribal statue now in the
Manchester Museum (5051), found not far away from our site,
on the plain in front of Dra Abu el-Naga, “beneath the temple
of Nebunef”, see PETRIE, Qurneh, 12, pl. XXX.3.
mose written on the torso and legs in big signs (it is not clear if there were a couple more signs at the end of the inscription). The name of the latter, unlike in the rest of the occasions, is exceptionally written with the moon-sign facing up, and it is preceded by a schematic striding male figure holding a staff on one hand, probably sign A21 for wr/sr. Moreover, among the inscribed linen, one torn fragment preserves “[...] his son, Ahmose [...]”, and a second complete tissue is labelled “daiu-linen made for Ahmose-Sapair”.

While it is true that shabtis have been found in situ bearing other names than the tomb-owner’s (two with the name Sapair and Ahmose-Sapair were found in the tomb of Tetik), there seems to be enough circumstantial evidence to argue that this funerary complex belonged to Ahmose-Sapair. However, the fact that the title “king’s son” is only attested once (and on a blurred, debatable section), being absent from the rest of the references, and that the name Ahmose is most of the time written with the moon-sign facing down, one has to be extra-cautious and refrain from concluding that the objects found were part of the funerary equipment of the revered prince Ahmose-Sapair, wherever his tomb may be. Indeed, other not so well-known individuals were named likewise.

The funerary shaft located just two metres to the southeast (UE 1005; see plan in Fig. 2) was also plundered in antiquity, the robbers leaving behind small objects of the original funerary equipment. Among them was a calcite scarab with the inscription “son of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt”.

After four seasons excavating southwest of the courtyard of Djehuty’s tomb-chapel (TT 11), in Sector 10, it seems reasonable to suppose that Djehuty chose to build his funerary monument within the necropolis of the royal family and courtiers of the Seventeenth and very early Eighteenth Dynasty, which in turn had developed in an area already occupied by Middle Kingdom burials and rock-cut tombs. In this context, the location of the infants’ burials and the re-burial of Neb’s coffin in the Third Intermediate Period can also be better understood. Still, future excavations in Dra Abu el-Naga may shed more light on the arrangement and successive use of this populated area of the Theban necropolis.

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42 CARNARVON, CARTER, Five Years’ Explorations at Thebes, 19-21, pls. 10-2; DAVIES, JEA 11, 10-3.

43 It has to be noted that inscribed stick-shabtis usually do not mention the owner’s titles; see WIELAN, 17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis. On the title “king’s son”, see SCHMITZ, Untersuchungen zum Titel s3-njswt; MINIACI, in PERNIGOTTI, ZECCHI (eds.), Il tempio e il suo personale, 99-131; SHIRLEY, in MORENO GARCIA (ed.), Ancient Egyptian Administration, 548-56.

44 VANDERSLEYEN, Iahmès Sapair; VAN ASCHE, JSSEA 37, 113-21; ANDREWS, in DODSON, JOHNSTON, MONKHOUSE (eds.), A Good Scribe, 1-6.

45 The pyramidion of Ahmose-Sapair must have been found by Spiegelberg only 20-30 metres southwest from this shaft (and “2 m above the gebel”), since the latter is 35 m away from here’s tomb-chapel, and on January 10 1899 Spiegelberg was working about 60 metres away from it, considering the location of the House of Idris Awad on the sketch map drawn the day before, in SPIEGELBERG, Fundjournal, 58b, 62. It has to be noted, that the name Ahmose-Sapair is written on the obelisk with the moon-sign facing up, and it is preceded by the title “king’s son”, see also NORTHAMPTON, SPIEGELBERG, NEWBERRY, Report on some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis, p. 17. On the removal, re-burial and possible identificiation of Ahmose-Sapair’s mummy and coffin, see above n. 15. It has been assumed since Winlock’s interpretation of Papyrus Abbott, that the tomb of prince Ahmose-Sapair was in Dra Abu el-Naga south, near the area known as el-Birabi, an assumption that seemed to be supported by the proximity of Tetik’s tomb-chapel (TT 15), where two stick-shabtis bearing his name were found: Sapair (UC 40212) and Ahmose Sapair (UC 40213, with the moon-sign facing down!); see WIELAN, 17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis, 10-4, 118-20. This hypothesis, together with Vandersleyen’s use of the moon-sign as dating criteria, needs to
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