

Preliminary Report of the Waseda University Excavations at Dahshur North: Tenth Season, 2004-2005

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Abstract

The mission of the Institute of Egyptology, Waseda University, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sakuji Yoshimura and Masahiro Baba as the field director, resumed their field work at Dahshur North from December 23rd 2004 and continued until January 14th 2005. During this season the excavation concentrated on an area of 10 m square and four tombs (shafts 41, 42, 43, 44) around the Ramesside tomb of *Ta wab-lector priest of Ptah* which was discovered during the last season. The highlight of the season was the discovery of an intact tomb (shaft 42) where we found a complete coffin containing a mummy with a cartonnage mask. The coffin has inscriptions on the exterior surfaces which suggest that this interment is *Senw, Commander*, probably dating to the Middle Kingdom. Moreover, an intact pit-burial from the New Kingdom furnished with various burial goods was uncovered.

Introduction

The mission of the Institute of Egyptology, Waseda University, directed by Prof. Dr. Sakuji Yoshimura and Masahiro Baba as the field director, conducted the Tenth field work at Dahshur North from December 23rd 2004 until January 14th 2005¹. The site is located in the lower desert 2 km north of the Red pyramid of Sneferu and 1 km northwest of the pyramid of Senwosret III, which consists of several tombs with superstructures, a large number of the shaft-tombs and simple pit-burials. Until the eighth season in 2002, our excavations had been concentrated on two areas in the centers of which the tombs of *Ipay* and *Pashedw* respectively are situated (Fig. 1)². The mud-brick superstructure of *Ipay*'s tomb is massive similar in scale to the tomb of *Horemheb* in Saqqara³, although only its foundations remain. The subterranean rooms of *Ipay*'s tomb were originally made around the later Eighteenth Dynasty, but they were re-used for the burials in the Nineteenth Dynasty. Most conspicuously, a huge granite sarcophagus of *Mes, Royal Scribe and Steward* in the reign of *Rameses II* was uncovered in the inner-most room of *Ipay*'s subterranean tomb. The total assemblage of the

objects scattered in the tomb of *Ipay* suggests that this tomb was used mainly during the "Post-Amarna" period. In the other area south of *Ipay*'s tomb, there was the tomb of *Pashedw* which was built of limestone with a small pyramid at the rear. In the substructure, there is a sarcophagus pit revetted with limestone slabs probably dated to the Ramesside period⁴. There are few objects with the name of *Pashedw* from the tomb but we can identify his titles from other tombs; *Steward, Overseer of the Gateway, Seal Bearer of the King of Lower Egypt and Fan Bearer to the Right of the King*.

Excavations in these tombs and in the vicinity had been almost completed, therefore, from the ninth season in 2004, a new area was designated that of a small mound approximately 100 m to the west of *Ipay*'s tomb, where there was a sand depression in the center and some architectural remains had already been identified during the general survey in 1996 (Fig. 1). In excavating the small mound, as was expected, it proved to be a typical tomb-chapel built of limestone with a shaft 40 in the center of its courtyard, the superstructure of which had been totally destroyed. The tomb-owner could be identified as *Ta, wab-lector priest of Ptah* from the inscriptions on relief blocks and

funerary objects. The most conspicuous finds of all were relief blocks (at least 3.5 m wide) with a scene depicting a group of gods on a solar boat. On this scene a child sitting on the bow of the boat was represented, which points to a characteristic representation of a “night-bark”⁵. There is no other relief depicting such a scene among the private tombs in Saqqara, but can only be found in tombs in Thebes⁶.

In the course of the last excavation, two shafts (41, 42) were newly identified around the tomb of *Ta*, but they had to be left unexcavated due to lack of time. Therefore, the objective of the present season was to concentrate on the excavations of shafts 41 and 42, and an area of 10 m square (grid 3E21d, 3E22c, 3E31b, 3E32a) which was chosen in order to check the superstructure of *Ta*'s tomb.

The Grid Excavation (Fig. 1)

The superstructure of *Ta*'s tomb was found completely destroyed, though only a part of the southern outer wall (0.58-0.6m thick) of the central court and some pavement blocks in certain areas remained. During this season, therefore, in order to figure out the extent of the superstructure, a four 5 × 5m grid (3E21d, 3E22c, 3E31b, 3E32a) was opened, where there was a sand depression slanting down towards the north-east. Work started by removing the sand on the surface. A *tafla* floor overlaying the bedrock appeared 60 cm below the foundation of *Ta*'s tomb. There were holes and a hard patchy surface with pottery sherds

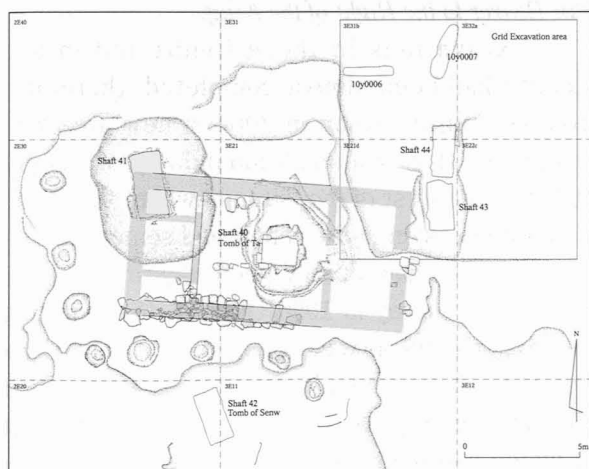


Fig. 1 Plan of the excavation area

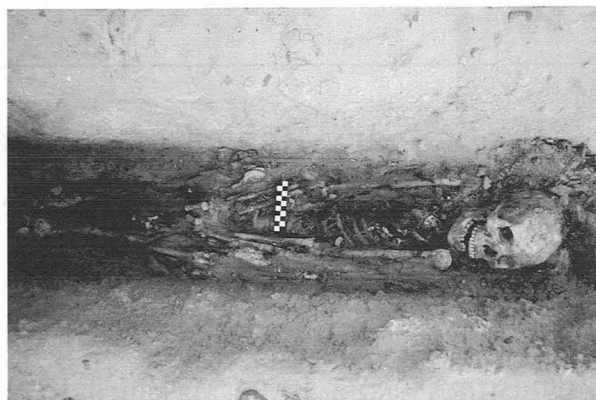


Plate 1 Simple pit-burial (10y0006)

on the *tafla* floor, which indicates that activity had occurred at this level. And two new shafts (shaft 43, 44) appeared on the *tafla* floor. Furthermore, two burials wrapped in palm mat were found in the pits cut into the bedrock. One burial (10y0007) was completely disturbed, but seems to have been furnished with a gravestone and be covered with mudbrick, while the other (10y0006) remained completely intact (Pl. 1). This individual seemed to be that of a young female who had rich ornaments such as earrings, necklaces and bracelets of beads and amulets. Moreover, the burial was equipped with a pottery jar with a lid of sherd and a small wooden box near the head, and a wooden shabti near the food. From the view point of the style of this wooden shabti, this burial can be dated to the late Eighteenth or early Nineteenth Dynasty (see below). In this cemetery we have uncovered many simple burials, but almost all of them were unfortunately disturbed. Therefore, this discovery gives us valuable information about burial customs in the New Kingdom.

A study of the stratigraphy of the grid sections shows a thin foundation layer made by the limestone chips on the *tafla* probably originated from digging the shaft of *Ta*'s tomb, and below it, one compact thick layer filled with pure yellow sand. This yellow sand stratum forms a mound over the *tafla* floor, on which the superstructure of *Ta*'s tomb was build. But it remains unknown whether the yellow sand accumulated artificially or naturally.

This excavation helps us to fix the length of superstructure as being approximately 12m based on the stratigraphy of the east-west section. This

fits in with our estimation from the last season.

Excavation of the shaft-tombs

Shaft 41 (Fig. 2-1)

This shaft is situated to the west of the shaft belonging to the *Ta*'s tomb. Already during the previous season this shaft was identified and some clearance works had been conducted around the entrance. The entrance was made in the bedrock and oriented north-south. The entrance size is 2.7 × 1.25m which is the largest in this cemetery. The shaft itself is 7.3 m in depth, leading to a room (Room A) at the south. This room is in the shape of a rectangular pit (3.15 × 1.15m with 2.5m in depth), which seems to be done on purpose for the emplacement of the coffin. Actually parts of a huge very damaged rectangular wooden coffin were found *in situ*. Furthermore the shelves are furnished on both the long length sides of room A, which suggests that the coffin had been covered with limestone slabs that we found in room C of shaft 40 during last season. Some reliefs (see below) and limestone blocks probably belonging to the superstructure of *Ta* were uncovered in the debris of the shaft itself.

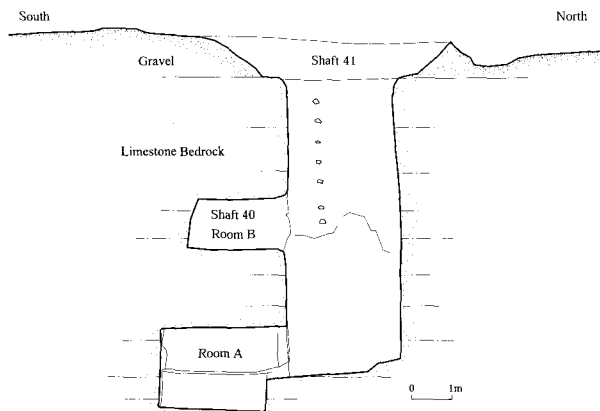


Fig. 2-1 Shaft 41 Section (North-South)

Shaft 42 (Fig. 2-2)

The existence of this shaft was also known in the previous season. The shaft 42 (1 × 2.2m north-south) is located immediately to the south of the southern wall of *Ta*, but the level of the shaft entrance is 1.3m below the basement of the superstructure of *Ta*. The shaft itself was filled with *tafla* chunks and many brown rocks in the upper layer, which was not the same as in the case of the other

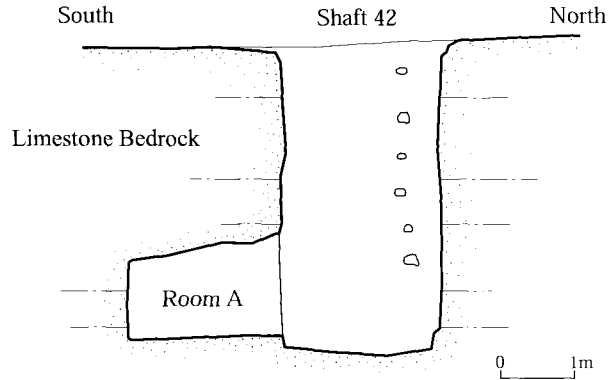


Fig. 2-2 Shaft 42 Section (North-South)

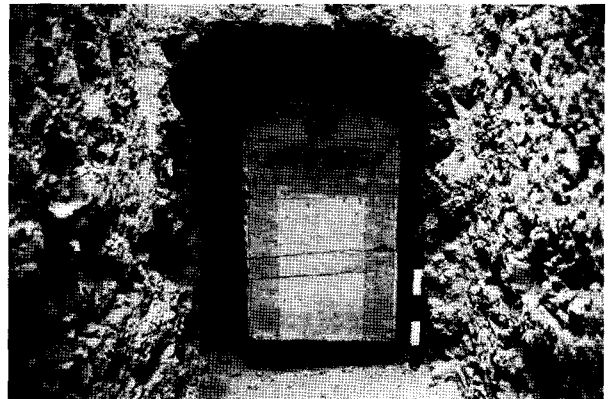


Plate 2 An intact coffin *in situ*

shafts. At a depth of 2.6m to the south side of the shaft opened into the room A, in which an intact wooden coffin was discovered (Pl. 2). Funerary equipment consisted only of a pottery bowl found beside the coffin.

Shaft 43 (Fig. 2-3)

This shaft (1 × 1.9m north-south) was found alongside shaft 44. At a depth of 1.4m the shaft itself turned out to be incomplete. It is interesting to note that the retaining wall with limestone slabs was laid along the northern rim of the shaft.

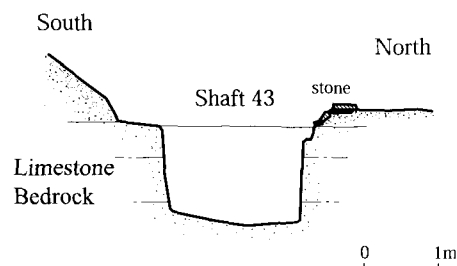


Fig. 2-3 Shaft 43 Section (North-South)

Shaft 44 (Fig. 2-4)

This shaft (0.9 × 2.1m north-south) is lined and revetted with mudbrick carved into the bedrock wall. The shaft leads to a room (Room A) on the south at a depth of 4.2m. Room A was totally disturbed where many fragments of wooden coffin and pottery sherds were found amongst the debris.

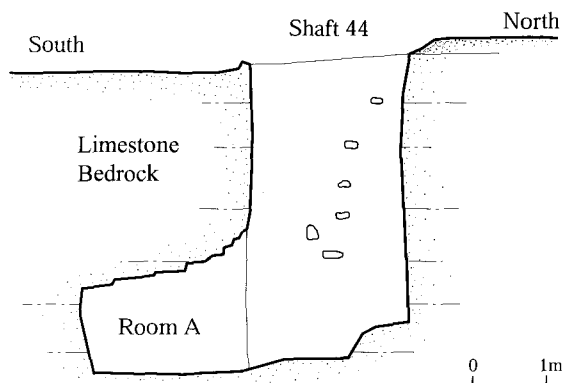


Fig. 2-4 Shaft 44 Section (North-South)

The date of all these shaft-tombs was earlier than the tomb-chapel of *Ta* because they were covered by limestone chips and *tafla* used for the foundation of *Ta*'s tomb.

Finds

Selected objects found during this season are as follows;

- 1) Wooden shabti (Fig. 3-1, Pl. 3): This complete shabti takes form of a mummiform painted Polychrome which was found near the foot of the individual (10y0006). There is no inscription except *3sir* on the front foot. (l. 18.8, w. 5.2, t 3.1cm). The characteristic features of the shabti is the *Wsekh*-collor, the elaborate wig and the red, black and white paint, which suggest a date of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Dynasty⁷.

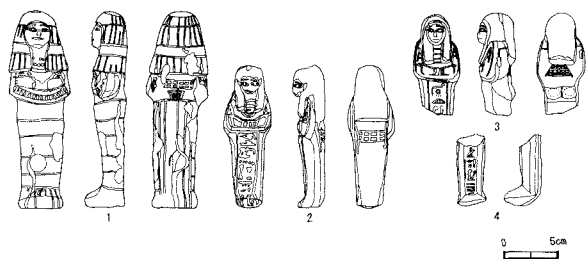


Fig. 3 Shabtis



Plate 3 Wooden shabti

- 2) Faience shabti (Fig. 3-2): This blue faience shabti was recovered from debris in Room A of Shaft 41. This figurine (L: 13.7cm, W: 4.5cm) has the name and title of *Ta* on the front, which is exactly the same as the group of shabtis found in the tomb of *Ta* from last season.
- 3) Pottery shabtis (Fig. 3-3, 4, Pl. 4): These shabtis were excavated 'en masse' from the sand debris of the 3E32a grid. All are broken, apart from one or two of them with their vivid paint still remaining (very roughly coated in yellow and blue, inscribed in black ink), the inscriptions of which can be read as *shd 3sir* on the one (Fig. 3-3), and // *t3iry(t) m3'(t)-hrw m 3sir* on the other (Fig. 3-4), the latter is



Plate 4 Pottery shabtis

probably a part of a name.

4) Ornamental objects (Fig. 4, Pl. 5) (all from 10y0006 burial)

*Bracelet: This bracelet consists of amulets (made of carnelian) shaped of *Wedjet* (l. 2cm, w.2.9, t.0.6cm) (Fig. 4-1) and Scarab (Fig.4-2) and beads, found on the right wrist.

*Earrings: The reddish ones are made of glass (Fig. 4-3), a dark blue one made of some precious stone (Fig. 4-4). The individual wore two rings (red and blue) on the left ears and one (red) on the right. (dia. 1.8cm, thick. 0.8cm)

*Faience ring (Fig. 4-5): This blue faience ring (dia. 2.2cm, thick. 0.6cm) remained *in situ* on the third finger of the left hand. On its bezel some motif was carved but unclear.

*Scarab and Barrel-shaped Bead: The scarab (l. 1.9cm, w.1.3, t.0.9cm) (Fig. 4-6) is made of some sort of stone, and Barrel-shaped bead (Fig. 4-7) is made of faience⁸. These were all found together on the left wrist.

*Amulet ring: This consists of tiny scarabs and a frog made of stones and beads, which was found around the left hand.

*Necklaces: This is made of two strings; the top string consists of red beads and the bottom one consists of tiny faience figures of gods in various shapes, which was found around the neck⁹.

5) Pottery: A number of fragments of pottery were found this season. The pottery particularly found in the shafts are generally complete, even if broken, they can be refitted.

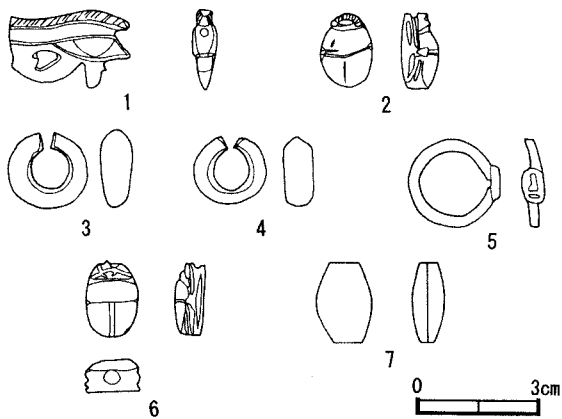


Fig. 4 Ornamental Objects

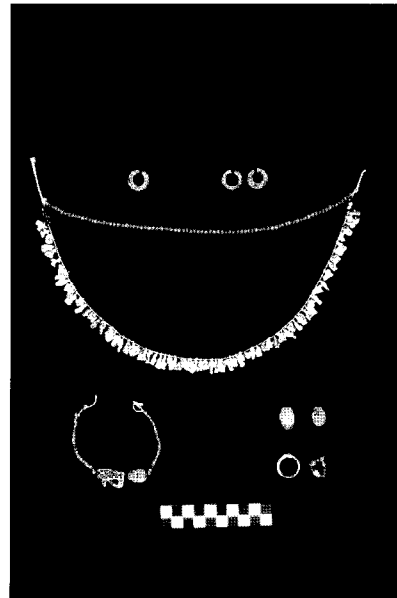


Plate 5 Ornamental objects

A large plate with a flat-base and characteristic by its extremely uneven rim was found broken against the eastern side of the coffin in the shaft 42 (Fig. 5-5)¹⁰. This is the only burial goods for the deceased of the coffin. Another three miniature dishes¹¹ were unearthed from shafts 41 and 44 (Figs. 5-1~3), all of which are likely to be foundation deposits of the shafts. In the intact pit-burial a complete large jar with a flat-base (Fig. 5-4) was furnished with a pottery lid sherd near the head.

6) Sunk-Reliefs: Also this season, many fragmented pieces of relief blocks were uncovered. Here two good preserved sunk-reliefs are reported on. The one (Fig. 6-1) (h. 39cm, w. 73cm) was uncovered from the sand debris of the 3E21d grid square, which has part of a sun-disc of Isis and an inscription on

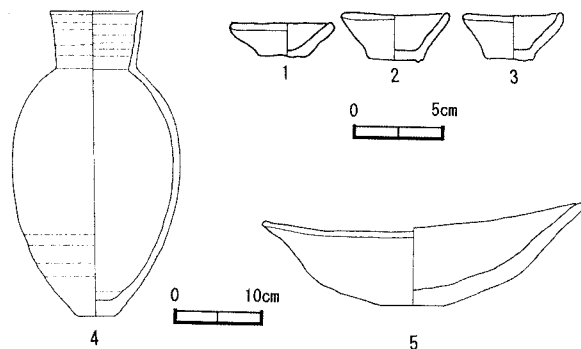


Fig. 5 Pottery



Fig. 6 Reliefs

its left; *3st mwt ntr 3sir w^cb hry-ḥbt n Pth III ʿk n pr III t3 m3^c-ḥrw n pr m III*. And the other sunk-relief (Fig. 6-2) was unearthed in the debris of the shaft 44. On the front facing side the lower part of two people (probably the deceased and his wife) wearing long kilts and sandals are represented. Besides, on the right facing side part of a shoulder and the back of a head are visible.

Wooden Coffin and Mask of *Senw*

The intact wooden coffin found in the shaft 42 is box-shaped (182 × 105 × 57 cm), all the sides of which are painted yellow, and bear the text columns in blue paint (Fig. 7, Pl. 6). On the one-side a *Wedjet* panel is represented. Inside, a mummy wearing a cartonnage mask and wrapped with a fine linen was laid down (Pl. 7). There is no decoration on the interior. From the text columns of the outer coffin it could be identified that the owner's title is *3tw* and the name is *snw*. The title *3tw* means "commander" which is commonly seen in the military sector of the Middle Kingdom¹².

The text columns are situated on both the long sides, the ends, and the lid, the layout of which corresponds to the "Type IVaa" of Harco

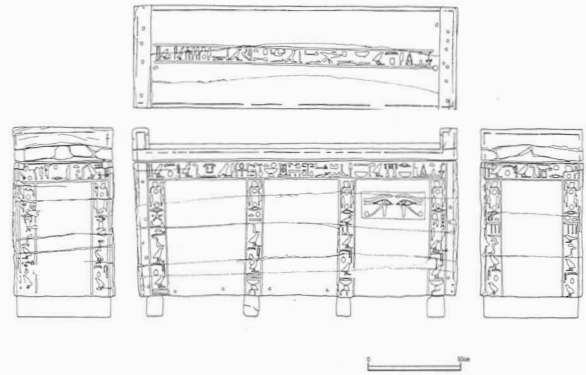


Fig. 7 Wooden Coffin of Senw

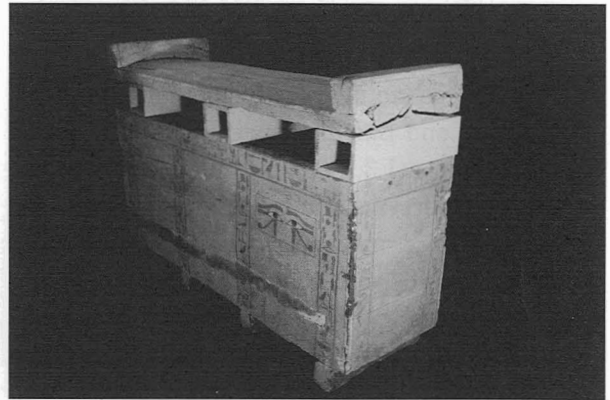


Plate 6 Coffin

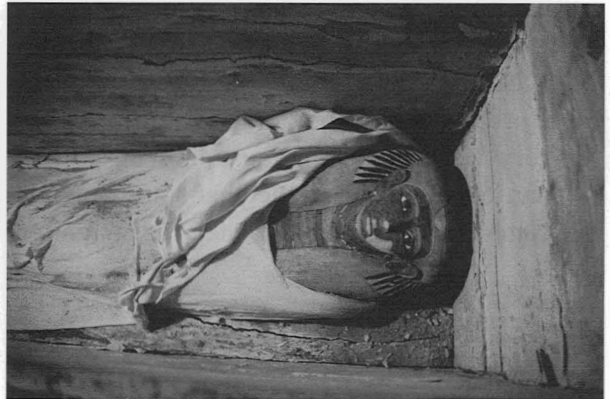


Plate 7 Mummy with Cartonnage mask

Willems's typology¹³. The horizontal texts on both the long sides and on the lid are a standard style, *ḥtp di nswt* and *prt-ḥrw*. The vertical texts on all the sides and the horizontal texts on the ends have the *im3hy hr* phrases, which are also very common in the Middle Kingdom coffin. The deities appearing in the columns are also very typical; Osiris and Anubis on the long sides, Isis and Nephtys, Serqt

and Neith, Great and Little Enneads on the ends¹⁴.

The cartonnage mask has features such as a blue beard with pivots for the false beard, a blue modeled wig and a broad collar, all of which are characteristic of a Middle Kingdom coffin. Moreover, feathered decorations are represented entirely in full on the head. This suggests its date as in the latter part of the Middle Kingdom¹⁵. Strangely, the coffin was incorrectly placed as the *Wedjet* panel facing to the west, but the mummy is properly oriented to the north.

In summary, the style of the text column type on the coffin and the mask, and his title suggests that this coffin dates to the Middle Kingdom, especially to the latter part.

Conclusion

Although this season was very short, we excavated the area around the tomb of *Ta* found last season, consequently an intact coffin probably dated to the Middle Kingdom or the Second Intermediate Period. This discovery let us to reconsider the chronological framework of this site.

Moreover the intact simple burial wrapped with palm matting gave us a great amount of information about the burial customs in ancient times. Further excavation and study should shed further light on the intriguing study of funerary practices relevant to the various classes in the Memphite area.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the members of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), in particular to Dr. Zahi Hawass (Secretary General of SCA) and Mr. Magdy al-Ghandur (Chairman of the department of Foreign Missions) for granting us the permission for our mission. Thanks are also due to Mr. 'Atef Abu al-Dahab, Mr. Kamal Wahid, Mr. 'Usama 'Abdes al-Salam al-Shimy of the Saqqara Inspectorate, and special thanks are due to Dr. Samy Hasain, Chief Inspector of the Dahshur Inspectorate, and Mr. 'Adel Ragab, Inspector of our mission for his kindness in every possible way.

Footnotes

- ¹ The staff of this season consisted of Prof. Dr. Sakuji Yoshimura (general director), Masahiro Baba (field director), Prof. Jiro Kondo, Ass. Prof. So Hasegawa, Mr. Masaki Koiwa, Miss Yoshiko Akiyama, Mr. Musashi Minamisawa, Kazuyoshi Nagaya and Miss Megumi Tsubono. The management and public relations were represented by Mr. Tatsundo Yoshimura and Mr. Muhammad al-'Ashry. We want to thank Mr. Takao Kikuchi for the textual studies on the coffin, and Mr. Masaki Koiwa for his drawing the excellent plan and sections of tombs.
- ² For the previous excavation reports, see S. Yoshimura and S. Hasegawa, "Ramesside Sarcophagus at Dahshur", *Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1999), 5-7; S. Yoshimura and S. Hasegawa, "New Kingdom Necropolis at Dahshur – The Tomb of Ipay and its vicinity-", in M. Bárta and Krejci (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000*, Prague, 2000, 145-160; S. Hasegawa, "The New Kingdom Necropolis at Dahshur" in Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century* vol. 1, Cairo, 229-233.
- ³ G.T. Martin, *The Memphite tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-chief of Tut'ankhamun I: The Reliefs, Inscriptions, and Commentary*, London, 1998.
- ⁴ A similar method of construction can be seen in the tomb of Tia and Tia, G. T. Martin, *The Tomb of Tia and Tia: A Royal Monument of the Ramesside Period in the Memphite Necropolis*, London, 1997, pl. 6.
- ⁵ Cf. J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism*, London, 1995, 49-50 n. 63. Generally in the "book of Amduat" or "Book of Gate" the solar boat is represented as a mere papyrus boat, but by the Twentieth Dynasty and later a differentiation between "day-bark" and "night-bark" in the "Book of Heaven" became clear. This suggests that the tomb can be dated to the Twentieth Dynasty, but further detailed studies must still be undertaken.
- ⁶ For a more detailed descriptive representation of both boats, see J. Assmann, *Grabung im Asasif: Das Grab der Mutirdis*, 1990, Mainz, Abb. 41.
- ⁷ For a similar example, see A. K. Capel and G. E. Markoe, *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven, Woman in Ancient Egypt*, New York, 1996, no. 76.
- ⁸ For a similar example, see G. O. B. E. Brunton and R. Engelbach, *Gurob*, London, 1927 pl. XLV.74.
- ⁹ There is no totally parallel examples but for a similar one, see A. Boyce, 1995: "Collar and Necklace designs at Amarna: A Preliminary Study of Faience Pendants", *Amarna Report VI* (1995), figs. 11.3., 11.5; *Gurob*, pl. XXV. 9-16.
- ¹⁰ For similar examples, see I. Hein and P. Janosi, *Tell El-Dab 'a XI, Areal A/V, Siedlungsrelikte der Späten 2. Zwischenzeit*, Wien, 2004, Abb.27; D. Polz and A. Seiler, *Die Pyramidenanlage des Königs Nub-Cheper-Re Intef in Dra 'Abu el-Naga* (AVDAIK 24), Mainz am Rhein, 2003, Abb. 20-3.

- ¹¹ Of all these miniature dishes the bases were all cut-off from the wheel by string. See *Tia and Tia*, 88, Cat. 30, 90-92.
- ¹² Cf. S. Quirke, *The Administration of Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom* (SIA Publishing), Surrey, 1990, 81-85; W.A. Ward, *Index of Egyptian administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom*, Beirut, 1982, 6.b
- ¹³ Harco Willems, *Chests of Life: A study of the Typology and Conceptual Development of Middle Kingdom Standard Class Coffins*, Leiden, 1988, 136-160. As for a parallel for the lid, *per-nu*-shape see J. de Morgan, *Fouilles a Dahchour Mars-Juin*, Vienne, 1895, pl. XXXVI.
- ¹⁴ Cf. *Chests of Life*, 138.
- ¹⁵ Cf. S. Ikram and A. Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity*, London, 1998, 169-170.