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Preliminary Report of Excavations at Dahshur North, Egypt

— 7th Field Season, 2001 —

Yoshimura, S. ¹, Kondo, J. ², Hasegawa, S. ³, Nakagawa, T. ⁴, and Nishimoto, S. ⁵

Introduction

The Institute of Egyptology, Waseda University carried out the 7th season’s excavation at Dahshur North in February and March 2001 ¹. We would like to express our thanks to Dr. Aly Gaballah (Secretary General, SCA), Dr. Zahi Hawwas (General Director, Giza Inspectorate), Mr. Adel Hassain, Mr. Sami Hassain, Mr. Adel Abd al-Rahman (Saqqara Inspectorate), and Mr. Nozomu Kawai (Johns Hopkins Univ.), for helping us to analyze inscriptions, as well as Mr. Masahiro Baba and other members of the Institute of Egyptology, Waseda University.

Since the beginning of these excavations, we have concentrated the research on the area called “The tomb of Ipay and its vicinity”, whose name and title, “Ipay, the Royal Scribe and the Royal Butler” ², were confirmed only by the mud brick stamps. The objects found in the subterranean chambers were dated to the Post-Amarna period, as is conspicuously indicated by the Ramesside sarcophagus found in the innermost place of Ipay’s tomb. As necropolis topography has come only from Saqqara, these Dahshur excavations encouraged discussion on expansion of the New Kingdom Memphite necropolis, and it became a goal to establish a chronological framework of the area.

¹ 早稲田大学人文科学部教授
² 早稲田大学文学部助教授
³ 早稲田大学理工学総合研究センター客員講師
⁴ 早稲田大学理工学部教授
⁵ 早稲田大学理工学部助教授

* ¹ Professor, School of Human Sciences, Waseda University.
* ² Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology, Waseda University.
* ³ Lecturer, Advanced Research Institute for Science and Engineering, Waseda University.
* ⁴ Professor, Department of Architecture, Waseda University.
* ⁵ Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Waseda University.
Research Methods (Fig.1)

Ipy's area was located at the southernmost desert hilltop at the site. From the chronological point of view, the N-W corner in the area was noteworthy for formation of the area. In particular, objects from Shaft 27 and Shaft 30 had similarities to those from Shaft 17 which revealed objects with the name of Tutankhamen<sup>3</sup>, and those shafts were probably dated to the earlier stage of shaft groups, that is the late 18 Dyn. Then we enlarged the western area of Ipy's tomb, where Shafts 23, 24, and 25 are distributed, and they contained a lot of shabtis, Ramesside scarabs, and a pottery coffin of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Intermediate period. Therefore, two grids of every 10 m (3D-87 and 3D-88) were prepared for the excavation to complete this western area. We additionally re-cleaned 3D-97 and 3E-07, and consequently we found that more than 40 simple burial pits and 3 shafts (Shafts 31, 32, and 33) were distributed at the area.

As for Ipy's tomb itself, we found that it was evidently constructed on the predated tomb with Shaft 22, and the chapel place of Ipy's tomb also seemed not to have been completed at one time. Only the outside area of the ramp remained still unclear, and we excavated that area, where the whole plan of the predated tomb and the project brick line of Ipy's tomb were revealed.

At the east side of Ipy's tomb, we made archaeological clearance for Shafts 13, 14 and 15. The largest Shaft 15, which seemed to have had a superstructure, could be identified on Lepsius's map<sup>4</sup>.

Remains
1) Area around Ipy's chapel ramp (Fig.1)

1: South area

Thick tafla layer might be resulted from the shaft digging around the ramp. Removing the tafla debris, Ipy's funeral stela was revealed. In front of the stela, wooden sticks, a jar docket with hieratic inscription, and a group of miniature cups were found. The brick line remained on the gravel, and Ipy's tomb plan seems to have been projected by it.

2: North area

Mud formed a pool-like depression, composed of fragmental pieces of brick and mud mortar, on which finger and footmarks remained. Once bricks and mud mortar seem to have been reused and prepared here. Open storage for bricks in a line piled diagonally, in which Ipy's stamped bricks were observed. Under the deposit, a predated tomb to Ipy's one was revealed, and its scale of the plan, composed of a court and tripartite inner room, was about one-third of Ipy's tomb (l: ca.15 m, w: ca.8 m).
2) Vestside of Ipay's tomb (Fig.1)

1: Shaft 31

Shaft 31 is located at 3D-97. The shaft (1.8 m × 0.9 m, NS axis) was well lined by bricks but incomplete in depth 3.5 m. A part of relief block representing the funeral procession was picked up from the deposit.

2: Shaft 32

Shaft 32 is located between 3D-97 and 3D-98. The shaft (1.4 m × 0.6 m, approximate NS axis) was lined by bricks and blocks, and an incomplete chamber with limestone door jambs were revealed at the north side in depth 5.3 m. A faience jar lid representing a floral design was found from its debris.

3: Shaft 33

Shaft 33 is located at 3D-88. The shaft (3.5 m × 2.5 m, approximate NS axis) was measured in depth 1.1 m. Brick lines remained around the shaft edge.

4: Simple burials

More than 40 simple burials were found at the west side of Ipay's tomb. The area is located at the lower hilltop, and the pits were dug on gravel. Some bodies were wrapped by reed mats or placed in wooden coffins (Fig.2, Pl.1) and in another case, bricks were used for the box and lid (Fig.3, Pl.2). Both adults and children were included in those individuals, and some had their heads pointing to the west, though others were pointing to the east. In case of the intact tomb, as bricks covered the burial, its body had a bronze finger ring bearing Ptah-em-pet's name on the ivory face and a wooden palette. Beside those objects, ivory earrings and wooden shabtis were unearthed in the burial pits.

3) Shaft clearance at the eastside of Ipay's tomb

1: Shaft 13 (Fig.4)

Shaft 13 is located at 4D-97. The shaft (2.1 m × 1.0 m, approximate EW axis) was lined by bricks, and it led to Room A (5 m × 5 m, h: 1 m) at the west side in depth 10 m. Room A led to the inner Room B (3 m × 4 m, h: 1.2 m), where a few pottery shards were scattered. Cover stones of the shaft had fallen down at the bottom of the shaft (Pl.3). The entrance of Room A was concave as if the room had once been tried to enlarge it (Pl.4). Fragmental pieces of a wooden coffin, faience tiles, scarabs with the name of Nebamon or with geometric designs, Amenophis III's faience ring, agate amulets and an alabaster cosmetic spoon were found from the deposit. Probable date: the late 18 Dyn.
2: Shaft 14 (Fig.5)

Shaft 14 is located between 4D-97 and 4D-98, which also seems to have been disturbed recently. The entrance of the shaft (2.1 m × 1.0 m, approximate EW axis) was lined by bricks, and Room A (4.2 m × 5 m, h: 1.7 m) was revealed at the west side in depth 6.5 m. Part of brick wall remained at the passage between the two rooms (Pl.5). A rock-cut rectangular pillar remained, and another one was unfinished (Pl.6). Room A led to inner Room B (2.6 m × 1.8 m, h: 1.2 m). Fragmental pieces of mortar sealing with illegible stamps remained at the entrance of Room B and an alabaster vessel with a base was found from the debris. A few pottery fragments were scattered on the floor of Room B.

3: Shaft 15 (Fig.6)

Shaft 15 is located at the central position of area 4D, at the southernmost isolated hilltop. We could observe a part of a floor along the shaft edge, and fragmental pieces of column bases were found from the debris, which suggested that the tomb had a superstructure. From the debris, very few objects and modern tools such as light poles, ropes, baskets and candles which were used by robbers, were found.

The shaft (2.6 m × 1.8 m, approximate EW axis) led to the entrances in depth 6.9 m at E and W sides. From Room A to Room D were led from the western entrance of shaft. Room A (3.5 m × 3.4 m) had a small Room B (2.7 m × 2 m) and a Room C (2.6 m × 2.1 m, 0.6 m above of the floor). In the innermost Room D (4.3 m × 4.3 m, h: 2 m), two rectangular burial pits (one pit: 2.7 m × 1.5 m, h: 1.4 m) covered by limestone slabs (h: ca.0.15 m), were found, which had been disturbed. At the eastern side, the shaft bottom led to Room E (3.3 m × 2.4 m), which was also disturbed.

Fragmental pieces of Pashedu’s statue, relief blocks representing a Hathor, an official wearing a kilt and the epithet of Anubis, faience shabti bearing the name Nereveptah and a faience amulet of Toth were found.

Finds

1) Relief Blocks

1: Fragmental piece of limestone block from Shaft 15 (Pl.11). Probably it is a Goddess Hathor or Isis with the sun disk.

2: Fragmental piece of a quartzite statue from Shaft 15 (Pl.12). On the back-pillar, Pashedu’s name is inscribed. In front, a breast wearing a kilt is represented.
2) Architectural Objects

1: Fragmental piece of limestone column from Shaft 15 (Pl.13); an official wearing a kilt.
2: Limestone base of a column with 22 cm dia. and 33 cm high from Shaft 15 (Pl.14). On the surface, an ear is represented by the incised line. Probably it is a practice work.
3: Limestone base of a column with 53 cm dia. and 15 cm high from Shaft 15 (Pl.15). On the surface, a man with a kilt is represented by and incised line. It seems to be a practice work.

3) Pottery

1: Marl clay large jar with a hieratic inscription; "Mrht 20 hnw" (Merhet oil, 20 henw) from a deposit at the south side of Ipay's chapel ramp. Its writing-style suggests that it can be dated to the Ramesside period (Pl.16).
2: A group of Nile Clay miniature cups picked up in a spot (Pl.17), from a deposit at the south side of Ipay's chapel ramp.

4) Stela

Limestone stela with pyramidal top (h: 46 cm) from a deposit at the south side of Ipay's tomb ramp. Anubis is represented at its topmost (Pl.18).

On the upper register: Ipy "šš nsut (m3f), mr.f, imy-r pr" (Royal Scribe, beloved by him, Steward) is seen adoring Osiris who is seated on his throne before a heaped offering table together with Isis and Nephthys⁹.

On the lower register: Facing Ipy with one hand raised in salutation and the other holding a probable incense, stands a man who is his son. Standing behind is also his son purifying Ipy, and his daughter is holding bread and a lotus bouquet for presentation. Behind her is a youth⁹.

5) Ornaments

1: Bronze ring with an ivory face, on which "s3t-nswt Hnw-t-m-pt, Nbt-k3, "s3t ht" (the King's daughter: Henutemtpet-Nebrtc-Ashathkhet) is inscribed (Pl.19), from a simple burial area at the west side of Ipay's tomb¹⁰.
2: Bronze ring with a faience scarab with the name Nb-imn (Nebamen) inscribed on the face (Pl.20)¹¹ from Shaft 13.
3: Faiience ring bearing the name Amenophis III (Nb-m3f-t-R⁷) on the face (Pl.21), from Shaft 13.
4: Faience ring with the motif of Bastet on the face (Pl.22), from a simple burial area at the west side of Ipay’s tomb.

5: Faience scarab with 6 concentric circles incised on the face (Pl.23) from Shaft 13.

6: A set of ivory earrings (Pl.24); Dia.: 3 cm, from a simple burial area at the west side of Ipay’s tomb.

7: Agate amulet representing Wedjet (Pl.25), from Shaft 13.

8: Agate amulet representing Horus (Pl.26), from Shaft 13.

9: Red breccia amulet representing Hapi (Pl.27), from Shaft 13.

10: Faience amulet representing Toth (Pl.28), from Shaft 15.

6) Tools and Shabtis

1: Alabaster cosmetic spoon in the shape of a mirror (Pl.29); L: 13 cm, W: 7 cm, from Shaft 13. It was elaborately smoothed and polished.

2: Alabaster vessel with a trumpet-shaped base (Pl.30); H: 8 cm, from Shaft 14. It was smoothed and polished elaborately, typifies a stone vase with a flat ledge rim and a long, slightly concave neck set off from a globular body.

3: Faience lid for a jar, decorated in floral design by black pigment (Pl.31); D: 9.5 cm, from a simple burial area and Shaft 32 at the west side of Ipay’s tomb.

4: Wooden shabtis with tripartite wigs colored by pigments, without inscriptions (Pl.32), from a simple burial area at the west side of Ipay’s tomb.

5: Faience shabti bearing the inscription “Nbt nht, Nfrw-pth (Mistress of Sicamore, Neferuuptah)” (Pl.33), from Shaft 15.

6: Fragmental pieces of faience plaques originally inlaid to a probable wooden box. Mortar is applied to those back surfaces. Some of them were inscribed with gold dust or pigments (Pl.34), from Shaft 13.

7: Wooden palette with a slot for storing reed pens and four inkwells, which still contained red ink (Pl.35), from a simple burial area at the west side of Ipay’s tomb.

8: Wooden sticks of with upper part are divided into branches. One restored stick measured 1.6 m (Pl.36), from a deposit, at the south side of Ipay’s tomb ramp.

Tentative Conclusion

This season, we have completed the survey of almost all of Ipay’s area. Simple burials were distributed mostly at the west side of Ipay’s tomb under the lower hill. Though most of the burials were disturbed and had scarce equipment, the assemblage suggested the New
Kingdom period, not so late than it.

Then we made clearance for three shafts at the east side of Ipay's tomb. Shaft 13 may be dated to the late 18 Dyn. Shaft 15, with a probable superstructure, had scarce objects, as it had been disturbed completely, but the box-type burial pits suggested it can be dated to the Ramesside period. The owner's name of the tomb is still unknown.

The name and title of "Ipay," previously only found on stamped mud bricks, ware supplemented by a funeral stela bearing the name "Ipy," suggesting a connection between "Ipy, Royal Scribe and Steward" who constructed a tomb in Amarna, and "Ipay," the tomb owner at Dahshur.

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1) This season's research was financially supported by a research grant from the Kajima Foundation.
2) Two versions: "Wsr st-nswt m3-hrw", "st-nswt m3 mr.f wbr-nswt w't 'wy lpy m3-hrw"
3) From Shaft 27: A golden finger ring with a carnelian Wedjet eye, a wooden waisted headrest, parts of an ivory game box called Senet, with playing pieces and knucklebones, etc. see Yoshimura, S., et al. 1999. Shaft 17: Jar sealing bearing the name of Tutankhamen, a necklace composed of faience beads in the shape of different kinds of flowers and fruit, etc. see Yoshimura, S., et al. 1998.
5) Western pit is constructed by limestone slabs attached to the bedrock by mortar. There is a similar sample of the box-type burial pit in the tomb of Tia and Tia (Martin et al., 1997, pl.6).
6) The personal name Pashdu has been known from some objects previously, whose epithets are "sdjty bity (seal-bearer of the King of lower Egypt)", "j3y-hw h r.f n nswt (fun-bearer on the right of the King)", "imy-r rwy (overseer of the gateway or the law-court)", "imy-ib h r m pr.f (favorite of Horus in his house)", "imy-r pr (steward)".
7) I hnw : ca.0.51 (cf. Faulkner, 1962, p.158).
8) cf. Martin, 1985, pl.12, Cats.7-9.
9) Probable similar example of both registers is from the vicinity of the tomb of Maya (Martin, 1991, pl.111).
10) One example of Hnwt-m-pt is a daughter of Amenophis I (Troy, 1986, p.162).
11) cf. Petrie, 1891, pl.XXIII, no.71.
14) For the similar decoration, see Brunton and Engelbach, 1927, pls. XXVII, LIII.
15) Usually this ephiset is for the goddess Hathor.
Fig. 6

Pl. 7

Pl. 8