



REPORT ON ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND PALAEOPATHOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT 1998

On invitation of the archaeological mission of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Charles University, Prague (Director Prof. Dr. M. Verner, DrSc.) to Abusir near Cairo, the following anthropological and palaeopathological activities were realised.

Finds of a left hand and five bones or bone fragments from the floor level with remains of the original 5th Dynasty burial equipment in the burial chamber of the unfinished pyramid of King Raneferef were investigated. According to their morphology, age features (revealed by X-rays) and traces of mummification, they appear to belong to a single individual. In spite of the gracility of the bone shafts, a single preserved secondary sexual feature, the well developed muscular relief, the enlarged end parts as well as the substantial length of the bones strongly suggest their male sex. Age determination falls into the interval of 20–25 years. This appears to be in harmony with the known short reign of King Raneferef (2–3 years, Egyptological date around 2460/2455 B. C., both according to T. Schneider, *Lexicon der Pharaonen*, Dtsch. Taschenbuch Verlag, München 1996, pp. 261–2).

In the shaft tomb of the priest and overseer of royal palaces Iufaa, found intact by the mission, a mummy was lifted from a wooden coffin. Both were decayed by high moisture at the bottom of the 23 m deep burial shaft. After X-raying, the mummy was dismantled and the skeleton was investigated. It belonged to a male with clearly developed secondary sexual features. His stature was well above average (about 170 cm). While his lower extremities were medium robust to robust with a well developed muscular relief, the skeleton of arms and hands was gracile with less developed muscular attachments. His spine revealed only slight to medium osteophytosis due to tear-and-wear. These findings correspond with the common idea about the life of a priest and official who moved often but did not exert any strenuous physical work or lifting of excessive weights. In spite of his young adult age of 25–30 years, maximum 35 years) he had badly devastated dentition, an advanced symmetrical biparietal atrophy and progressed fusion of cranial sutures, features encountered usually at a higher age.

In collaboration with Dr. Nasri Iskandar, the skeleton from tomb KV 55 was re-examined in the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. Its male sex and young adult age (18–22 years) were confirmed.

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One of the aims of the season of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities and Leiden University Mission to the New Kingdom Necropolis at Saggara was our start of elaboration of human remains from four tombs excavated already in 1986–1987. This material was previously sorted and only well preserved skulls partially elaborated by R. S. Walker, the fragmentary ones and all postcranial remains still awaiting a study. The lot is very extensive, filling up 142 baskets.

For quick determination of basic demographic data requested by the archaeologists, we decided in the case of three smaller lots (Tombs of Khay, Pabes and Tia and Tia), to study descriptive features of the skulls, pelves and femora and compare the demographic results. The highest numbers of any of these skeletal parts were taken for minimum numbers for subadults, adult males and adult females.

Thus in the Tomb of goldwasher and merchant Khay, dated late 19th – early 20th Dynasty, 12 subadults, 20 adult males and 12 adult females were determined, together 43 individuals, all dated archaeologically to the New Kingdom (late 19th–20th Dynasties).

In the Tomb of Khay's son, royal scribe and military officer Pabes, we found 5 subadults, 6 adult males and 4 adult females, in sum 15 individuals. As all the bones were concentrated in a single room, these New Kingdom burials most probably represent Pabes and members of his family.

In the Tomb of vezir Tia and his wife Tia, daughter of King Ramesses II, 5 subadults, 10 adult males and 4 adult females were identified, together 19 individuals, all coming from Late Period burials in a chamber adjoining Shaft B.

In the Tomb of troop commander Ramose, contemporary with the reign of King Horemheb (late 18th Dynasty), because of the great quantity of material, postcranial remains could not be elaborated in the limited time allotted to our work. We decided, therefore, to base the demographic data on mandibles which can be quickly recognized and sorted out from other bones, and provide rough data on age at death. Mandibular data were checked by confrontation with cranioscopic data on calvaria, well preserved ones as well as fragmentary ones.

According to mandibles, 47 belong to subadults, 103 to adult males, only 32 to adult females and 6 to sexually undetermined specimens (because of their atrophy). Calvarial results are quite similar. The usual mortality curve of subadults was found grossly deformed with sharp underrepresentation of newborns and infants, while the percentage of young adult females considerably outnumbered that of young adult males.

The material from the mentioned tombs proved to be rich in the occurrence of various common, but also some rare palaeopathological changes ranging into the categories of congenital anomalies, fractures, inflammations, degenerative productive processes, tumours, metabolic and endocrinologic disorders, dental and alveolar diseases etc.

This year's Mission excavations south of the inner courtyard of the Tomb of Horemheb unearthed remains of a living site with refuse layers of the Byzantine Period, under which part of a New Kingdom cemetery of common people was discovered. Partly disturbed, partly well preserved remains of burials of a newborn, a child, four adult males and two adult females were so far discovered and elaborated anthropologically and palaeopathologically.

On request of Professor Naguib Kanawati of Macquarie University, North Ryde, Australia, we also examined the newly discovered skeletal remains of proprietors of two mastabas in the 6th Dynasty Necropolis north of the Pyramid of King Teti, both his sons-in-law, Nikau-Isesi and Shepsi-pu-Ptah.

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