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ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND PALAEOPATHOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF THE LEIDEN MISSION TO SAQQARA (EGYPT) IN 2000

The Joint Mission of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden and of the University Leiden to the New Kingdom Necropolis of Saqqara continued in February and March 2000 excavations of the area south of the inner courtyard of the Tomb of Horemheb. Instead of containing another monumental New Kingdom funerary monument, the area of about 200 square meters proved already in the previous season to contain a thick upper Coptic layer, covering a substantial New Kingdom layer with several shallow graves. It was also permeated by orifices of 7 shafts dated to different periods whose superstructures either perished or have been preserved only partially.

The mission continued to excavate individual burials of the New Kingdom cemetery, whose exploration started in the 1999 season. Most of them were skeletized bodies, some with remains of linen wrappings, but without traces of resin. They were protected only by mattings, except Nos. 99/4 B and 99/5, buried in wooden coffins. To 8 burials from the previous season, 7 newly excavated and an additionally recognized ones were added. The whole skeletal series was subjected to a detailed anthropological and palaeopathological study which enabled a precise determination of sex and age of each individual. Some data published in the 1999 preliminary report could be thus corrected:

Burial No.	Sex	Age (years)
1999/ 1 A	F	25–35
1 B	M	20–21
2 A	F	25–30
2 B	C	11–13
3	C	newborn
4 B	M	18–20
4 A	M	30–40
4 C+/ 5	? M	14–17 22–24
6+/ 2000/ 3	M F	27–30 23–25
4	M?	13–15
5	C	1 1/2–1 3/4
6	C	7–8
7	F	35–45
8	M	14–16

Explanations: M = male, F = female, C = child, ? = sex indeterminable
+/- recognized additionally, +/+ excavated in the season of 2000.

Human remains unearthed in the New Kingdom Shafts 99/II and 99/VI, explored in 2000 year season, were found dispersed by tomb robbers. Nevertheless, their preservation was better than in tomb shafts excavated in the large tombs on the same site in previous seasons. They were mostly broken, some of them missing, but not too fragmentary. Because of their great numbers, bones of the individual skeletons could not be matched together. In spite of this, the number, sex and age of individuals could be reconstructed using the anatomical method.

For lack of time, only skulls and mandibles could be studied in detail. From the postcranial skeleton, hip bones, sacra and long bones of the extremities were roughly sexed and aged, the remaining bones only calculated. Hence the demographic data have to be considered as preliminary ones.

In burial chamber A of Shaft 99/II remains of 10 persons only were lifted because the research had to be stopped for instability of the rock. Of them, 4 were children and 6 adults, consisting of 4 males and 2 females. There was one infant (1 1/2 to 1 3/4 year old) and 3 about 3–7 year old children. Three of the adult males were aged 22–24, 25–30 and 35–45 years. One of the adult females died between 30 and 40 years. The age of one male and one female could not be determined more precisely.

In burial chambers A and B of Shaft 99/VI, excavated wholly, remains of minimally 26 persons were distinguished. Of these 11 were immatures, consisting of 7 children, 2 juvenile males and 2 juvenile females, and 15 adults, containing 8 males and 7 females.

Among the children one was an infant of 1–2 years, from the others one was aged 2–3 years, two 3–4 years, and the remaining ones 4–5 years, 5–6 years and 6–7 years.

One juvenile male died 16–18 year old, the other 17–19 year old. The age of one the of the juvenile females lies between 15 and 19 years, of the other between 18 and 20 years.

The adult males died one aged 20–22 years, four 20–30 years, the remaining ones 30–40, 35–45 and 40–50 years.

The adult females died one aged 20–22, two 20–30, the remaining ones 30–40, 35–45, 40–50 and 40–60 years.

If we join the skeletal remains of the individual tombs to the reconstructed individuals from the two described shafts (n=52 persons), the participation of immatures is relatively high (42.3 %) compared with that of the adults (57.7 %). Among the adults, individuals who died between 20–40 years (21) outnumber those who died between 40–60 years (6). Accordingly, the mean age at death which could be determined in 50 individuals of the New Kingdom series was as low as 20.5 years, of the 27 adults 30.6 years.

As in previous seasons, special attention was directed towards detection of palaeopathological finds. These can be divided into commonly occurring changes, which were recorded systematically in



FIGURE 1. Upper half of spine of 7–8 year old child No. 2000/6 with a sharp bend in the upper thoracic region. Photo by Elisabeth van Dorp and Eugen Strouhal.

every individual (as degenerative arthritis of the joints, pathology of the dentition, or occurrence of *cribra orbitalia*), and rarely occurring anomalies and pathological finds. From their total of 32 items, a case of spinal tuberculosis in a 7–8 year old child, a case of periostitis of the interior of the braincase (probable meningitis) in a 4–5 year old child, or a case of mastoiditis in a 40–50 year old probable female should be mentioned.

Excavations carried out towards the end of the season in Shaft 99/I uncovered its upper chamber, dated by a find of a hoard of coins into the Ptolemaic Period. It yielded parts of fragmented mummies of about 70–100 individuals whose examination has been reserved for the next season.



FIGURE 2. The bend was produced by compressed cuneiform bodies of vertebrae T₂ and T₃ resulting from Pott's disease (spinal tuberculosis). Photo by Elisabeth van Dorp and Eugen Strouhal.

South of the remains of the superstructure of Shaft 99/I, remains of the upper half of a body, mummified with copious use of resin, were found (burial 2000/9). According to its position under a Late Period embalmers cache and close to the wall of the superstructure, it could be tentatively dated Graeco-Roman Period. It was of a 40–50 year old male.

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