



MICHAEL E. HABICHT, ELENA VAROTTO, FRANCESCO MARIA GALASSI

THE BOY WHO NEVER BECAME PHARAOH? A THEORETICAL STUDY IN IDENTIFICATION

ABSTRACT: *This article examines the vexed archaeological question of the mummy of the so-called boy from KV 35 considering potential news studies on it, trying to present the most likely identifications based on anthropological and Egyptological information. The mummy could be related to Amenhotep II, but it could also represent a secondary burial.*

KEY WORDS: *Ancient Egypt - New Kingdom - Mummy Cairo - CG 61071 - KV 35 - Identification*

INTRODUCTION

When Victor Loret (1859–1946) examined tomb KV 35 of King Amenhotep II in 1898, he found not only the royal mummy in the sarcophagus, but also numerous other royal mummies. In one side chamber, numerous still-missing royal mummies were stored in secondary coffins. A few years earlier, most of the kings had already been found in the Deir-el Bahari Tomb 320 (Loret 1899, Reeves 1990, Bard 2014). In the present communication, however, we will deal with the three mummies that initially remained unidentified, which were lined up in another side chamber (KV 35 side chamber Jc) (Smith 1912, Harris, Wente 1980, Hornung 2001).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- A long-haired, somewhat elderly female individual, who has therefore entered the research literature as "Elder Lady KV 35" (Cairo CG 61070) (Harris *et al.* 1978, Partridge 1994). Because of her bent arm, which must once have held a queen's sceptre, she has long been considered a possible queen. Hatshepsut or Tjye were suggested. The 2010 genetic study has proven Elder Lady KV 35 to be the genetic daughter of Yuya and Thuya (Hawass *et al.* 2010, Habicht 2012). Thus, for historical reasons, it is clear that this mummy must be Queen Tjye, the main wife at the side of King Amenhotep III.

- In the middle was a young individual wearing a juvenile sidelock (*Figure 1*). Otherwise, he was clean shaven (Mummy Cairo CG 61071). G. E. Smith estimated him to be about 11 years old, while Don Brothwell (1933–2016) put the age interval at 11–15 years (Smith 1912: 39–40, Fletcher 2004). Since he is not fully grown, the individual cannot be used for craniometric comparisons with the other royal mummies and was therefore not included in corresponding investigations (Habicht *et al.* 2021).
- The third mummy was a shaven-headed young female who was named Younger Lady KV 35 (Cairo CG 61072). Loret initially thought the mummy was a young male before the anatomist G. E. Smith determined the female sex. The age at death is estimated at 25–30 years (Habicht *et al.* 2016a). Her identity was unknown for a long time before the suggestion was made at the turn of the millennium that she was none other than Queen Nefertiti herself (Luban 1999, Fletcher 2004). The mentioned important 2010 genetic study proved her to be the genetic mother of Tutankhamun. As a result, researchers discussed who this individual might be. Nefertiti was suggested (Habicht 2011, Schlögl 2012, Gabolde 2013) or Kiya, the concubine of Akhenaten, or Merytaton (Huber 2016), Akhenaten's eldest daughter, or Satamun (Maciejewski 2010), Amenhotep III's eldest daughter and Akhenaten's elder sister. A key argument in favour of Nefertiti is the inscription in the royal tomb at Amarna (TA 26) which suggests that Nefertiti gave birth to another child by Akhenaten in year 12. The fragments of the inscription allow to add the name Tutankhaten – the other names of the princesses are too short and the remains of the signs do not fit. Moreover, the known six daughters were born earlier. Thus, the conclusion suggests itself that the genetic mother (YL KV 35) is to be equated with Nefertiti – although it must be acknowledged that not all Egyptologists would concur with this identification. Interestingly, the Younger Lady KV35 is not only the genetic mother of Tutankhamun, but according to the genetic data, also the sister or cousin of mummy KV 55. The identification of KV 55 (Cairo CG 61075) is highly controversial and fluctuates between an identification as Akhenaten or Smenkhkare. For a summary of the research debate see Habicht (2022). The anthropological arguments have been presented by various researchers (Smith 1912, Derry 1931, Harrison 1966, Strouhal 2010).

The present analysis is carried out through a combination of anthropological and historical evidence assessed in the context of the period (Habicht *et al.* 2016a, 2016b).

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the lively debate about the Younger Lady KV 35 and the identity of the man from KV 55, the boy from KV 35 was really lost. Only recently have the media reported that a Zahi Hawass-led team has had the boy's mummy CT-scanned and that genetic samples were also taken from it (Felske 2022, Al-Kady 2022). The results are not yet known but there are good reasons to reflect on the possibilities of identification.

Loret and Smith thought the three mummies were unknown family members of Amenhotep II. However, since KV 35 had served as a hiding place for royal mummies from entirely different dynasties, it is completely open to whom the boy from KV 35 could be related. Based on the mummification technique as described by Smith, a technical dating to the Mid-18th Dynasty is considered to be realistic. The assignment to the environment of Amenhotep II was based on an assumption of analogy. Since unidentified mummies were found in the tomb of Thutmose III, which were considered to be family members, Loret drew the conclusion that analogously these three mummies could then be relatives of Amenhotep II (Bickerstaffe 2009, 105). However, the mummies in the tomb of Thutmose III only a few years later were considered to be secondary burials from much later times. Because the Elder Lady and the Younger Lady are both genetically linked to the Amarna period, it is not impossible that the KV 35 boy could also belong to this period.

As a general remark on the Amarna dating for this mummy, it must be specified that in the mid-18th Dynasty, the male descendants were less the focus of state monuments than the daughters. It can also be assumed that many members of the royal family are completely unknown to us. The idea that the boy in cachette KV 35 could be a possible heir to the throne is essentially because in the royal cachette only the kings and outstanding women of the dynasty were buried secondarily.

Theoretically, the heir to the throne Thutmose, who was to succeed Amenhotep III as crown prince, could be considered. However, he died before his father and so the crown fell to his younger brother Amenhotep IV, who changed his name to Akhenaten. In the tomb of Tutankhamun, a whip with a name inscription was found



FIGURE 1: Mummy Cairo CG 61071. Photograph © 1912. G. E. Smith, *The Royal Mummies*. Copyright expired.

by Howard Carter (Carter No. 333/13) (Habicht 2021). Carter's handlist description reports the following (Carter's finds list No. 333-13, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/333-c333-13.html>): with the dismembered parts of two chariots found in this chamber was a whip bearing an inscription: *The King's son captain of the troops, Thothmes* [Thutmosis]. Who was this Royal prince – who, to have been "Captain of the troops" during the reign of either Amenhotep III or Akhenaten, he could not have been too young; it is also quite conceivable that the title was awarded to a young person on a purely honorary basis, as is still not uncommon in monarchies today. Was he a son of Thutmosis IV, or was he a son of Amenhotep III? That problem has yet to be solved. The whip might be a keepsake from an ancestor, just like the castanets owned by Merytaton and also found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. The following scenario is conceivable: the whip belonged to Crown Prince Thutmosis, the eldest son of Thutmosis IV, who died as a youth. The whip remained in the royal family as a *memento* and was given to Tutankhamun in his tomb for reasons that are no longer clear today.

If it is a close relative of the Amarna period, and the genetic samples give good results, then the matter should be relatively simple. The genetic profile would then have to match the already published data on Amenhotep III and Queen Tjye.

It is possible that in the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, this identification will be marketed as a big sensation, but even if it is the elder brother of Akhenaten: the discovery is not historically significant, since crown prince Thutmosis never played a role in Egypt's history. Rather, it was only his premature death that brought Akhenaten to the throne and thus paved the way for the religious upheavals during his reign.

If one looks at research on royal mummies as a whole, an already questionable focus on Tutankhamun and his immediate predecessors cannot be overlooked. The kings of the 19th Dynasty, historically much more important than Tutankhamun, are already overshadowed. The situation is even worse for the 20th Dynasty, for which apart from the equally questionable study of the so-called harem conspiracy around Ramses III, there are hardly any recent studies. The high priests of Amun and the kings of Tanis (both 21st Dynasty) have hardly been studied, although the quality of the mummies is outstanding. A comprehensive study of all known royal mummies would also allow the identification of previously unknown mummies much more reliably, instead of testing speculative theories with individual

mummies and, in the absence of a match, having no answer as to where in the history of Ancient Egypt the mummies might fit in.

It would also be generally ideal for mummies to be radiocarbon dated to generate perfect chronological anchors on the one hand or to unmask them as mummies from another era (Habicht *et al.* 2016b) and more generally to correlate, as typically seen in multidisciplinary analyses of historical characters in the fields of bioarchaeology and palaeopathology, more information about the historical and cultural context with anthropological data (Galassi *et al.* 2017, Fornaciari *et al.* 2018).

REFERENCES

- AL-KADY B., 2022: *Egyptian archaeologist performs CT scan on child mummy in Luxor*. Al-Monitor, April 8, online at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/04/egyptian-archaeologist-performs-ct-scan-child-mummy-luxor> (last accessed on 8th August 2022).
- BARD K. A., 2014: *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*. Routledge, London.
- BICKERSTAFFE D., 2009: *Identifying the Royal Mummies. Refugees For Eternity: The Royal Mummies of Thebes*. SOS Free Stock; Canopus Press, London.
- DERRY D., 1931: Note on the Skeleton hitherto Believed to be that of King Akhenaten. *Annales du Service des Antiquites de L'Egypte* 31: 115–119.
- FELSKE C., 2022: *Zahi Hawass untersucht Mumie aus KV35*. Selkets Blog. <https://blog.selket.de/tourismus-aegypten/wochenrueckblick-dna-tests-an-mumie-aus-kv35-verurteilung-besuch-im-gem-textilien-ausstellung-und-aegypten-von-oben>.
- FLETCHER J., 2004: *The Search for Nefertiti*. Hodder and Stroughton, London.
- FORNACIARI A., GIUFFRA V., ARMOCIDA E., CAMELLA D., RÜHLI F.J., GALASSI F. M., 2018: Gout in Duke Federico of Montefeltro (1422–1482): a new pearl of the Italian Renaissance. *Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology* 36, 1: 15–20.
- GABOLDE, M. 2013: L'ADN de la famille royale amarnienne et les sources égyptiennes. *Egypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 6: 177–203.
- GALASSI F. M., HENNEBERG M., DE HERDER W., RÜHLI F., HABICHT M. E., 2017: Oldest case of gigantism? Assessment of the alleged remains of Sa-Nakht, king of ancient Egypt. *The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology* 5, 8: 580–581. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587\(17\)30171-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587(17)30171-7)
- HABICHT, M. E. 2011: *Nofretete und Echnaton: Das Geheimnis der Amarna-Mumien*. Koehler + Amelang Gmbh, Leipzig.
- HABICHT M. E., 2012: Das Geheimnis der Amarna-Mumien. DNA-Untersuchungen klären Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse auf. *Antike Welt* 6: 21–26.

- HABICHT M. E., BOUWMAN A. S., RÜHLI F. J., 2016a: Identifications of ancient Egyptian royal mummies from the 18th Dynasty reconsidered. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 159, Suppl 61: S216–31. DOI: 10.1002/ajpa.22909
- HABICHT M. E., BIANUCCI R., BUCKLEY S. A., FLETCHER J., BOUWMAN A. S., ÖHRSTRÖM L. M., SEILER R., GALASSI F. M., HAJDAS I., VASSILIKA E., BÖNI T., HENNEBERG M., RÜHLI F. J., 2016b: Queen Nefertari, the Royal Spouse of Pharaoh Ramses II: A Multidisciplinary Investigation of the Mummified Remains Found in Her Tomb (QV66). *PLoS One* 11, 11: e0166571. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0166571>
- HABICHT M. E., 2021: *Tutanchamun: 100 Jahre Entdeckung seines Grabes*. 3rd edition. epubli, Berlin.
- HABICHT M. E., 2022: *Smenkhkare: The enigmatic Pharaoh of Akhet-Aton*. 6th edition. epubli, Berlin.
- HABICHT M. E., GALASSI F. M., HENNEBERG M., 2021: Cranial variation in Egyptian Pharaohs: Ancestry or microevolution? Suggestions of family interrelations. *Acta Palaeomedica* 1: 61–77.
- HARRIS, J. E., WENTE E. F., COX C. F., NAWAWAY I. E., KOWALSKI C. J., STOREY A. T., RUSSELL W. R., PONITZ P. V., WALKER G. F., 1978: Mummy of the "Elder Lady" in the Tomb of Amenhotep II: Egyptian Museum Catalog Number 61070. *Science* 200: 1149–1151.
- HARRIS, J. E., WENTE, E. F., 1980: *An X-Ray Atlas of the Royal Mummies*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- HARRISON R. G., 1966. An Anatomical Examination of the Pharaonic Remains Purported to be Akhenaton. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 52: 95–119.
- HAWASS Z., GAD Y. Z., ISMAIL S., KHAIRAT R., FATHALLA D., HASAN N., AHMED A., ELLEITHY H., BALL M., GABALLAH F., WASEF S., FATEEN M., AMER H., GOSTNER P., SELIM A., ZINK A., PUSCH C. M., 2010: Ancestry and pathology in King Tutankhamun's family. *JAMA* 303, 7: 638–647.
- HORNUNG E., 2001: The Tomb of Amenhotep II. In: K.R. Weeks (Ed.): *The Treasures of the Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Temples of the Theban West Bank in Luxor*. Pp. 140–145. WhiteStar, Vercelli; American University in Cairo Press, Cairo.
- HUBER M.T., 2016: *Who was the Father of Tutankhamun?* Books on Demand, Norderstedt.
- LORET V., 1899: Le tombeau d'Aménophis II et la cachette royale de Biban el-Molouk. *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* (3 sér.) 9: 98–112.
- LUBAN M., 1999: *Do we have the mummy of Nefertiti?* Online at: http://www.reocities.com/scribelist/do_we_have_.htm. (last accessed on August 8, 2022).
- MACIEJEWSKI F., 2010: *Echnaton oder Die Erfindung des Monotheismus*. Osburg Verlag, Berlin.
- PARTRIDGE R. B., 1994: *Faces of the Pharaohs. Royal Mummies and Coffins from Ancient Thebes*. The Rubicon Press, London. Pp. 121–122.
- REEVES C. N., 1990: *Valley of the Kings: The Decline of a Royal Necropolis (= Studies in Egyptology)*. KPI, London. Pp. 192–199.
- SCHLÖGL H. A., 2012: *Nofretete. Die Wahrheit über die schöne Königin*. Beck C. H., München.
- SMITH G. E., 1912: *The Royal Mummies*. Cairo, Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale. (reprint 2000: Duckworth).
- STROUHAL E., 2010: Biological Age of Skeletonized mummy from tomb KV 55 at Thebes. *Anthropologie (Brno)* 48, 2: 97–112.

Michael E. Habicht ^{1, 2}

Elena Varotto ^{1,2}

Francesco Maria Galassi ^{1, 2 *}

E-mail:

francescom.galassi@flinders.edu.au

¹ Archaeology, College of Humanities
Arts and Social Sciences
Flinders University
Adelaide, SA, Australia

² FAPAB Research Center
Avola (SR), Sicily, Italy

* Corresponding author.