

JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature	RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies	RB	Revue Biblique
JDAI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts	RdEg	Revue d'Égyptologie
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology	RGTC	Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes (TAVO Beihefte)
JEOL	Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux	RHA	Revue Hittite et Asianique
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient	RIMA/B	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian / Babylonian Periods
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies	RIME	Idem, Early Periods (Toronto)
JNSL	Journal of North-West Semitic Languages	RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society	RQ	Revue de Qumran
JSOT (S)	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (Supplement)	RSF	Rivista di Studi Fenici
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies	RSO	Rivista degli Studi Orientali
KAI ²	Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften (Donner - Röllig)	RT	Recueil de Travaux
KTU	Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit (AOAT 24)	SAAB	State Archives of Assyria, Bulletin
LÄ	Lexikon der Ägyptologie	SAA(S)	State Archives of Assyria (Studies)
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient	SAACT	State Archives of Assyria, Cuneiform Texts
LSS	Leipziger semitistische Studien	SAK	Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur
MAD	Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary	SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
MANE	Monographs on the Ancient Near East	SCCNH	Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
MARI	Mari, Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires	SD	Studia et documenta ad jura orientis antiqui pertinentia
MÄS	Münchener ägyptologische Studien	SMANE	Sources and Monographs from the Ancient Near East
MDAI	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts	SMS	Syro-Mesopotamian Studies
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin	SS	Studi Semitici (Roma)
MEE	Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla (Napoli)	StBoT	Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten
MHEM/T	Mesopotamian History and Environment, Memoirs/Texts	StEbl	Studi Eblaiti
MIO	Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung	StOr	Studia Orientalia (Helsinki)
MRS	Mission de Ras Shamra	TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
MSS	Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft	TUAT (E)	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments (Ergänzungslieferung)
MVAeG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft	UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
NABU(M)	Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires (Mémoires)	UVB	Vorläufiger Bericht über die ... Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka
NAPR	Northern Akkad Project Reports	VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology (continuation of BA)	VDI	Vestnik Drevnej Istorii
OAA (S)	Old Assyrian Archives (Studies)	VT (S)	Vetus Testamentum (Supplement)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis	WAW	Writings of the Ancient World (SBL)
OEAE	The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt (2001)	Wb	Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache WO Die Welt des Orients
OEANE	The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East (1997)	WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen d. Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta	WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica	YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung	ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie
OMRO	Oudheidkundige Mededelingen, Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden	ZAh	Zeitschrift für Althebraistik
OrAnt(C)	Oriens Antiquus (Collectio)	ZAR	Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
OrNS	Orientalia, Nova Series	ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
OrSuec	Orientalia Suecana	ZÄS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly	ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
PLB	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava PRU Le palais royal d'Ugarit (MRS)	ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästinavereins
PSD	Philadelphia Sumerian Dictionary	ZfA	Zeitschrift für Althebraistik

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE LEIDEN EXCAVATIONS AT SAQQARA,
SEASON 2005: THE TOMBS OF HOREMHEB AND MERYNEITH

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LADISLAVA HORÁČKOVÁ AND GEOFFREY T. MARTIN

Introduction

The joined mission of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities and the Faculty of Archaeology/Department of Egyptology of Leiden University resumed its work at Saqqara on January 26th 2005 and continued until March 2nd. The staff consisted of Dr Maarten J. Raven and Dr René van Walsem (field directors), Dr Barbara G. Aston (ceramicist), Dr Ladislava Horáčková (anthropologist), Drs Willem Beex (surveyor), Mr Peter Jan Bomhof (photographer), Ms Dorothea Schulz (draughtswoman), Ms Larissa Martens and Ms Elsbeth van der Wilt (field assistants). Prof. Geoffrey T. Martin (honorary director) carried out work in the Cairo Museum on behalf of the Expedition, copying New Kingdom reliefs from the Saqqara necropolis.

The fieldwork was carried out in close collaboration with Mr Kamal Wahid (Director of Saqqara) and Mr Usama Abdessalam el-Shimy (Inspector of Saqqara-South), and was supervised in the field by the Inspector Mr Ahmed Zikry Abdelhaq. The Expedition wants to express its gratitude to Dr Zahi Hawass (Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities), Mr Magdy el-Ghandur (Chairman of the Department of Foreign Missions), to the members of the Permanent Committee of the SCA, and to Dr. Wafaa el-Sadiq (Director) and Mr Ibrahim Abdelgawad (Curator of the New Kingdom section) of the Cairo Museum. We are also grateful to Dr G. Borg (Director of the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo) and his staff for logistic help and hospitality. The Egypt Exploration Society again granted us the use of the Saqqara dighouse. Financial support for this season's work was received from the Society of Friends of Saqqara, whereas the restoration project of the tomb of Meryneith could never have been carried out without previous contributions by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Society of Friends of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities (RoMeO).

This year's fieldwork of the Dutch mission formed a continuation of the task executed last year, when the First Pylon and forecourt of the tomb of Horemheb were cleared¹. This task could not be fully completed at the time, and its termination was the main objective this season. Other aims were the study of pottery and skeletal material found on this forecourt in the course of our season 2004. At the same time, great progress could be made with the recording and restoration of the adjacent tomb of Meryneith, which is now situated inside a

¹ See M.J. Raven *et al.*, Preliminary report on the Leiden excavations at Saqqara, season 2004: the tomb of Horemheb, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 25-44.

protective shelter built during November and December 2004. All of these activities will be described in more detail in the following.

Clearance of the forecourt and First Pylon of Horemheb

The forecourt and First Pylon of the tomb of Horemheb were largely cleared in 2004 (Figs. 1-2). The only portions still remaining to be excavated were the north-east corner of the forecourt, and the north end and entire east face of the pylon's north wing. Here the presence of a steep hill of sand and rubble impeded further progress, while also blocking the proper east entrance into the forecourt. This season, the 6 m high hill was therefore cut back and drystone terrace walls were laid to keep the sand at bay. These precautions helped to clear the last remaining corner of the forecourt. One of the reasons why this part of the tomb proved to be particularly difficult to excavate was that the north wall of Horemheb's forecourt had partly collapsed (Fig. 3). Whereas the west part of the wall still stands to a height of about 2 m, the upper courses of its east end had fallen southwards, thereby opening a breach through which the sand kept pouring in. The remaining lower courses are no higher than about 1 m above the pavement of Horemheb's forecourt.

This means that the top of this collapsed stretch of wall lies practically flush with the limestone pavement of the adjacent forecourt of Horemheb's northern neighbour Tia. This forecourt was only partially excavated during the clearing of Tia's monument in 1983², when the presence of a limestone porch in front of the pylon could be attested. Now it proved to be possible to expose a c. 1.5 m wide strip of this forecourt all the way along Horemheb's north wall (Figs. 2 and 4). The north face of this boundary wall still bears remains of a coat of whitewash, whereas a stela base stands at a straight angle to the wall and about 2 m east of the porch. The eastern delimitation of Tia's forecourt is formed by the north end of Horemheb's First Pylon, which protrudes beyond the boundary wall separating the two forecourts. A flimsy mud-brick door-jamb has been built against the north face of this pylon; there was no opportunity to assess whether its northern pendant is also still present. A Late Period shaft (2005/1) lies in the south-east corner of Tia's forecourt.

The north-east corner of Horemheb's own forecourt comprised yet another Late Period shaft (2004/13), which was dismantled down to pavement level by the Expedition in order to clear the last remaining bit of the original pavement. An unexpected find in this area was that of an Old Kingdom relief block depicting herdsmen with cattle crossing a canal (Fig. 5); this had been reused in the pavement with its decorated side up. A thick stratum of broken New Kingdom beer jars covered the whole area against the foot of the north wall of the forecourt³. Rather surprisingly this ceramic material was mixed with about fifty sherds of Archaic stone vessels (predominantly 'alabaster' ones and more than half of them rim sherds). No further material was found belonging to the robbers' dump of grave goods from the tomb of the Tias⁴, except for a single faience shabti fragment. This is further proof that this dump

² G.T. Martin, *The tomb of Tia and Tia, a royal monument of the Ramesside period in the Memphite necropolis* (London, 1997), 4 and Pls. 1, 127, and 128.1.

³ See B.G. Aston, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 38; see also below, 10.

⁴ M.J. Raven, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 31-36.

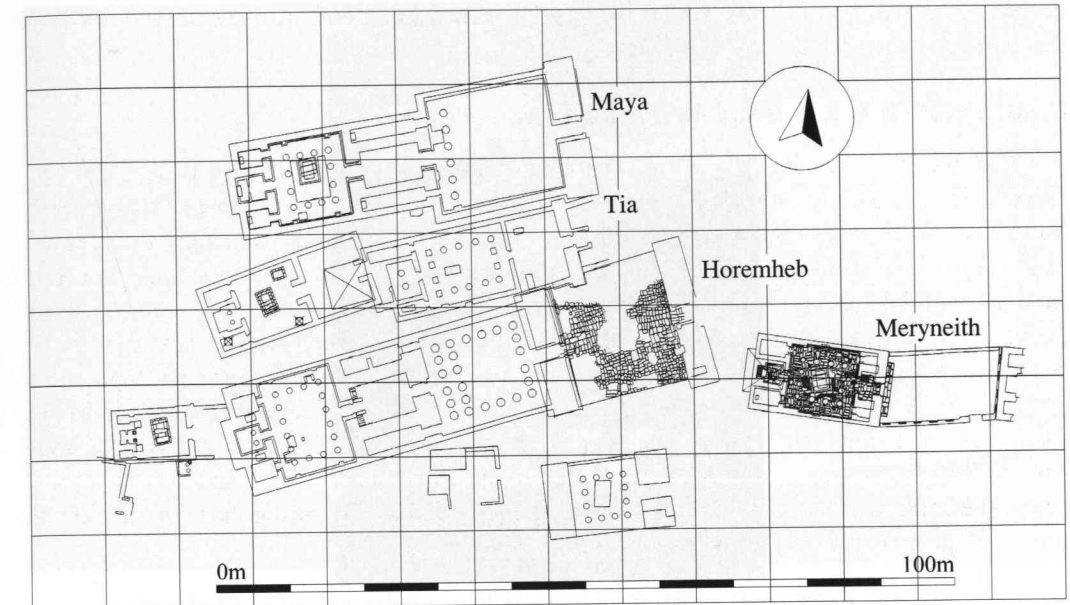


Fig. 1. General plan showing the relative position of the tombs of Horemheb, Tia, and Meryneith.

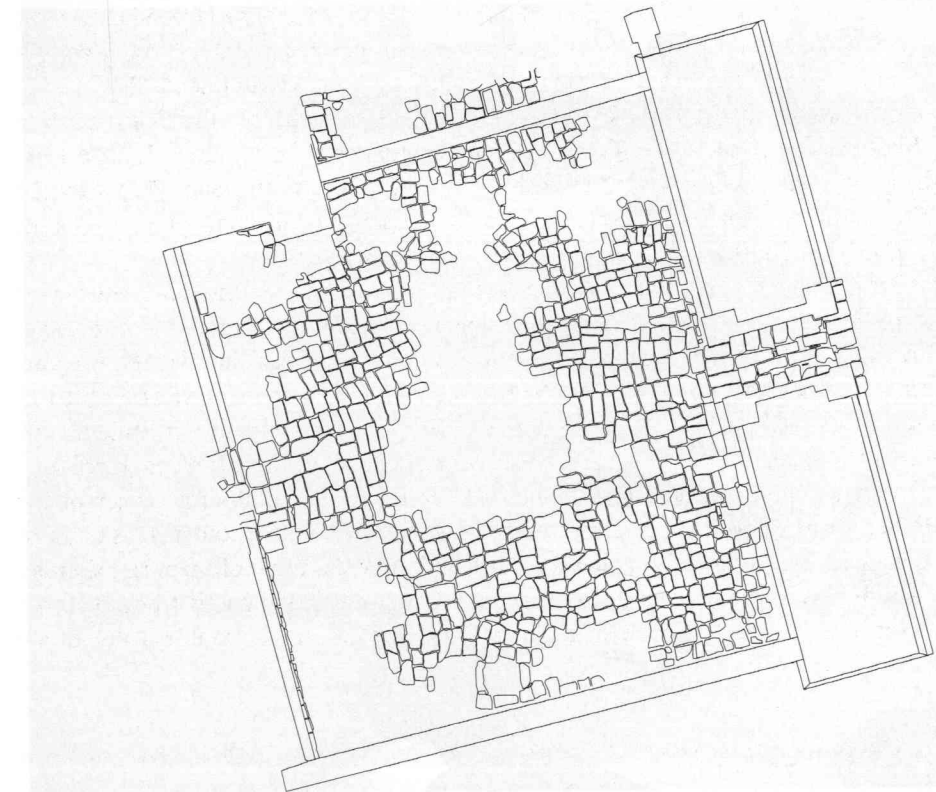


Fig. 2. Plan of the forecourt and First Pylon of Horemheb, including part of the forecourt of Tia.



Fig. 3. View of the north wall of Horemheb's forecourt during excavation, showing how a section collapsed southwards.



Fig. 4. General view of the partial excavation of Tia's forecourt.

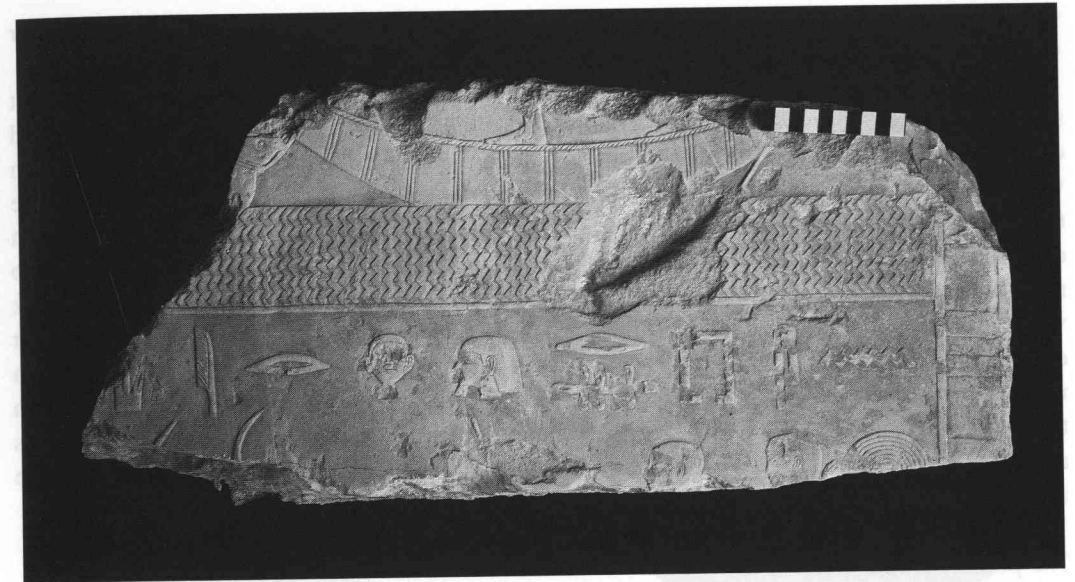


Fig. 5. Old Kingdom relief reused as a pavement slab in Horemheb's forecourt.



Fig. 6. Entrance of Horemheb's First Pylon, showing the edge of the limestone pavement and the stepped ridge along the pylon's east face.

was deposited on top of the original New Kingdom and Late Period strata in the area, in other words probably during the Christian period.

The north wing of Horemheb's First Pylon was now fully excavated as well. Along its east side ran a level of mud and *tafl* probably deposited during the later New Kingdom and comparable to the similar (but slightly higher) deposit against the east face of the south pylon wing⁵. Under this level, the pylon proved to have a stepped ridge along the foot of its east face (Fig. 6). The stone-lined east entrance could also be completely cleared now. This has been constructed by erecting four jambs and two reveals in the 3.7 m wide gap left between the two mud-brick towers of the pylon. The intervening space between the reveals and the brickwork was then filled up with rubble and loose bricks. The limestone pavement of the forecourt extends just about 0.3 meter beyond the eastern door-jambs. The south-east jamb and both reveals were found to show a number of incised graffiti. Otherwise, there is no decoration on this part of the tomb, which was probably never finished. An even slope with some steps running down to this doorway was dug out by the Expedition to provide easy access to the tomb.

The pottery (B.G. Aston)

Excavation in the north-east corner of the forecourt of the tomb of Horemheb and to the north of its north wall only yielded five additional sherds of vessels from the deposit of material from the burial-chambers of the tomb of Tia and Tia recovered last year. Pottery from this deposit was reconstructed as far as possible this season. Although only small percentages of many vessels are preserved, this assemblage — datable to the first half of the reign of Ramesses II — contained a number of interesting forms. Parts of four examples of the slender, one-handled marl clay jars with unusual button-like bases have been reconstructed⁶, as well as a tall jar with a ledge on the rim, and blue petal decoration painted over pink on a red-slipped burnished background. Ten additional small peaked lids covered in post-firing white wash like one found in the burial-chambers of the tomb of Tia and Tia were also recovered⁷.

A second focus of reconstruction this season was the deposit of New Kingdom pottery found at floor level in the south-east corner of Horemheb's forecourt in 2004. 99% (a visual estimate) of this deposit consisted of uncoated silt beer jar rims, bases, and body sherds, with only a few blue-painted, red-slipped, and Canaanite jar sherds and (surprisingly) virtually no plates. Based on a count of bases, there were 136 beer jars present (Fig. 7). 92% of these are the heavy, string-cut, finger-indented variety, with only 8% of the pointed form which has been trimmed on the wheel. This is in marked contrast to the nearly contemporary deposit of offering pottery from east of the tomb of Maya, also apparently dumped after being cleared from chapels inside the tomb. In the Maya deposit, although nearly all the beer jars had vertical or out-turned rims as was the case in Horemheb's tomb, the bases were almost all trimmed on the wheel rather than the heavy, string-cut version.

⁵ See M.J. Raven, R. van Walsem *et al.*, Preliminary report on the Leiden excavations at Saqqara, season 2003: the tomb of Meryneith, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 5-23, esp. 15-16 and Fig. 12.

⁶ Cf. B.G. Aston, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 38 with Fig. 14.

⁷ D.A. Aston, in: Martin, *The tomb of Tia and Tia*, 89 no. 138 and Pl. 118.



Fig. 7. New Kingdom beer jar from the south-east corner deposit.



Fig. 8. *Depression biparietalis circumscripta* in the skull of a female.

Excavation along the north wall of Horemheb's forecourt uncovered a second deposit of (primarily) beer jars at floor level, just south of the wall and extending to the north-east corner of the court. Curiously, many fragments of Archaic 'alabaster' bowls were dispersed within this deposit. New Kingdom pottery was also recovered from the entranceway to the forecourt (pottery of 19th to 20th Dynasty date), at the 2.5 m level north of the north pylon wing, and also in the fill in the lower levels along the pylon's east face. From the surface debris in this area came an unusual marl beaker with a modelled face of Bes below a black-painted rim band; Bes faces are more commonly found on jars with a cylindrical or flaring neck.

In addition, work continued on recording and drawing pottery from the New Kingdom level south of the tomb of Horemheb excavated in 1999 and 2000, adding new forms to a valuable corpus of late 18th to early 20th Dynasty pottery from the foundation fill of the small 19th to 20th Dynasty monuments constructed in the spaces between their more imposing late 18th Dynasty predecessors⁸.

⁸ Cf. B.G. Aston, in: R. van Walsem *et al.*, Preliminary report on the Saqqara excavations, season 1999, *OMRO* 79 (1999), 24; B.G. Aston, in: R. van Walsem *et al.*, Preliminary report on the Dutch excavations at Saqqara, season 2000, *JEOL* 35-36 (1997-2000), 21.

Skeletal remains (L. Horáčková)

The human skeletal remains studied this season came from the Tia deposit in the north-east corner of Horemheb's forecourt. Most of the bones had already been found during the season 2004, some more came up in the course of season 2005. Skeletons or partial skeletons were examined macroscopically, all necessary diameters were measured, and the basic parameters of demography (sex, age), variability and paleopathology were studied on the bones in each layer (2 m, 1.75 m, 1.5 m and 1 m above floor level). A total of 49 individuals were recognized, of which 17 (34.7%) belonged to immatures while as many as 32 (65.3%) were adults. The number of adults includes 20 (62.5%) males (including specimens classified as probably males), 9 (28.2%) females (including specimens classified as probably females), and 3 (9.3%) sexually undetermined specimens. The ratio between males and females was very close to 2:1 in favour of males. The highest child mortality rate was in the infans I age group, i.e. from birth to 6 years of age, with 11 individuals (64.7%).

The most interesting paleopathological finds from the 2004 season included symmetrical thinness of the parietal bones (*depressio biparietalis circumscripta*) in the skull of a 50-60 year old female (Fig. 8). The area concerned is elliptic with the long axis in the fronto-occipital direction (length: left side 66 mm, right side 40 mm). The skull was postmortally damaged, so it is not possible to say if it was or was not perforated during life. Familiar occurrence of symmetrical thinness points to a genetic element in its etiology. The skull is dark brown in colour, and there is a level of resin inside the skull which reaches to the top of the lambdoid suture. A layer of resin (about 7 mm thick) also covers the occipital bone externally. Remains of red and brownish hair (max. length 73 mm) are preserved on the upper part of the occipital bone. According to the cranial index (78.8) this skull belongs to the category of mesocran skulls. The reconstructed body height was about 159-160 cm.

Other interesting paleopathological findings included porotic hyperostosis (*hyperostosis cranii*) in the skull of a 20-25 year old female. Porotic hyperostosis is characterized by symmetrically distributed cranial lesions involving the incompletely resorbed outer table of the frontal and parietal bones. It is usually ascribed to anaemia caused by iron deficiency (because of low levels of iron in the food or its poor utilization), just as in the case of cribra orbitalia.

The pathological processes most frequently found on all the skeletal remains uncovered in the 2004 season included arthrotic changes in the spine. These usually appeared on the frontal edges of vertebral bodies in the form of outgrowths (osteophytes). The onset of arthrotic changes was also found in several temporomandibular joints. Various anomalies and pathological lesions were also studied on isolated bones found this season in the entranceway to the forecourt of Horemheb and also in the lower levels along the east face of the north pylon wing.

The Tia deposit also contained many bones of animals (especially at the 1.75 m and 1.5 m layers above floor level). These comprised at least four monkeys, bones of cattle, and bones of some kind of Carnivora and Pisces (probably Scaridae). More detailed study involving a specialist in zoology is planned for next season.

Restoration of the tomb of Meryneith

Ever since the discovery of the tomb of Meryneith in 2001 the preservation of this splendid monument and its wall-reliefs and paintings has given occasion to great worries. It was quite

clear from the start that the condition of the monument would inevitably suffer from the local climatic conditions and would form a potential target of vandalism and art robbery. Therefore the vulnerable wall-paintings were immediately protected by reconstructing the collapsed vaults of the four corner chapels of the tomb. At the same time, the reliefs were screened off by panels of plywood secured with fired bricks and mortar. Obviously these were temporary solutions only and a proper conservation plan had to be developed.

Such a plan for the restoration of the tomb of Meryneith was designed by the Cairo-based architect Nicholas Warner. After approval by the SCA's Permanent Committee actual work on the site started on November 21, 2004, and could be completed on December 23. Execution was committed to the local contractor Mahmud el-Taiyib and the work was supervised by the SCA inspector Mohammed Hussein Mohammed el-Hindawy. New walls of fired brick were constructed around the perimeter of the tomb proper, extending from directly west of the pyramid to about 2 m east of its façade (leaving the greater part of the forecourt outside the modern construction). These walls were drawn up to a height of about 3.5 m and support a roof construction of steel box girders and timber. The top of the roof was clad with contar boarding, bitumen roll isolation, and mortar, with galvanised metal flashings to the perimeter. The underside of the roof was finished with plywood panels. There is a central lightwell above the tomb's inner courtyard, with steel bars and wire mesh to keep out unwanted visitors and birds. The east façade has a steel plate double door, with one window above and a slit window on either side; a fourth window is in the rear (west) wall. All windows are provided with a steel grille and mesh. The exterior walls as well as those interior wall faces protruding above the original tomb walls were plastered in a sand colour. This, and the tomb's low location, make that the new construction blends perfectly with the surrounding landscape and is in fact invisible from a distance (Fig. 9).

The completion of this new shelter meant that at the beginning of the present season the plywood screens in front of the wall-reliefs could finally be removed (Fig. 10). This greatly facilitated the remaining job of reconstructing the original wall-decoration. No less than 536 relief fragments (either belonging to the tomb of Meryneith itself or to other monuments) have been retrieved during the excavations in and around the monument during the seasons 2001-2005. All of these were now unpacked once again for comparison with the extant reliefs and for establishing their date, style, and original position. Most of these fragments were drawn and photographed, a task that had already been started in season 2004 and could now be completed. Several joints could be made and thanks to the help of the local SCA restorers (under the supervision of Mr Sabri Abdelgaffar Abdelkarim) most of these could be fixed instantly.

Among the blocks that could be put back onto the walls of the tomb were two slabs making up the head of the tomb-owner's figure on the north reveal of the entrance (Fig. 11)⁹. The opposite figure on the south reveal was always thought to have lost its upper part. However, piecing together of about forty small fragments allowed the reconstruction of this figure's wig and right hand, as well as a substantial part of the text of nine columns of hieroglyphs above

⁹ One of these blocks and the lower part of the figure in question are depicted in M.J. Raven, R. van Walsem *et al.*, Preliminary report on the Leiden excavations at Saqqara, season 2001: the tomb of Meryneith, *JEOL* 37 (2001-2002), figs. 5-6.



Fig. 9. Exterior view of the shelter constructed over the tomb of Meryneith.

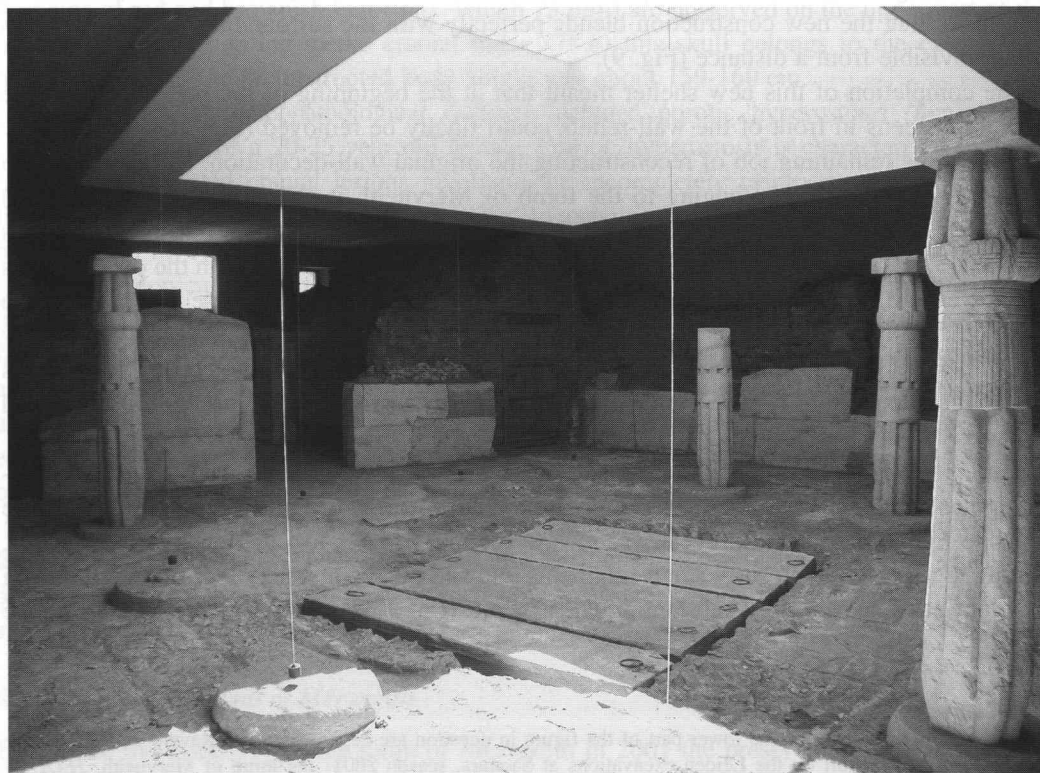


Fig. 10. The tomb of Meryneith inside its shelter, with the slabs over the shaft in position.

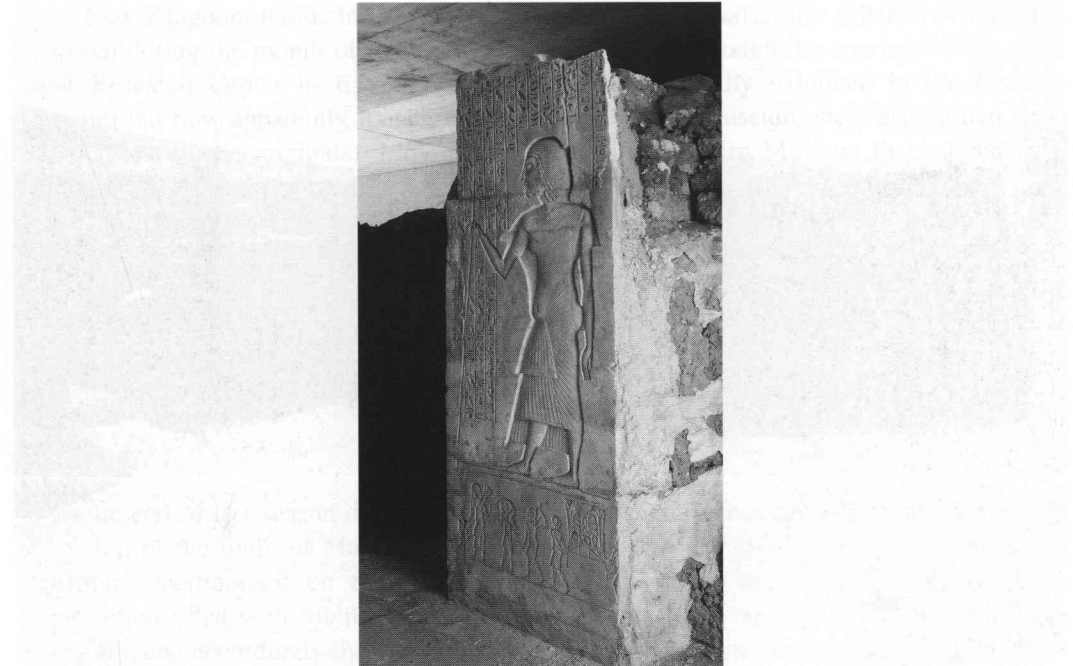


Fig. 11. Relief panel on the north reveal of the entrance to the tomb of Meryneith, after the reinstatement of the two upper slabs.

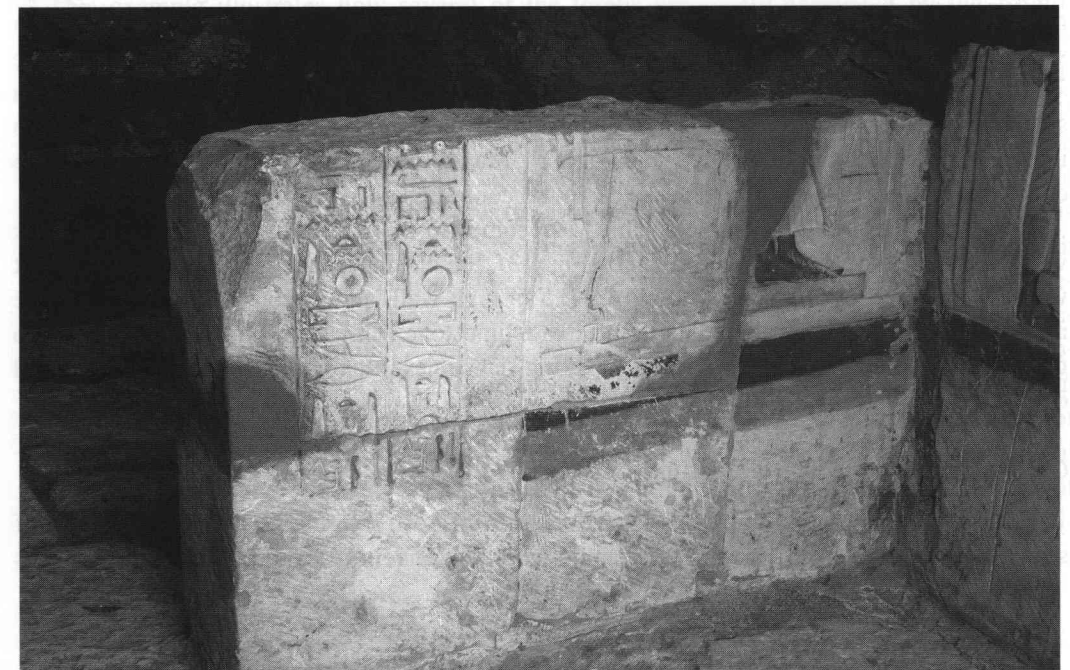


Fig. 12. North screen wall inside the main chapel of the tomb of Meryneith, after the block from the Egyptian dig was rejoined to its original position.



Fig. 13. Forecourt of the tomb of Meryneith after consolidation of the exterior walls and arches.

his head. This means that we shall be able to reconstruct this slab coming season. On the north wall of the tomb's peristyle courtyard several fragments could be added to the adoration scene, including the right leg of the deceased and a block showing the Sons of Horus. On the south wall a join was made with a block showing the funerary bier of the deceased, and a small fragment was added to the south door-jamb of the central chapel. Last but not least, an interesting block found about ten years ago by Magdy el-Ghandur to the south of our site could be rejoined to the north screen-wall in the central chapel (Fig. 12)¹⁰.

Other restoration tasks completed this year comprise the consolidation of the mud-brick walls and arches of the tomb's forecourt (Fig. 13), the closing of the gap in the tomb's west wall and pyramid by the construction of a 0.5 m high wall, and various small repairs to the masonry of the interior walls of the tomb. New limestone slabs were laid in order to fill up gaps in the pavement or to replace badly flaking flagstones. Finally, concrete lintels were laid over the main shaft of the tomb (Fig. 10).

Cairo Museum project (G.T. Martin)

For a general description of the Cairo Museum project we refer to the preliminary report of season 2004¹¹. The programme of epigraphic recording of reliefs and architectonic fragments

¹⁰ M. el-Ghandour, Report on work at Saqqara south of the New Kingdom cemetery, seasons 1994, 1996, 1997, *GM* 161 (1997), 5-25, esp. 12 cat. 1 and pl. XI.

¹¹ G.T. Martin, *JEOL* 38 (2003-2004), 43.

from New Kingdom tombs in the Saqqara necropolis continued in the galleries of the Cairo Museum during the month of February 2005. In addition, through the courtesy of the American Research Center in Egypt, two large blocks, originally exhibited in the Egyptian Museum but now apparently transferred to the new Luxor Museum, were also drawn (from plaster casts of the originals). Most of the reliefs in the Cairo Museum that remain to be recorded in the future are exhibited in wooden frames, the surface of the blocks being protected by sheets of heavy-duty perspex. These will ultimately be dealt with by making facsimile tracings over large-scale photographs, with subsequent collation in front of the originals. Detailed measurements, with notes on technique, colour traces and the like, were made of the hitherto unrecorded reliefs, in anticipation of future access. Museological details were also culled from the various inventories of the Egyptian Museum with the kind permission of the Director, Dr Wafaa el-Sadiq.

Other tasks

At the end of last season dangerous cracks could already been seen in the south tower of the pylon of the tomb of Maya. The mud-brick masonry in question was a modern reconstruction superimposed on the original base of the pylon and consisted of a box-like construction filled with rubble. Obviously the walls did not stand up to the pressure of the heavy fill, and accordingly the whole tower collapsed during the summer of 2004. The repair of this conspicuous landmark of the Dutch excavations was undertaken by the contractor Mahmud el-Taiyib during the month December of the same year. It has again been executed as a hollow box, which has now been left empty (just like the north pylon tower) and has been provided with a drain for rain water.

This example illustrates how several of the tombs previously excavated by the Anglo-Dutch expedition are in need of consolidation. Most of them have by now been exposed to the elements for twenty to thirty years. This means that certain misguided restorations and reconstructions begin to show weak spots and erosion, several materials used in makeshift solutions are at the end of their lifespan, and some constructions are even in danger of collapse. The Dutch expedition wants to preserve this heritage for the future and would like to upgrade the site as a whole so that it will look presentable to visitors. Therefore, the architect Nicholas Warner has been asked to advise us on a conservation plan for the site as a whole which includes the following aspects: access and circulation; information; presentation of those elements of wall-decoration which have so far been covered by temporary panels; better protection against rain, subsoil humidity, sun, and degrading by birds; consolidation of roof constructions, especially in the inner courtyard of the tomb of Horemheb; limited reconstruction of perimeter walls and other architectural elements; further development of the tomb of Meryneith into a proper site museum by the display of loose relief scenes on the original walls. The overall site conservation project will be submitted to the SCA in the course of 2005. Contacts have already been established with several parties to investigate the possibilities of external finance for these projects.