

Włodzimierz Godlewski, Barbara Czaja-Szewczak

**Cemetery C1 in Naqlun Tomb C.T.5
and its Cartonnages**

Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean 18, 247-260

2008

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

(Godlewski *et alii* 1994: 216 and 235; Godlewski 2005: 184-186; see also above, report by I. Zych in this volume). The number of tombs has been estimated at about 120 [Fig. 1]. They are best seen in the afternoon light as circular hollows in the eroded rock surface, testifying either to illicit penetration of the tomb substructures or their collapse. The tombs were packed in very tightly and the cutting of new tombs frequently damaged, but did not destroy already existing ones. No evidence of tomb superstructures appears to have been preserved on the eroded ground surface, even though the existence of such superstructures is suggested by fragmentary funerary stelae discovered in secondary

context in the monastic compound and believed to come from this cemetery (Godlewski, Łajtar 2006: 43-62) [Fig. 2].¹ Fragments of red brick preserving traces of mortar have been found in the secondary fill of some of the excavated tombs, which were either disturbed or heavily damaged by robbers. No brick structures, however, have been found in any of the burial chamber entrances. Instead, amphorae appear to have been used to seal tomb entrances, as in tomb C.T.3, which was found intact (Godlewski 2005: 184, Figs 5-6). The practice appears to have been quite common considering that amphorae and sherds of amphorae have been found in all of the excavated tombs. Finally, the five



Fig. 2. Funerary stela of Damianos (Nd.00.296), left, and fragment of stela (Nd.07.001) (Photo W. Godlewski)

1 A find of a fragmentary piece of funerary stela (Nd.07.001, see above Fig. 2, right) from the surface of cemetery C.2, made during a general survey of the cemetery in 2007, has further confirmed this belief.

bricks set in a line at the bottom of the shaft of tomb C.T.5 had no mortar bonding. It thus seems highly probable that the bricks from the fill of damaged tombs came from the lost superstructures which had held the funerary stela.

Tomb C.T.5 was cleared in 2004 (Godlewski 2005: 186), leaving the examination of the cartonnages for this season. The grave was cut in soft sedimentary rock [Fig. 3] and was composed of a shaft leading to a subterranean burial chamber. The shaft was almost vertical, 1.46 m deep, with a step at the bottom 0.40 m wide and 0.24 m high. The mouth widened toward the top, the size at the top being 0.90 by 0.96 m. The chamber opened to the east, extending 2.10 m from the step and achieving a width of 1.20 m and height of 0.70 m. A section 0.80 m long of the north wall had cut through the rock into the chamber of the neighboring tomb C.T.6.

Two burials were discovered inside the chamber, one on top of the other, half way pulled out into the shaft of the tomb [Fig. 4, top right]. This position was palpable evidence of illicit penetration of the burial. The top burial (M.1), wrapped in a shroud and with jarids inserted to stiffen it, was slightly bent at the knees and extended into the neighboring chamber of C.T.6. Its condition was such that there was no choice but to examine it on the spot and remove from the tomb part by part.

The lower burial (M.2) took on the form of an anthropomorphic cartonnage with padded feet and head rising significantly above the body [cf. Fig. 4]. It was wrapped in shrouds and bound with linen tapes. The cartonnage was in fairly good condition, despite the tapes being torn off and the head and foot part ripped apart. It was also much flattened. The bottom part of the shaft was strewn with the ripped elements of the M.1

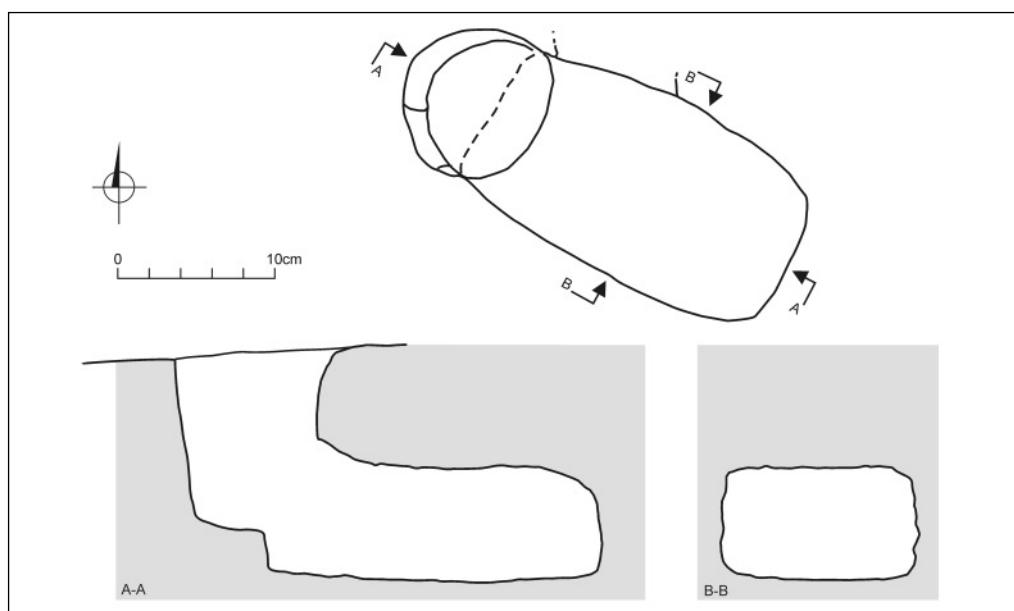


Fig. 3. Tomb C.T.5. Plan and section
(Drawing W. Godlewski and D. Zielińska)

cartonnage, while the upper part contained broken amphorae. One fairly complete amphora was found inside the chamber [Fig. 5]. There is no doubt that the tomb had been penetrated by robbers in antiquity and the disturbed and damaged state of the cartonnages is evidence of hurried work. At the end of the day, the broken pottery and cartonnage elements were thrown back into the shaft.

Based on the evidence from undisturbed tombs C.T.6 and C.T.13, we can say with considerable likelihood that a chamber of the same width as in C.T.5 (1.20 m) was intended from the start to hold two burials placed next to one another on the floor (see above, p. 239 and Fig. 9). Burial chambers for a single cartonnage were much narrower

(0.60 m). The cartonnages were introduced into the chamber feet first, leaving the head by the entrance. While the size of the chamber permitted two cartonnages to be placed inside it, there is no way of telling how contemporary they could be.

Amphorae were then placed upright in the entrance to the chamber at the bottom of the shaft. In C.T.5 there were at least five vessels, possibly more. A good example of untouched sealing of an entrance was provided by C.T.3, where the six amphorae blocking the entrance to the chamber were further packed with bunches of palm fiber. All the vessels from the shaft and burial chamber are typical local products, the slender variant of type LR 7, not exceeding 60 cm in height and with the shoulders

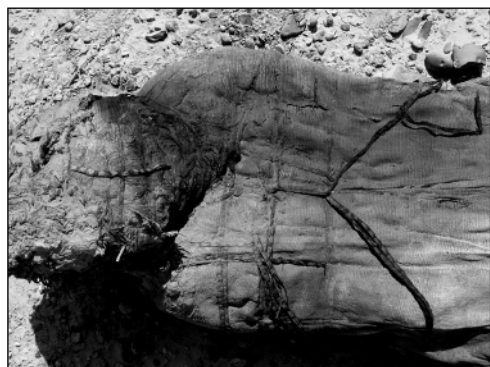


Fig. 4. Burial M.2 seen half pulled out into the shaft of tomb C.T.5 (top right), after lifting from the tomb (bottom) and detail (Photo W. Godlewski)

diameter equal to 17-22 cm, neck diameter most likely c. 7 cm. A Coptic inscription in red ink occurs on the shoulders of one of the amphorae. The different body ribbing and the turn of the shoulders into the body suggests different workshops producing these vessels. They were undoubtedly reused at the cemetery as discarded packaging salvaged for this constructional purpose.

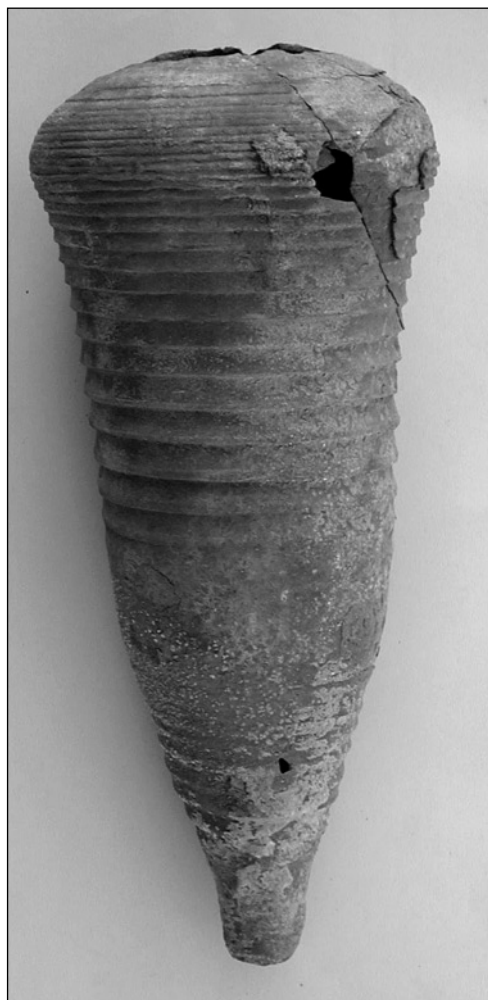


Fig. 5. Amphora from tomb C.T.5 (Nd.04.341)
(Photo W. Godlewski)

The two burials in C.T.5 represented adult males (*adultus/maturus*). The upper burial (M.1) had the same kind of anthropomorphic cartonnage as M.2, but it was so damaged that only fragments of the shrouds and robes could be lifted and examined. Even so, there can be no doubt that this cartonnage, like others of its kind, was the work of a professional undertaker who had access to shrouds made specially for the purpose.

The other cartonnage (M.2) was found practically intact. It was 1.90 m long, from 0.29 to 0.47 m wide and 0.30 m high. Its controlled unwrapping in a field lab in 2006 permitted its construction to be studied in detail. The following description follows a reversed sequence, thus presenting the actual process that took place at the undertakers.

The body was laid out extended on the back with hands folded on the lower belly and held in place by ornamental linen tapes, which were passed down to the feet, tying them together as well [Fig. 6]. It was dressed, the clothes in this case consisting of ankle-long trousers, set into boots reaching up to mid-calf, and three long-sleeved short tunics reaching below the hips. The first tunic (Nd.06.796) was the undergarment – a long-sleeved shirt of linen in plain weave, the sleeves narrowing toward the wrists. The fabric was plain, varied only by thick picks formed by thicker warp threads. The middle garment (Nd.06.439), also with long sleeves, was made of linen in plain weave with thick picks contributing to a varied texture. The outer tunic (Nd.06.438), also of linen in plain weave, featured a woolen decoration [Fig. 7] in the form of a haberdashery tape. This plaited tape, 2.5 cm wide, was applied to the fabric at the sleeve edges, shoulders and around the neck opening and vent in front. The

shirt was 0.80 m long, 0.45 m wide at the shoulders and c. 0.60 m at the bottom hemline. The long sleeves (0.62 cm) narrowed down to 10 cm at the wrists. The vertical vent in front, 0.33 m long, was quite deep.

The linen pants (Nd.06.437) demonstrated an exceptional design. The legs were

narrowed toward the bottom and had vertical vents at the back of the ankles, the bottom edges tied together with straps. This allowed the pant leg to be fitted to the calf and comfortably set into high boots. There were belt carriers sown to the waistband, holding a leather belt (Nd.06.436).



Fig. 6. *Body of the man from cartonnage M.2 after unwrapping, still dressed and with the hands and feet tied with ornamental tape (Photo W. Godlewski)*



Fig. 7. *Outer tunic (Nd.06.438), close-up of front vent with haberdashery decoration (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)*



Fig. 8. Shroud IX (Nd.06.662), end with fringe and decoration, and close-up of decoration (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)

Long linen socks (Nd.06.440) made in linen weave had a yellow felted wool sole. The linen was fitted to the cut and size of the high leather boots, which the deceased wore as well, and was presumably one with it despite not being attached in any way. The linen upper of the sock was gathered in

and basted to the sole with linen thread. The high leather boots (Nd.06.494) were not a pair [Fig. 12] (see below, contribution by D. Dzierzbicka in this volume, esp. Fig. 1 on 262-263). The left one was tied with palm string above the ankle, the right with a wide leather thong.



Fig. 9. Linen with thick-pick texture. Fragment of shroud V (Nd.06.658) (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)

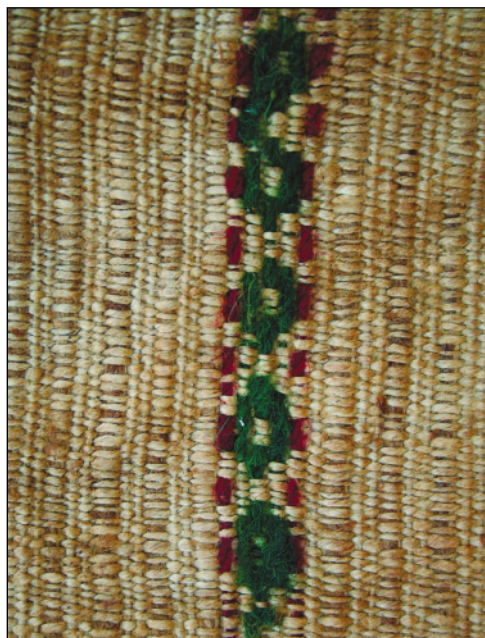


Fig. 10. Close-up of one of the color stripes decorating Shroud XI (Nd.06.664) (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)



Fig. 11. Close-up of one of the plain tapes (Nd.06.705) (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)

A long fringed shawl (Nd.06.665) covered the face and neck of the deceased and was subsequently folded along the right side of the body right down to the boots. The shawl was made of linen in plain weave (weaving sett 9 wefts/cm and 26 warps/cm). The sole ornament was a red woolen thread woven in as thin transverse, widely spaced stripes in supplementary brocading. Products of body decay have been deleterious to the preservation of this textile, hence it is impossible to determine the original size of the shawl, as well as the arrangement and frequency of these red stripes.

Eleven linen shrouds of different width, between 0.87 m and 1.18 m, and length at

least 2.55 m (the longest piece does not preserve the full length), were used for wrapping the body and forming the cartonnage. All the shrouds were woven of linen (S-spun) in warp-faced plain weave (weaving sett between 12 and 16 warps/cm and from 4 to 6 wefts/cm). They are characterized by a thick pick structure formed during weaving by introducing every which shed a thicker weft composed of a few thinner weft threads [Fig. 9]. The shorter edges have a warp fringe from 1.5 to 16 cm long. Decoration in the form of color parallel stripes, either three or five, appears 17 to 24 cm from one of the short edges [Fig. 8]. There is a group of parallel stripes, either three or five, made of an extra wool thread, red, dark red, light and dark green in color, c. 20-25 cm long, woven as supplementary brocading wool wefts (in Z2s-spun). The colorful wool threads



Fig. 12. Leather boots from burial M.2 (Nd.06.494)
(Photo W. Godlewski)

formed geometric patterns on the textile [Fig. 10]. Colored tapes were used on the surface of the cartonnage, also as decoration, and inside they served a structural purpose. Every three-four layers of shrouds, the body was tied with linen tapes of cream, brown and creamy-brown color (e.g. Nd.06.730, Nd.06.731), 6-9 mm wide, made in tablet-weaving technique [Fig. 11].

The dressed body was wrapped in four successive shrouds, each c. 1.10 m wide. The shrouds were laid lengthwise on the body and the long edges folded under it, after which the ends were wrapped at feet

and above the head. The fifth shroud, 1.18 m wide, was wrapped around the body and folded under the feet, then tied in place with a single tape around the neck, twice around the chest, and around the feet.

At this point in the process, the wrapped and tied body was placed on a wooden board which provided a stiff frame for the cartonnage. The board was 1.34 m long, 0.23-0.24 m wide, 1.3-2.0 cm thick; at the head end, it had cuts in the side edges forming a rounded shape emphasizing the shape of the head [Fig. 13]. The body and board were subsequently wrapped in two



Fig. 13. Wooden board from cartonnage M.2 (Nd.06.263)
(Photo W. Godlewski)

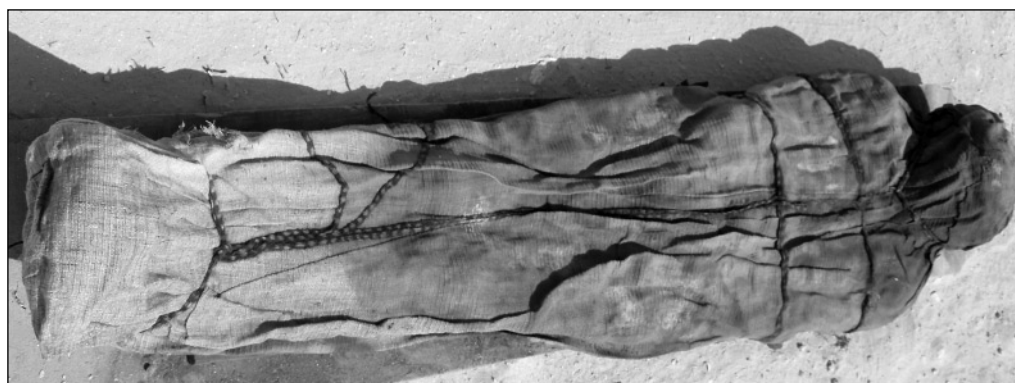


Fig. 14. The body wrapped in the seventh shroud and tied with tapes
(Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)

shrouds, one 0.90 m and the other 1.00 m wide [Fig. 14].

Laid on the surface of the seventh shroud was a folded curtain (Nd.06.109), covering the abdomen and lower part of the body. The curtain was damaged, missing about 30% of the original form. It represented a linen textile in plain weave, decorated with linen and woolen threads in tapestry weave, the details of the ornamental motif being executed in flying-shuttle technique. A warp fringe 8.0 cm long decorated the short edges. The ornamental design was situated in the four corners of the curtain. In each the central motif was an oval containing a female bust [Fig. 16]. The dark-haired woman wears a tunic with clavi and a diadem on her head. Orbiculi with

a red-petal flower design are found in a square around this central motif, set at the ends of the diagonals. The size of the textile (2.22 m by 1.40 m total length to width) and the disposition of the motifs (all the ovals with busts in one direction) clearly indicate that the textile was intended as a curtain or wall hanging. The textile appears to have been repaired in the middle

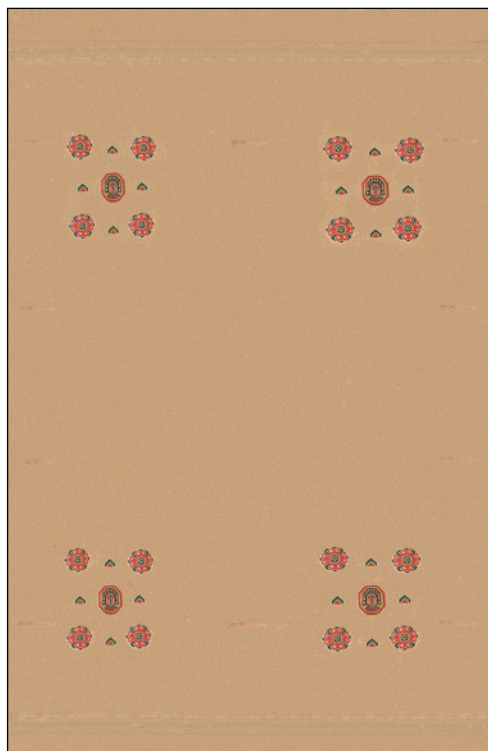


Fig. 15. Close-up of a design from a presumed curtain or wall hanging (Nd.06.641) (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)



Fig. 16. Curtain or wall hanging Nd.06.109, reconstruction (left) and close-up of one of the corner designs (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak; processing D. Dzierzbicka)

part, apparently while still in use in its original role, with linen patches cut from the same or a very similar fabric sown onto the back. The right bottom corner is missing together with the design which an analysis of the composition of the textile indicates should be expected here. The loss occurred before the textile was deposited in the grave.

A fragmentary textile from tomb C.T.14 (Nd.06.641) bears analogous decoration in the form of four orbiculi with w cross-rossette motif (Hoskins 2004: 118-119) [Fig. 15]. Grave robbers had ripped the piece skillfully from a bigger whole for mercantile reasons and apparently missed it in the end. It was found together with the remains of a severely manhandled burial.

A similar textile, which is now in the Vatican Museum collection, can be presumed to come from a burial, judging from the character of the damages and the stains on the surface (Renner 1982: 54, Cat.



Fig. 17. Twisted bundle used as filling in cartonnage M.2 (Nd.04.347) (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)



Fig. 18. Close-up of the intact cartonnage from tomb C.T.13 (Photo B. Czaja-Szewczak)

no. 15). The full dimensions of this piece (2.30 m by 1.30 m length-to-width) are close to the size of the Naqlun textile. It is dated to the second half of the 5th century. Other textiles with similar decoration from the Vatican Museum collection have been preserved in small fragments (Renner 1982: 54-56, 65, Cat. nos 16, 28, 29). Small fragments of utilitarian textiles with parallel decoration from The Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington come from Albert Gayet's excavations at Antinoe (Hoskins, 2004: Pls 22, 83.7-35A).

The next four shrouds completed the outer cartonnage. Two wrapped the feet and reached to the chin of the deceased and the outermost two covered the whole body and were bundled up at the ends. The eleventh shroud was carefully tied up at the neck and feet and along the entire length of the body. Despite this layer of tapes being partly damaged, it is clear that they formed a more elaborate network than on the surface of the fifth shroud. It was most certainly not the outer binding of the cartonnage.

This had been ripped off by the grave robbers. A few bundled up pieces of shrouds, between 0.10 and 0.35 m long, were found in the fill of the shaft. They could have come from cartonnage M.1 as well as from M.2, but they were used most certainly as the filling of the contraption above the head and feet of the deceased in likeness to that on the intact cartonnages from tombs C.T.3 and C.T.13. These fillings are made of the same kind of fabric as that used for the shrouds – linen in plain or warp-faced plain weave and they were most definitely prepared at the undertakers. They were cut from bigger textiles, folded in four and sometimes occasionally twisted tightly, and only then used in the process of shaping the cartonnage [Fig 17]. The finished cartonnage was then wrapped

in one or more outer shrouds and tied with tapes arranged in a careful ornamental pattern. When undamaged, it can be assumed to have looked very much like the well preserved cartonnage from tomb C.T.13 [Fig. 18].

Anthropomorphic cartonnages with a raised construction above the head and feet of the deceased, formed of a number of shrouds, are known from a few cemeteries from Egypt. In 1913, H. Ranke uncovered a few dozen cartonnages at the cemetery in Karara (Ranke 1926: 2-3, Pls 1-2 and 10). The form and execution resemble closely the cartonnages from Naqlun, although they were never described in detail and published only as photos. At Dayr al-Qarabin, B. Huber discovered damaged cartonnages in a crypt excavated in the rock under the church; the published fragment above the head of a male body is practically identical with the cartonnages from Naqlun (Huber 2006: 64-67, Figs 7 and 8). Similar cartonnages were found at the cemetery in Bawit (Benazeth 2000: 105-107; Cledat 1999: 195, Figs 165-166), the cemetery at El-Bagawat (Kajitani 2006: 95-112, Figs 5 and 6) and the monastic cemeteries in West Thebes: Deir el-Bahari (Godlewski 1986: 48, Fig. 25), the hermitage of St Epiphanius (Winlock, Crum 1926: I, 45-50 and 76-78, Pls XI-XII and XXVI-XXVII) and Qurnet Mar'y (Castel 1979: II, 121-153, Pls X-XVII).

The cartonnage was stiffened with wooden boards or panels made of *jarids* tied together with palm-fiber string at three points along the length, as well as single *jarids* inserted between the layers of shrouds making up the cartonnage. At Naqlun, they have been confirmed by finds from other tombs at cemetery C in Naqlun: C.T.5, but also the damaged burial from tomb C.T.2 (board Nd.04.324: L. 1.76 m; W. 0.24 m;

Th. 6 cm) and tombs C.T.2, C.T.7 and C.T.201-202 (*jarid* panels Nd.06.292: L. +1.16 m; W. 0.245 m; Th. 1.5 cm). A board with the part under the head clearly cut out has been found at the cemetery in Bawit (Cledat 1999: 188, *Fig. 33*).

REFERENCES

- Benazeth, D.
2000 *Les costumes funéraires* [in:] *L'art Copte en Egypte. 2000 ans de christianisme*, Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 105-107
- Castel, G.
1979 *Etude d'une momie Copte* [in:] *Hommage à Serge Sauneron*, Le Caire, 121-153
- Cledat, J.
1999 *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouit*, D. Benazeth and M-H. Rutschowskaya (eds) [=MIFAO 111], Le Caire
- Godlewski, W.
1986 *Le monastère de St Phoibammon, Deir el-Bahari V*, Varsovie
2005 Naqlun (Neqloni). Season 2004, *PAM XVI* [=Reports 2004], 184-186
- Godlewski, W., Derda, T., Górecki, T.
1994 *Deir el Naqlun (Neklioni)*. Second preliminary report, *Nubica* III.1, 216-235
- Godlewski, W., Łajtar, A.
2006 *Grave stelae from Deir el-Naqlun*, *JJP* XXXVI, 43-62
- Hoskins, N.A.
2004 *The Coptic Tapestry Albums and the Archaeologist of Antinoé*, Albert Gayet, Seattle, London
- Huber, B.
2006 *Al-Kom al-Ahmar/Sharuna: Different archaeological contexts – different textiles* [in:] S. Schrenk (ed.), *Textiles in situ*, *Riggisberger Berichte* 13, Abegg-Stiftung, 57-68
- Kajitani, N.
2006 *Textiles and their context in the third to fourth century CE cemetery of al-Bagawat, Khargah Oasis, Egypt, from the 1907-1931 excavations by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York* [in:] S. Schrenk (ed.), *Textiles in situ*, *Riggisberger Berichte* 13, Abegg-Stiftung, 95-112
- Ranke, H.
1926 *Koptische Friedhöfe bei Karara und Amontempel Scheschonks I bei El-Hibe*, Berlin und Leipzig
- Renner, D.
1982 *Die Koptischen Textilien in den Vatikanischen Museen, Kataloge, Band 2*, Wiesbaden
- Winlock, H.E., Crum W.E.
1926 *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Egyptian Expedition, New York