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THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD CEMETERY IN THE HATSHEPSUT TEMPLE AT DEIR EL-BAHARI

RECENT RESEARCH

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Abstract: The paper deals with the Third Intermediate Period cemetery in the Hatshepsut Temple at Deir el-Bahari. The architectural form of the tombs and their funerary equipment are discussed.

Keywords: Temple of Hatshepsut, Third Intermediate Period, burial

The end of the Ramesside period in the Hatshepsut temple is still obscure. There is some scant information from the Twenty-first Dynasty, which should be connected with the activity of the necropolis authorities in this area (Demarée 2002: Nos 51842–3; Peden 2003),¹ but it falls beyond the scope of the present paper. In any case, there is no reason to doubt in the unhindered functioning of the temple under the rule of the high pontiffs of Amun until the Libyan period at the very least. The change in temple function took place when the Theban priesthood decided to use it as a graveyard for the noblest families of the region. Why they did so, cannot be easily explained and there are many

questions without satisfactory answers: Why was a temple with a centuries-old cultic tradition converted so suddenly into a huge cemetery? In the light of what is known of Egyptian cultic practices, one wonders how a restricted temple precinct could be reorganized as a burial ground.²

It would be easier to discuss these questions, deeply rooted in developments of the “Libyan anarchy” period, if we could reconstruct properly the sequence of events during this stormy era. In any case, separatist tendencies were still alive in the Thebaid and even growing after the death of the “Theban king” Harsiese, grandson of Osorkon I and great-grandson of Psusennes II. They reached their apex

¹ At least two of the unpublished ostraka from Deir el-Bahari, found during the clearance of the area of the temple of Tuthmosis III, can be dated to the beginning of the Twenty-first Dynasty.

² For the sake of comparison, the earliest burial in the temple at Medinet Habu probably did not take place before the end of the 8th century BC, see Aston 2003: 141; also Hölscher 1954: 32.

at the rise of the “Theban” Twenty-third Dynasty.³ The existence of a necropolis in the Hatshepsut temple at this time is already well documented, even if there is no easy connection to be recognized between the dynasty’s policies and the existence of the cemetery in the temple.

The point is that the dating of finds from the Hatshepsut temple cemetery is still a matter of conjecture. In the documentation of the early explorers there is no record of the archaeological context of discoveries like the magnificent coffins, sarcophagi and other elements of funerary equipment found in the temple area. The only certainly attributed fragments are those which can be dated on genealogical grounds. One thing is for sure: older reconstructions of the chronology of the cemetery in the Hatshepsut temple should be revised considerably. A number of modern studies on the typology of coffins and cartonnages of the epoch, as well as some amendments to the known history of the Libyan period have restricted considerably the period during which the necropolis was in use. It now seems that the earliest burials did not take place before the Twenty-third Dynasty (possibly on the eve of the Nubian period). The latest burials are difficult to date properly, but there is no serious reason why they should not be assigned to the eve of the Saite period, if not the very beginning of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty.

The actual location of individual tombs inside the temple and their architectural form had not been known until the recent excavations by archaeologists

from the PCMA working on the Upper Terrace. Within the last dozen years or so the Polish mission has discovered or re-excavated several tombs in the main sanctuary of the temple, in the Bark Hall, in the so-called Northern Chapel of Amun (Szafranski 2001: 185ff.) and in the Chapel of Hatshepsut situated in the southern part of the upper terrace. These interments, belonging to the priesthood, turned out to be made in simple shaft tombs hewn in the soft *tafl* bedrock. The burial chambers were small and irregular, accessible through shafts, none of which exceeded 6 m in depth. Restrictions on space inside the burial chambers did not prevent some of the graves being used as a kind of family hypogeum for several generations of priestly families. As a matter of fact, there was enough space in the tombs to insert several coffins or sarcophagi.

While the architectural form of mortuary chapels of the Third Intermediate Period cemeteries in Western Thebes is now ascertainable,⁴ no installations of this kind have been recognized in the temple of Hatshepsut. A certain number of wooden stelae was found by early explorers in the context of the priestly burials, but their connection with mortuary chapels of any kind is rather excluded. It is possible, however, that the temple chapels as such were still functioning in connection with the mortuary cult of the priests and members of their families buried there. In at least one instance, there are traces in the form of late figural graffiti, which could be interpreted in this way. These graffiti were painted in red

³ On the “Theban” Twenty-third Dynasty, see Spencer, Spencer 1986; Aston, Taylor 1990; Leahy 1990: 155ff. (esp. 177–200).

⁴ For example, in Medinet Habu, in the Ramesseum area and in Assasif, see, e.g., Eigner 1984; Aston 2003: 138ff.; Nelson 2003: 88ff.; Anthes 1943: 1ff., esp. 17–50.

on the walls of one of the niches in the Solar Cult Complex [Fig. 1]. Human figures were represented as if entering the niche and paying homage to the original figure of the solar god depicted on the rear wall. On the opposite wall, a similar pair was represented as if leaving the niche. The stylistic character of these drawings considered, a dating to the Third Intermediate Period cannot be excluded, although more precise chronological attribution is impossible for lack of inscriptions. One notes with interest the three-dimensional development of the iconographic scheme of a typical Third Intermediate Period funerary stela within the space of the niche.

A number of crude offering tables found in the temple area can be connected with the mortuary cult of the deceased buried there, but their exact dating still awaits elucidation. One such offering table merits particular attention, having been made of a limestone column drum [Fig. 2]. It is tempting to associate it with some unknown cultic installation belonging to the Third Intermediate Period cemetery, although being uninscribed, the object can hardly be dated with any precision.

A complete inventory of funerary equipment accompanying these burials had been produced by the 19th century excavators (Aston 2003: 138ff.) and the present finds

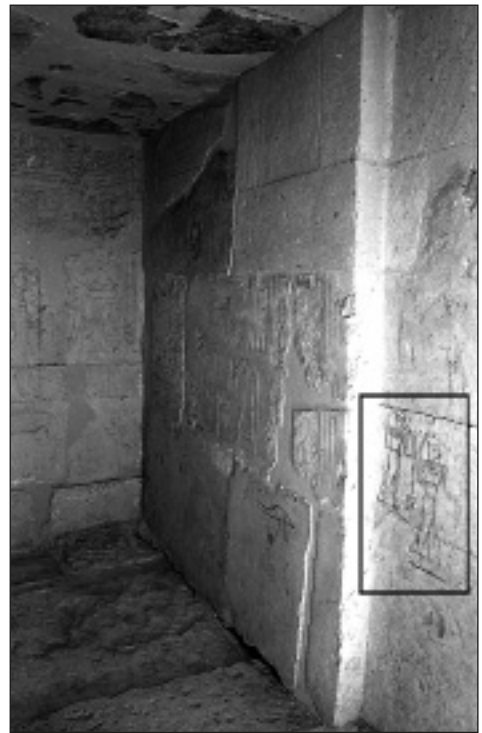


Fig. 1. Southern niche in the open courtyard of the Solar Cult Complex with red-painted figural graffiti, left side of entrance (left) and right side (Photo M. Jawornicki)

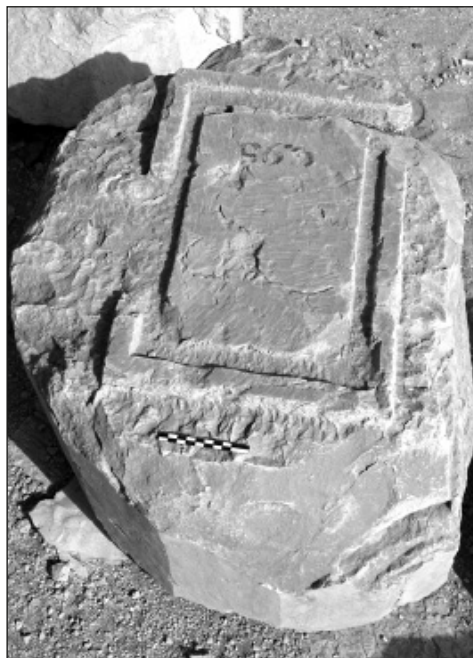


Fig. 2. Offering table made of a fragment of limestone column originating from the temple (Photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 3. Three shaft tombs in the western part of the Mortuary Chapel of Hatshepsut (Photo M. Jawornicki)



cannot add significantly to older descriptions. Finds made recently by the Polish team in the tombs located in the Mortuary Chapel of Hatshepsut on the upper terrace of the temple [Fig. 3]⁵ were limited to tiny fragments of the original funerary equipment, that is to say, the “rubbish” left by ancient intruders and 19th century explorers, and can hardly be compared, either artistically or in terms of antiquarian value, with items held in museum collections. They included innumerable fragments of cartonnages, coffins and sarcophagi, crude clay and faience *shabti* figurines, remnants of bead nets,⁶ and wooden funerary figures. No traces of canopic boxes were noted, but one limestone hawk-headed stopper of a canopic jar (representing Kebehsenuf) was found (in shaft tomb 8, located near the northwestern corner of the Chapel). The quality of the workmanship of this piece⁷ points to the high status of the buried individual; he may have been the vizier Padiamonet (see below).

One category of finds, which appears to compromise the suggestion for overall

dating, is constituted by fragments of wooden openwork decoration that was hardly used at such an early date. These are standing figures of female deities, arms outstretched in typically protective gesture — Nephthys and probably Neith (Stupko 2008). Uraei surmounted with solar discs formed a typical crowning frieze from a structure of some kind [Fig. 4].⁸ Several bird-shaped wooden legs would have been suitable for the lower part of this object, assuming there is a connection with the elements mentioned above. There is one category of funerary equipment that was decorated in this way, that is, “funerary beds”, otherwise described as open sarcophagi or catafalques, but these are of much later date.⁹ There are no grounds on which to date our finds to the Third Intermediate Period, hence it should be considered that they represent rather a later intrusion, a secondary burial possibly from the Roman period.¹⁰ It would explain the lamentable state of preservation of objects connected with the original burials, which would have been broken into pieces by the later intruders.¹¹

⁵ Four shaft tombs were excavated or rather re-excavated in the chapel by 2006 and more finds of this kind can be expected as the excavations in the Chapel of Hatshepsut are continued. As a matter of fact, the opening of the fifth shaft has been located near the middle of the south wall.

⁶ Faience bead nets covering mummies were a common element of high status burials from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to the Ptolemaic period, see Silvano 1980.

⁷ Two fragments of the jar (or jars) were found during the last season; one of them covered with tiny remnants of a painted inscription.

⁸ Similar uraei from the Hay collection, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, may have come from the Chapel of Hatshepsut. In any case, the Boston set of uraei, acquired in 1872, is comparable to our finds with regard to their size and workmanship, see D’Auria *et alii* 1988: 143–144 (No. 84, with photo on 144).

⁹ See, however, so called “openwork mummy covers”, dated to the Ramesside period, as a possible parallel to our finds, Raven 2005: 76 (Cat. 52; with references), Pls 94 (52a), 100 (52a–j).

¹⁰ As for burials from the Roman period in the temple area, a good example is the sarcophagus of Heter, see *PM I/2*: 647; Neugebauer, Parker 1969: 93ff., Pl. 50; Sheikholeslami 2003: 131ff. (esp. 133–134). On Roman burials in the surrounding area, but not in the temple itself, see Riggs 2003: 189ff. (esp. 190, 198–199).

¹¹ It should be noted, however, that the tombs were entered in modern times as attested by modern newspapers and cigarette boxes found in the fill. Dozens of fragments of decorated limestone blocks were also found, originating mostly from the walls and vaulted ceiling of the Chapel of Hatshepsut, as well as furniture remnants associated with the Coptic monastery and the church which was located in the chapel itself.

Inscribed mummy bandages or shawls were found among the debris filling shaft tomb 8. The prenomen Usermaatre found inscribed on one of them [Fig. 5] was borne by many Libyan rulers, but usually in connection with epithets accompanying

a royal name. Without an epithet it was used only by rulers of the Twenty-third Dynasty: Osorkon III, Takeloth III and Rudamun, and later by Piye (see von Beckerath 1984: 265–266, 269. Bonhême 1987: 172ff., 189–190, 202–203). The



Fig. 4. Frieze of uraei decorating a Late Period catafalque structure of some kind (Photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 5. Bandage dated to the 27th regnal year of king Usermaatre found in shaft tomb 8 (Photo M. Jawornicki)



Fig. 6. Bandage inscribed with the name of vizier Padiamonet; from shaft tomb 8 (Photo M. Jawornicki)

remarkably high year-date (Year 27) mentioned in the inscription¹² eliminated Takeloth III and possibly Rudamun from this group, leaving Osorkon III and Piye under consideration. Another bandage found in the same tomb was inscribed with the name of the vizier Padiamonet [Fig. 6], a descendant of the well known family of viziers and priests of Amun. Padiamonet's father, Pamiu, was vizier and so was his brother Pakharu, who was married to a daughter of king Takeloth III. The vizier Nespakashuti, son of vizier Padiamonet, married in turn princess Di-Ese-nesyt, another daughter of king Takeloth III. In these circumstances, dating this generation to the reign of Takeloth III and his immediate successors seems to be well grounded.¹³ A fragment of a sarcophagus of Padiamonet found in the same tomb [Fig. 7, left], and some parts of his brightly painted cartonnage [Fig. 7, right] make it highly probable that this prominent official had been buried there, in the Mortuary Chapel of Hatshepsut. His interment in the period immediately following the Nubian conquest of Egypt seems probable.¹⁴

It is interesting to note that Emile Baraize, working on a reconstruction of some elements of the tomb architecture in the 1932–1933 season, discovered the burial of other members of Padiamonet's family (Bruyère 1957). Significantly, the

tomb was located in front of the Chapel of Hatshepsut, not far away from tomb 8 inside the chapel. Baraize's discovery comprised funerary equipment belonging to Nespakashuti (great-grandson of the vizier Padiamonet), his mother and a paternal uncle Padiamonet, who was in turn "prophet of Montu, lord of Thebes". Once again, we have here persons related to the royal family, as this Padiamonet was a grandson of Takeloth III through his mother, princess Di-Ese-nesyt, married to vizier Nespakashuti (see von Beckerath 1984: 265–266, 269. Bonhême 1987: 172ff., 189–190, 202–203).¹⁵

Coffins belonging to Pamiu and princess Ir-Bast-udja-tjau and the latter's sarcophagus, formerly in the Sabatier collection (now in the Louvre and Musée de l'Opéra in Paris, *PM I/2*²: 647) were found on the middle terrace of the temple. A sarcophagus of Pamiu from the same find (now kept in the Cairo Museum, *PM I/2*²: 645) gives a full genealogy of this descendant of the family of viziers and Theban priests as he was the son of vizier Pakharu and princess Ir-Bast-udja-tjau, a daughter of Takeloth III (CG 41036: Moret 1913: 299–301). It should be noted that coffin fragments belonging to vizier Pamiu, a powerful ancestor of the family, were found in the priestly cache which was also located on the middle terrace of

¹² The same number was inscribed on another bandage found in the same tomb. In this case, however, no traces of the royal name were discernible.

¹³ See Kitchen 1986: 567 (§489), 597 (Table 15); earlier attributed to the reign of Takeloth II, see Kitchen 1986: 328–329. On the family of vizier Pamiu, see also Kees 1957; 1953: 229–230; Aston, Taylor 1990: 132, 147ff.

¹⁴ According to J. von Beckerath, the newly found bandage inscribed with the cartouche of Usermaatre can be connected with the reign of king Piye (personal communication to Z.E. Szafranski).

¹⁵ Strangely enough, a *shabti* box belonging to princess Di-Ese-nesyt was found in the tomb beside three other *shabti* boxes, see Bruyère 1957: 14. As for the fragment of a cartonnage inscribed with the name of Padiamonet, it cannot be connected with the vizier Padiamonet because of the different titles, see Bruyère 1957: 14.

¹⁶ See *PM I/2*²: 649. For a funerary figurine probably of vizier Pamiu, see Taylor 2001: Fig. 155 (BM EA 22913).

the temple,¹⁶ so it is rather surprising that no traces of the burial of vizier Pakharu have been found until now. It may only be conjectured at this point that Padiamonet's brother was also buried in the Hatshepsut temple.

To recapitulate the data presented above, we can assume that the burial ground of the family of the vizier Padiamonet was located in the temple of queen Hatshepsut, that it covered a relatively long span of time and comprised at least five generations,

from the reign of the immediate successors of Osorkon III to the middle years of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty at the very least.

To complete this genealogical survey, three shaft tombs should be mentioned, located by the Polish team in 2000 in the so-called Northern Chapel of Amun on the northern side of the upper terrace (see Barwik 2003). At least four persons buried there were identified on the ground of the names and their titles inscribed on fragments of coffins, sarcophagi and carton-



Fig. 7. Fragment of the sarcophagus, left, and cartonnage of vizier Padiamonet, the latter reconstructed by A. Niemirka (Photos J. Iwaszczuk, M. Jawornicki)

nages. Among them we find “god’s father, beloved of the god, opener of the doors of heaven in Karnak” Pa-en-kharu. It is to be doubted rather that he is the same person as the “prophet of Montu, lord of Thebes” Pa-kharu, mentioned on fragments of a sarcophagus and inner coffin of Shaimenimes found in the same chapel. It is possible that the latter was a well known “chantress of the interior of Amun”, an adoptive(?) mother of Meresamunet, who in turn was a daughter of prince Osorkon Pataudjay, a descendant of the royal family being a son of Takeloth (III) (see Elias 1995). It is worth noting that a fragment of an anthropoid (exterior?) coffin mentioning a certain Padiamonet was found along with the above mentioned pieces (Barwik 2003: 126, Fig. 10). As no titles of that person have been preserved, his family relationship can only be conjectured, but his connection with the family of vizier Padiamonet cannot be excluded.

The recent discoveries in the Temple of Hatshepsut have also produced data regarding funerary rituals of the Third Intermediate Period. The black coating observed on some of the cartonnages found in the so-called “Northern Chapel of Amun” (Barwik 2003: 124ff.) has been proved in a recent analysis made by I. Zadrożna from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts to be resin, most probably pistachio resin (see Serpico, White 2001). Judging by the distribution of black patches on cartonnage surfaces, there can be no doubt that in some cases the resin was poured over a cartonnage, while it was lying in a horizontal position, but in others that it was brushed on, even in two layers. The Northern Chapel of Amun also produced a number of coffin fragments with similar “black” coating [Fig. 8], but

no “blackened” coffins or cartonnages were forthcoming from the excavations inside the Chapel of Hatshepsut. This could possibly be developed as an additional dating criterion in the future.

Notwithstanding, the true nature of the presumed ritual cannot be explained satisfactorily. One hypothesis vaguely associates the black coating with a “final ritual libation” during the funeral ceremonies. On the other hand, assuming equivalence between pistachio resin (or resin in general?) and the Egyptian *snt* (“incense”) leads to the supposition that the ritual was meant in the broadest sense as conferring divinity on the deceased (Serpico, White 2001: 39; see also Niwiński 1992).

[2005]



Fig. 8. Fragment of coffin found in the Northern Chapel of Amun with traces of resin coating inside (Photo M. Jawornicki)

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