

Preliminary Report on the Work Carried out During the Season 2012

In the undecorated tombs KV 26, KV 29, KV 30, KV 31, KV 32, KV 33, KV 37, KV 40, KV 59, KV 61, and KV 64 in the Valley of the Kings

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This year's season of the University of Basel in the Valley of the Kings started on January 07th, 2012 and lasted until April 15th, 2012.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Minister of State for Antiquities Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim; the Secretary General Dr. Mustafa Amin; the Director of Foreign Missions Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled; the General Director of Egyptian Antiquities Department Dr. Abd el-Hamid Marouf; the General Director of the Antiquities of Upper Egypt Dr. Mohamed el-Bialy; the Director of Luxor Mr. Mansour Boreik; the Inspectorate of Western Thebes and its General Director Dr. Mohamed Abd El-Aziz; the Director of the West Bank Mr. Nour Abd El-Ghaffar; the Director of the Valley of the Kings Mr. Aiman Mohamed Ibrahim, and to the Inspectors Mr. Ali Reda and Said Mamdouh for their helpful cooperation, assistance and advice during our working season.

This year's members of our team were: Susanne Bickel, director; Elina Paulin-Grothe, field-director; Tanja Alsheimer, archaeologist; Faried Adrom, egyptologist artist; Hans-Hubertus Münch, egyptologist; Claudia Gamma, egyptologist documentalist; Stephanie Vieli and Salome Keller, egyptologists BA; Erico Peintner, restorer; Agnieszka Wos-Jucker, textile restorer Abegg Stiftung Riggisberg; Salima Ikram, egyptologist, American University Cairo; Frank Rühli, anatomist, University of Zürich, and Matjaz Kacicnik, photographer.

KV 64

The principal event this season was the discovery of a new tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

During the season of 2011, three edges of an unknown man-made feature were revealed at 1.80m north of KV 40, on the 25th of January, the first day of the Egyptian revolution. Due to the situation, work was stopped and the feature was covered with an iron door (Fig. 1).

As this structure is so close to KV 40 and since it was impossible to know whether it was merely an unfinished shaft or a real tomb, we gave it the temporary number 40b. As soon as it became apparent during this year's work that the structure was actually a tomb, the Egyptian authorities decided to give it the final designation KV 64. The discovery was officially announced on January 15th.

KV 64 consists of a rather small shaft and a burial chamber. The shaft is ca. 3.5 m deep and measures 1.20 m by 0.95 m at the bottom. The entrance to the burial chamber is 1.20 m high and 0.95 m wide. The burial chamber has a length of 4.10 m, a width of 2.35 m and a height of approx. 2.04 m. The bottom of the shaft and the entrance lie ca. 0.70 m above the floor of the chamber. The walls are roughly hewn (Fig. 2). The shaft contained the original fill from Pharaonic times. The entrance to the chamber was blocked with stones but not sealed. Underneath this blocking were remains of an earlier wall covered with plaster, in front of which there was a flowerpot of Nile silt from the 18th dynasty. This indicates that two burials took place in the tomb at two different times. The chamber was filled with debris to the height of approx. 1 m. Part of this debris, consisting of thin and sandy material close to the entrance probably entered the shaft naturally during a period when the tomb stood open. The main layer of limestone chip debris seems to have been brought in intentionally with larger stones piled up in the corners.

In the northern half of the room a black painted coffin with yellow inscriptions and figures still stood in situ top of the debris. At the foot end of the coffin a wooden painted stela was leaning against the western wall (Fig. 3). The coffin and the stela belong to a chantress of Amun called Nehmes-Bastet. The coffin is made of sycamore wood with acacia pegs and nails, its length is 1.92 m and width at the shoulders 53.5 cm. The stela shows Nehemes-Bastet in the attitude of prayer in front of the god Ra-Harakhte. The typology of both the coffin and the stela as well as the lady's name and title indicate a 22nd dynasty date. The carefully wrapped and quite well preserved mummy lay directly in the coffin (Fig. 4). As the blocking of the entrance indicated, the tomb had never been opened since the 22nd dynasty, when Nehemes-Bastet was buried in KV 64.

Underneath the thick layer of debris on which the 22nd dynasty burial was placed were found remains of the original 18th dynasty burial. This first burial had been thoroughly looted. Most of the objects had been robbed or were left behind in a very fragmentary state. The coffin, parts of the canopic equipment, pottery, and possibly pieces of furniture were missing. At the bottom of the debris fragments of three limestone canopic jars and two lids in the shape of human heads were found, as well as fragments of pottery and small pieces of glass (Fig. 5) and leather. It remains uncertain whether a small wooden tag naming a royal daughter along with wooden splinters belonging to a piece of furniture with the name of king Amenhotep III stem originally from this tomb or whether these elements entered accidentally with the debris filling. Similar inscribed fragments were found near the tomb of Siptah by Howard Carter and by the Basel team of Mission Siptah – Ramses X, as well as by our team during this season outside tomb KV 29. This dispersion of material seems to result from looting in antiquity.

Along the north wall on the floor were remains of a mummy without linen bandages. This badly broken mummy is probably the original first owner of the tomb.

Work in KV 40

Tomb KV 40 lies on the slope on the east side of the path leading towards the tomb of Thutmosis III, to the north of KV 59 and northwest of KV 26. Hitherto, nothing was known about this tomb or its

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Fig. 1 KV 40 and KV 64 covered by protective walls and iron doors.



Fig. 2 KV 64 after clearing.



Fig. 3 Sarcophagus of Nehemes-Bastet and stela in situ.



Fig. 4 Mummy of Nehemes-Bastet.



Fig. 5 Fragment of glass from the 18th dynasty layers of KV 64.



Fig. 6 KV 40. View into room E.



Fig. 7 Entrance to KV 33

discovery. The shaft and the corridor B were cleared in the season 2011.

The tomb consists of a deep shaft A and a corridor B with a length of approx. 6 m. The central room C measures 8 m by 3 m. From room C two square side rooms open to the south (E and F) and one to the north (D).

This year work was conducted in room C of KV 40. The floor of the room was covered by a layer of debris to a height of approx. 0.40 m. The remains of the burials were in a very bad condition due to fire and looting (Fig. 6). It seems that the tomb has been robbed several times before and after the fire. The tomb was used for numerous burials, some of which date to the 18th dynasty and others to the Third Intermediate Period. The 18th dynasty remains are mainly big pottery jars, broken and scattered all over the floor of the tomb with their original contents of embalming materials, especially linen and natron bags. Despite the fire, many human remains are preserved and among the mummy fragments there are many bones of children. Fragments of different wooden objects and coffins as well as of cartonnage and even textiles have survived, but they all need special cleaning and restoration.

Work in KV 33

Victor Loret had discovered KV 33 during his work in the Valley of the Kings in 1898-1899. The only information about this tomb was in the Baedeker Guide Book where it is stating that it consisted of two empty rooms. KV 33 lies high up in the cliffs, a few meters to the northeast of the tomb of Tuthmosis III (KV 34). Its entrance was covered by a concrete bench.

In this season the bench was removed in order to start the clearing of KV 33. The entrance consists of 10 precisely cut and well preserved steps (Fig. 7). Behind the entrance door is a large chamber with two smaller side rooms. The entrance between the steps and chamber J was blocked with debris only to a height of approx. 1.20 m. All three rooms had been cut very accurately and all the walls show original chisel marks on their white limestone surface. Chamber J was filled to half its height with limestone debris, and on the surface lay many big stone boulders that probably belong to the blocking and the original filling of the entrance corridor A with the steps. The tomb has been robbed and many pottery fragments were left on the surface of the debris. The upper part of the debris consists of loose flood fill. The harder limestone debris close to the floor contained alabaster jar fragments and pottery fragments of big Nile silt jars, dating to the 18th dynasty and probably the reign of Thutmosis III. The few human remains (small bones) are in a bad condition due to the effects of water. No names have appeared so far. It is not clear when the flood had brought the debris into the tomb, but it probably remained open after the modern discovery by Victor Loret, during the time when the tomb of Tuthmosis III (KV 34) was cleared.

Surveying work

Surveying of the excavation area in our concession and the mapping of the tombs KV 64, KV 40, and KV 33 was continued by Tanja Alsheimer.

Textile restoration

Agneszka Wos-Jucker, a specialised textile restorer from the Abegg Stiftung Riggisberg, worked on several fragments of linen and unfolded and cleaned a multi-coloured piece of woven cloth with the name of Ramesses III.

Work on the human remains in KV 31

Salima Ikram (Department of Egyptology, American University Cairo) and Frank Rühli (Centre for Evolutionary Medicine/Swiss Mummy Project, University of Zurich) carried out a preliminary examination of the human remains from KV 31. One highly fragmented body (D1; one head, two legs) originates from chamber D, the rest from chamber C of KV 31.

First an initial macroscopic assessment was undertaken: the various fragmented body parts – initially thought to be four mummies – were anatomically rearranged. Almost all the bone and soft tissue fragments could be relocated correctly, leading to a much more complete appearance of the bodies. This reconstruction led to a new total of five individuals.

Body C1 consists of an isolated head as well as thorax and upper arms. Body C2 is almost complete and mostly wrapped, but divided in four major parts (head, upper body, two legs). Body C3 is headless, but the thorax, and most of the left arm, and both legs are preserved as fragments. Body C4 is mostly complete except for the feet and hands that are also fragmented. All the bodies have thus suffered major post mortem damage, and to the naked eye they show neither inscriptions nor amulets. The position of the arms of the mummies varies (crossed in front of the thorax, along the body, in front of the pubic region). An "organ package" and a miniature mummy-shaped bundle of unknown content have also been recorded. Sex and individual age group are assessed on the bases of macroscopic inspection and conventional x-ray. The body parts have also been properly photographed and labelled.

All the major body parts have been x-rayed in situ using a portable conventional x-ray unit provided by the Institute for Bioarchaeology, Cairo. These image data serve as basis for individual sex and age determination, as well as for the study of pathologies and embalming techniques. The bodies were placed in protective boxes.

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