

BÁRTA, M., et al. — The Tomb of the sun priest Neferinpu (AS 37). (Excavations of the Czech Institute of Egyptology. Abusir, XXIII). Charles University, Prague, 2014. (30 cm, XXV, 247). ISBN 978-80-7308-544-5. 1362 CZK.

The book under review represents the 23rd final publication of the Charles University (Czech Republic, Prague) archaeological mission to Abusir.<sup>1)</sup> It is the outcome of a longterm archaeological project focusing (since 1991) on a set of cemeteries located at Abusir South. Four previous publications dealt with tombs in the Abusir South area: Abusir V, XIII, XIX, and XXII (2001–2011). The tomb of Neferinpu was discovered in 2006 and largely excavated in 2007.

The publication contains fourteen thematically ordered chapters (Chapters 2–15), all amply illustrated with b/w photographs and drawings. Despite the large number of authors, very few inconsistencies or errors were noted. Indeed, the author of chapter 8 (model stone vessels) is alone in using footnotes. Chapter 7 (pottery) contains a comparatively large number of misspellings; the publication is otherwise very thoroughly proofread and corrected. As a final remark, there is quite some repetition of basic information at the start of each chapter (e.g. history of the tomb's excavation).

*1. Introduction – M. Bárta (pp. 1–6)*

To quote the author, the aim of the present volume is '... to present primary data and their basic analyses and interpretations acquired during the tomb's examination (...) and specific analytical campaign.' This new addition to the Abusir publication series definitely has new insights to offer. This is perhaps best expressed by the author who, in the conclusion (p. 205), states that '[t]he mastaba of Neferinpu with its cult and burial arrangements represents in microscale a material rendering of the ideology and doctrines operating in ancient Egyptian society at that time. The evidence embodies elements of information about the social hierarchy, administrative structure and ideology of the state and perpetuates it forever in the cemetery. Therefore every new research on the burial grounds in Ancient Egypt can shed considerable new light on the way we understand and interpret the civilization on the Nile in macroscale.'

In the introduction, the author also points to one of the limitations of scientific archaeology in Egypt. Due to the current restrictions on the export of samples, it is virtually impossible to make use of new analyses offered by the natural sciences. This is highly problematic, as it significantly slows down the development of Egyptian archaeology (compare e.g. to the currently favourable situation in Sudan). Yet, as the author states in the conclusion (p. 211), '[t]his study

<sup>1)</sup> The first book in this series: Verner, M., *Abusir I: The Mastaba of Ptahshepses* (Prague, 1977).

of the mastaba of Neferinpu attempts to make the greatest possible profit from the application of natural sciences in Egyptian archaeology.’

Mastaba No. AS 37 (previously ‘OO’) was built for a Sun Priest named Neferinpu. He reached the peak of his career during the Fifth Dynasty reigns of Nyuserra and Djedkara. The tomb consists of a corridor chapel with four cult places in the superstructure. Six shafts lead to the subterranean burial apartment. The mastaba is part of a large cemetery of the mid-Fifth Dynasty. The area was accessible from the Lake of Abusir; one of the wadi’s led up to this area from the northeast. It is hypothesised that the cemetery, of which AS 37 represents the latest addition, belonged to a single extended family or to a group of closely related individuals. The cemetery may have been initiated by Shepsekafankh (AS 39; immediately due south of AS 37), whose main title was Chief Physician of Upper and Lower Egypt.

### 2. *Neferinpu and his family – M. Bárta (pp. 7–11)*

The theophoric name Neferinpu (‘Anubis is accomplished’) is not commonly attested in the Old Kingdom. On pp. 8–9, the 16 titles (§2.2) and 3 epithets (§2.3) held by Neferinpu are listed. All are discussed at greater length in chapter 15.2 (pp. 208–210: Social standing of Neferinpu). The principal title is *r Nhn (n) z3b*, ‘Speaker of Nekhen of the king’. Cross-referencing to the sources of individual titles and epithets is not always made easy for the reader. Finding the source for ‘hieratic inscription no. 1, south wall of the mastaba’, for example, requires the reader to browse back and forth. References to titles found on loose fragments are easier to find, as they contain the excavation numbers (e.g. Excav. No. 40-27/AS37/2007).

Details on Neferinpu’s family members are sparse and largely incomplete. The inscriptions point to (at least) Neferinpu having had two sons Nefer and Kahesuf – the latter being a name otherwise unattested in the Old Kingdom. Kahesuf might be identified with a namesake attested on (tomb elements) found previously in the same necropolis. One inscription also points to Neferinpu having had a wife, although her name is not preserved.

### 3. *The architecture and archaeology of the tomb – M. Bárta (pp. 13–51)*

Richly illustrated with plans, elevations and photos, chapter 3 focuses on the tomb’s superstructure (3.1) and subterranean apartments (3.2). The mastaba measures 19×8.9m and it is oriented along a north-south axis. The dominant architectural element is the long, north-south oriented corridor chapel in the east. It includes the partially preserved cult places, some of which are furnished with false door stelae. The superstructure was built in two stages, probably reflecting a change in the structure’s ownership. Stage 1 represents a mud brick mastaba with four shafts; Stage 2 represents the mastaba considerably expanded towards the east and south, incl. a limestone revetment and inscribed stone elements (e.g. false door, largely *in situ*).

A total of six shafts were uncovered; two shafts (Nos. 1–2) are associated with Stage 2 and four shafts with Stage 1. The latter yielded most finds, as it contained the intact Burial Chamber East. A mud brick wall blocked the entrance into the chamber and at various depths votive offerings of pottery were found. A large part of the burial chamber was occupied by a limestone sarcophagus. A second burial chamber in the

West had been thoroughly robbed, yet still contained a range of offerings. Finds from the shafts are discussed in chapters 6–10. There are no inventory lists available for each chamber. This would have been desirable, as it is now rather difficult to collect the material evidence for each room individually.

### 4. *Decoration of the tomb – M. Bárta (pp. 53–69)*

This chapter presents factual descriptions of scenes and texts. Issues of style or iconography are not dealt with. Yet one may have expected the author’s opinion on certain peculiarities. For example, the jackal figure in the hieroglyphic writing of *z3b* in the title *r Nhn (n) [z3b]*, atop the first column of text below the small lintel in the false door stela, is carefully erased. This fact is acknowledged in the transliteration, but not mentioned or further commented on in the description or discussion.

Only the limestone revetment Stage 2 of the tomb received decoration in raised relief, little of which remained. With the exception of False Door Stela 2 (in Niche 2; lower part found *in situ*), the corridor chapel appears to have been devoid of decoration. The loose fragments of the false door stela have been reconstructed photographically and presented on the folding pages between pp. 68 and 69 (fig. 4.26) and folding colour plate 4.1. Figs. 4.28a-b present a photographic reconstruction of the entire facade of the tomb. The decoration points to Neferinpu as being the principal owner of this mastaba. The owner(s) of Stage 1 remain(s) anonymous.

Five courses of limestone blocks had remained *in situ* on the tomb’s facade, with decoration starting only at a height of 1.56m above floor level. This indicates that the structure may have been originally built to an impressive height of 4.0 m, or more.

The few fragments of relief decoration include the standing tomb owner (with his son Nefer) on either side of the entrance doorway. Offering bearers are depicted on multiple sub-registers orientated towards the tomb owner. In the adjacent doorway thicknesses fragments of the lowermost parts of butchering scenes are preserved.

– One critical sidenote concerns the layout of text and images. The texts (transliteration and translation) are incorporated in the description of scenes, and lines/columns are not numbered. Finding the image source to the text, or vice versa, is therefore not always easy. Additionally, the texts are not always printed on the same page of the corresponding photograph. The reader thus needs to continuously browse back and forth.

### 5. *Hieratic inscriptions on the masonry of the mastaba – H. Vymazalová (pp. 71–80)*

27 hieratic inscriptions were found on the mastaba exterior walls. They include in majority the name and titles of its owner, Neferinpu, as well as builders’ inscriptions. One line of large signs in red paint, written after the tomb had been completed, stretches several metres. It identifies the tomb owner as ‘Was-priest of (the pyramid complex), durable are the places of Nyuserra, elder of the (judicial) court of the king, Neferinpu.’

The inscriptions are very clearly presented. The numbered facsimile drawings are followed by a description, transliteration and translation. The location of the individual inscriptions has been indicated on cross sections of the walls, presenting a clear overview of their spatial distribution.

6. *Catalogue of finds – M. Bárta (pp. 81–108)*

This chapter presents finds from both the superstructure (6.1, 6.3) and substructure (6.2, 6.3) of the mastaba. The title of the chapter is somewhat misleading, as most finds (6.2) are presented and comprehensively discussed in chapters 7–10. Chapter 6 thus presents an overview of other, miscellaneous find categories. These include a fair number of the loose relief decorated blocks that were already presented in chapter 4. The fragments, irrespective of their size, are conveniently presented and provided with excellent line drawings.

Mud sealings bearing seal impressions include the tomb owner's name and titles, as well as the Horus name of king Djedkare (*Hr Dd-h'w*). The flat base of one sealing (Excav. No. 35/AS37/2007, once sealing a wooden canopic box) still features traces of rope impressions.

The finds from the sarcophagus include the remains of a long, wooden staff and *khrep*-sceptre clutched in the mummy's left hand. The latter was covered with leather and the upper part had originally been decorated as indicated by the remaining six straps of gold foil.

– In respect to the canopic jar lids, the author on p. 94 indicates that 'the lids (perhaps also the vessels themselves) were 'recycled' as circumstantial evidence, yet unpublished, would indicate'. This 'circumstantial evidence' is not further elaborated on in the present publication.

7. *Pottery – K. Arias Kytarová (pp. 109–43)*

The substructures revealed 72 diagnostic fragments of pottery, incl. 26 complete or almost complete vessels and sixteen fully preserved mud stoppers (nine jars fully intact with mud stoppers). While the total amount of ceramics may be small, the sample is, as the author indicates, significant, because all were found in an undisturbed context. All pottery examined dates to the reigns of Nyusera and Djedkare Isesi as is confirmed by the epigraphic evidence. An analysis of class composition revealed that the majority of ceramics (74%) constituted jars (81% of which beer jars). Other forms included bowls (14%), stands (9%), and bread forms (3%).

Following a brief discussion on the archaeological context, the author presents a comprehensive overview of the various ceramic types found in the tomb's substructures. A comparative analysis of beer jars shows that Stage 1 of Neferinpu's tomb is contemporaneous with Stage 2 of the nearby tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38).<sup>2</sup> With a statistical analysis, the author was able to show that the beer jars from the undisturbed Burial Chamber East were probably fashioned as a single 'order' in one workshop or even by a single potter for this particular tomb.

8. *Model Stone Vessels – L. Jirásková (pp. 145–62)*

This short chapter on 77 model stone vessels found in the burial apartment is largely descriptive, followed by a concise catalogue, technical drawings and crisp b/w photographs. According to the author, the variety of shapes indicates that several workmen will have been responsible for their production. The chisel marks (and their dimensions) may point to the participation of foreign workmen. The assemblage

<sup>2</sup> For AS 38, see: Vymazalová, H., et al. – The Tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38) and the Surrounding Structures (AS 57–60). (Abusir XXII). Charles University, Prague, 2011. Review in *BiOr* 71 (1–2), 2014, 110–113 (M. Valloggia).

compares well with those found in the nearby Fifth Dynasty tombs AS 47 and AS 67 (both disturbed contexts).

9. *Anthropology – P. Havelková (pp. 163–77)*

This chapter presents the human remains found in the tomb's burial chambers. According to the author, '[t]hese skeletons represent a unique osteological collection, as most of them are complete and well preserved and therefore suitable for obtaining essential data for a demographic analysis of the ancient Egyptian population'. The skeletal remains were examined by contemporary, well-established anthropological methods, which involves morphological description and enthesal changes (i.e. bone remodelling in the areas of the entheses). Enthesopathies were also evaluated. Evaluation of the latter provide information about the habitual activity or degrees of physical stress of individuals.

The five burial shafts of tomb AS 37 contained the burials of six individuals, four of whom were very well preserved with nearly complete skeletons: one (perhaps two) female and three (perhaps four) male. All individuals were adults, 35 years and older. Heavy dental abrasion was observed in all individuals. The teeth of the two oldest individuals were almost completely abraded, only the roots were preserved.

The cranium of Neferinpu (individual No. 42) showed several pathological abnormalities, incl. a large depression of the right parietal bone. The presence of bone ossification in the frontal sinus had been the result of an inflammatory process or osteoma (benign tumor). No family relationships were detected in the non-metric (epigenetic) morphological traits.

10. *Animal bones – Z. Šivová (179–83)*

Chapter 10 focuses on the archaeozoological finds, their interpretation and their relation to social status. For the analysis of the assemblage, standard archaeozoological methods were used (10.1). Perhaps the most remarkable find: the physical remains of a rodent, found inside the sealed sarcophagus. It was carefully arranged (intentionally placed) next to Neferinpu's body and covered with textile. Further examination of the skeleton was impossible, as it was heavily damaged by looters in 2011 – along with many other human and animal skeletal remains.

Interestingly, the majority of animal bones (probably all) belonged to cattle (*Bos Taurus*). In Ancient Egypt, beef consumption was expensive and therefore reflects the (high) social status of the tomb owner (and his household). Near the tomb's entrance, at least three species of domestic ungulates were distinguished; cattle (*Bos taurus*), pig (*Sus domesticus*) and sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*), the pig finds being the most common. These may represent feast waste.

11. *Radiocarbon date, Sample IFAO\_0410 (pp. 185–7)*

This chapter briefly summarises the method of processing a radiocarbon date and the ensuing analysis of the sample, which took place in the IFAO Laboratoire de Datation par le Radiocarbone.

12. *Nondestructive onsite X-ray analyses of excavated artifacts – Y. Abe, M. Uchinuma, E. Ogidani, I. Nakai: Tokyo University of Science (pp. 189–94)*

In order to characterise their chemical compositions and discuss their provenances, a number of excavated artefacts were analysed for X-ray fluorescence (XRF). These included

two samples of gold leaf and seventeen samples of faience beads. The analysis of the latter showed that different raw materials of Cu may have been used for the two compositional groups of faience beads. Whether the two were also produced in different workshops could not be determined.

13. *Three-dimensional scanning of selected artefacts – V. Novotný, L. Hegrлік (pp. 195–8)*

Following the excavation of the tomb in 2007, a select number of objects were 3D scanned and documented: the false door of Neferinpu, his skull, the skull of a woman, a Nile mud stopper, and several stone model vessels. Paragraphs 13.1–5 read as a manual explaining the scanning process and highlighting the pros and cons. The authors conclude that scanning is a major aid to archaeological work. First, it presents a non-destructive and contactless method, which gains excellent and extremely precise documentation of archaeological artefacts and features. Second, the well-documented artefacts can now be used for presenting the research or for other specialised activities, incl. digital epigraphy.

14. *Facial reconstruction of two individuals, Excav. No. 42 (Neferinpu) and 54/AS37/2007 – P. Malá (pp. 199–204)*

The publication concludes with the facial reconstruction (or rather approximation) of the tomb owner, Neferinpu (also reproduced on the book's cover), and an anonymous woman. Technique used: 3D sculptural manual British combination technique, or the Manchester method. The process of rebuilding the facial features onto the skull of an unknown individual is concisely illustrated.

15. *Conclusions – M. Bárta (pp. 205–14)*

The final chapter comprises a concise and integrative conclusion that draws together the publication's findings. The author divides the conclusion into six paragraphs, focusing on the architecture of the mastaba (15.1); social standing of Neferinpu (15.2); burial of Neferinpu (15.3); natural sciences and the mastaba's context (15.4); conclusion (15.5); aftermath (15.6).

On p. 212, Bárta rightly describes the significance of this publication as follows: 'Neferinpu and his tomb represent a valuable testimony documenting the dynamics of Ancient Egyptian society towards the end of the Old Kingdom.' The publication is indeed a very welcome new addition to the existing corpus of archaeological reports regarding Old Kingdom mastaba tombs. The publication answers to the high standard one has come to expect from the Charles University archaeologists working at Abusir. The publication has successfully incorporated and thoroughly analysed and discussed all archaeological remains encountered during excavation, where decoration and texts traditionally dominate archaeological reports in Egyptology. The approach has highlighted some surprising facts and yielded lively insights into the monument's use life.