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The tomb of ry: with a section by Maarten J. Raven

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FIVE NEW KINGDOM TOMBS AT SAQQARA

Maarten J. Raven



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FIVE NEW KINGDOM TOMBS AT SAQQARA

Maarten J. Raven

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The tomb of Ry

Nico Staring¹, with a section by Maarten J. Raven

1. Architecture (M.J. Raven)

1.1. General remarks

The tomb of the chief of bowmen and overseer of horses Ry was first glimpsed during the season 1994, when some mud-brick structures were spotted to the east of the forecourt which Raia added to his father Pay's tomb.² These remains were tentatively identified as a late tomb-shaft plus the pyramid of an adjacent New Kingdom tomb,³ whereas also some of the relief remains of Ry's chapel were already seen on that occasion.⁴ Another discovery occurred in the course of the season 2002, when the Expedition team was following a robbers' tunnel running south from the Early Dynastic galleries situated under the tomb of Meryneith. This tunnel abutted in an underground room, partly filled with debris and obviously belonging to an adjacent funerary monument (provisionally dubbed 2002/17, until its proper owner could be identified).⁵ This first chamber (A) gave access to a stairway (B) and lower burial-chamber (C), both of which had already been largely emptied by robbers and were now completely cleared by the Expedition. Among the few burial-goods left on the floors, there was no inscribed material betraying the identity of the original tomb-owner.

Therefore, in 2013 it was decided to investigate the hitherto unexplored desert area situated directly overhead of the said Chamber A, in an endeavour to locate the superstructure of the tomb.⁶ Indeed, this sondage produced the walls of a new tomb, which unfortunately had been robbed of most of its reliefs and all of its inscriptions. Thus, once again the identity of the tomb-owner remained a puzzle, and the monument was now provisionally referred to as 'Tomb X'. The tomb's shaft and first underground chamber (A) were then emptied in 2015, an excavation which brought us back in the substructure already inspected in 2002.⁷ Unfortunately, no further indications regarding

1 Postdoctoral research fellow (Chargé de recherches) of the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS at the University of Liège, Belgium.

2 Schneider 1995, 17 and pls. 1.1, 6.1; Staring 2020, fig. 12. See now also Staring 2023, 327–328 (tomb no. 038/USC); Herzberg-Beiersdorf 2023, Id 2073 (reference to the tomb structure) and Id 530 (reference to the individual, Ry).

3 Raven 2005, 12; Schneider 2012, fig. II.1.

4 Oral communication by H.D. Schneider. Also visible on Expedition photographs in the RMO Archives.

5 Raven/Van Walsem 2003, 97 and fig. 3; Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 75–76 with figs. III.23 and III.29.

6 Raven 2013.

7 Raven/Weiss 2015.



Fig. IV.1 (left). Tomb of Ry, seen from the west.

Fig. IV.2 (above). Tomb of Ry, seen from the east.

Fig. IV.3. Tomb of Ry, plan (drawing by Annelies Bleeker).

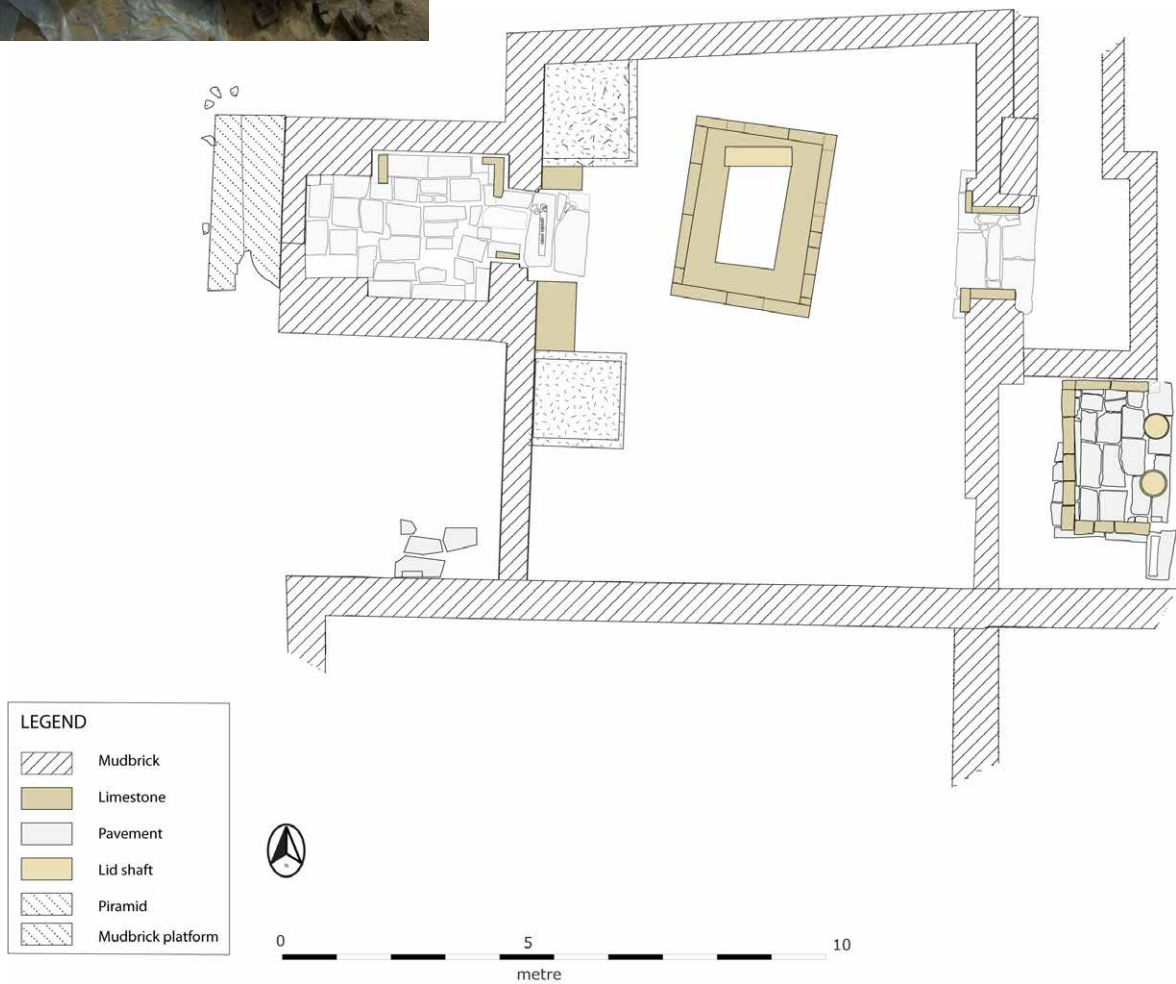




Fig. IV.4. Tomb of Ry, porch and façade from the east.

the tomb-owner were found in the underground part of his funerary monument. It was not until 2018 that our team member Nico Staring discovered that the relief fragments found *in situ* in the tomb chapel could be joined to relief blocks kept in the Berlin Egyptian Museum and elsewhere,⁸ and because these blocks include extensive inscriptions the monument can finally be identified as the tomb of Ry. Its architectural description (here Section 1) has been supplied by Maarten Raven, who was in charge during all the seasons of the actual excavation of Ry's tomb. The other sections of the present chapter have been written by Nico Staring.

Ry's tomb lies to the east of that of Pay and to the west of the chapel of Tatia, whereas the chapel of Samut and the tomb of Meryneith form its neighbours on the north side (Figs. I.5, IV.1–3). Another tomb, so far anonymous, is situated on the south side, a construction with which the tomb of Ry shares a common wall. The main axis of the tomb lies at an angle of approximately 89°, which can be compared with 77° for the tomb of Pay⁹ and 98° for the tombs of Meryneith and Ptahemwia.¹⁰ The door-sill of the central chapel of the tomb has a level of 56.74 m ASL, whereas the floor of Meryneith lies at about 56.10 m and that of Ptahemwia at 56.95 m ASL. Probably this indicates the presence of a natural slope upwards from north to south and from west to east in the area in question.

The walls of the tomb are built of mud-bricks with a size of 32 × 16 × 9 cm. The bricks are laid in a system of alternating courses of headers and stretchers in a layer of mud mortar and contain fragments of pebbles, particles of organic materials, and potsherds. Other architectural

elements, which will be specified below, were made of limestone. If more limestone elements were planned originally, these had never been installed, and in that case the tomb should be regarded as being unfinished.

The overall dimensions of the tomb of Ry are as follows: the length including porch and pyramid is 17.16 m, the width 10.96 m. At first sight, these measurements conform rather well with the regular proportions of contemporary tombs. However, as will be demonstrated below, the tomb has in fact a layout which differs quite remarkably from other monuments of the same period excavated to date. It seems to date to the very end of Dynasty 18, as will be argued below in Section 3 of the present chapter.

1.2. Superstructure

1.2.1. Porch

The eastern gateway of the tomb is preceded by an asymmetrical porch of unusual type. Possibly this was constructed at a later stage, when the level to the east of the tomb was raised considerably. Excavations around the tomb of Sethnakht and the chapel of Tatia suggest that in the early Ramesside period a deposit of 0.4–1.0 m of rubble and sand was laid down all over this area,¹¹ covering some of the previous structures and heaped against the exterior walls of others. This deposit now forms a kind of raised forecourt to the tomb of Ry, and the porch helps to keep it in position and prevents the rubble from sliding down into the tomb. The surface of the forecourt in question is covered with remarkably white rubble and potsherds. It lies about 0.35 m above the floor level of the porch.

The porch consists of two parts (Fig. IV.4). Its southern half lies directly in front (east) of the gateway which gives access to the inner courtyard of the tomb. This part

⁸ Staring 2018; Staring 2019; Staring 2020. The excavator, Giuseppe (Joseph) Passalacqua, offers a brief description of the reliefs found *in situ*: Passalacqua 1826, 167.

⁹ Raven 2005, 11.

¹⁰ Raven 2020a, 38.

¹¹ See Chapter I, § 2.2.



Fig. IV.5. Tomb of Ry, entrance gateway from the west.

has a rubble floor (1.86 × 3.18 m) and is fenced off by a sturdy mud-brick wall of eight courses high (0.84 m) and about 0.5 m thick. The brick format is 33 × 17 × 10 cm and there are regular layers of headers and stretchers. The L-shaped wall first follows the south and east perimeters of the porch floor, and then turns west for a length of about 0.5 m, thereby forming the transition to the north half of the porch, which is narrower. This has a neat floor of alternating ranges of mud-bricks (lengthwise or across). Its west side lies against the façade of the tomb proper, its east side is delimited by a mud-brick sill (wide 0.33 m) forming a step down from the adjacent rubble forecourt. This sill extends at least 2.3 m to the north, where it has been cut off by the construction of shaft 2015/13.

1.2.2. Façade

The east façade of the tomb is built in mud-brick but has the remains of limestone revetment at the gateway (Fig. IV.5). Both eastern door-jambs have been lost, but there is still an imprint on the floor. This shows that the north jamb was 0.28 m wide, 0.24 m deep and protruded 0.17 m into the doorway. The south jamb was 0.44 m wide, 0.25 m deep, and protruded a mere 0.06 m. The doorway still has a north reveal of 0.88 m wide and 1.36 m high (2 courses), whereas the south reveal consists of a single course of 0.83 m wide and 0.75 m high. Part of the west door-jambs is still in position, 0.42–0.43 m wide and having the same height as the adjacent reveals; these jambs do not protrude into the doorway. The gateway has a floor paved in limestone slabs, measuring 1.4 m from east to west and 1.37 m between the reveals. The paving protrudes beyond the line of the jambs at either end of the doorway. None of the limestone elements bears any carved decoration or inscription. This whole part of the tomb gives the impression of

being unfinished. When found, the doorway was largely blocked by a ceiling slab and other blocks of limestone (feature 2013/8), which suggests that it may once have comprised some higher courses of masonry.

North of the doorway, the entrance wall (Fig. IV.4) continues for another 2.81 m as measured from the outer corner of the west jamb. This wall is still 1.77 m high (17 courses of mud-bricks). The south wing of the entrance wall is almost 5.0 m long from the outer corner of the jamb, a measurement which immediately demonstrates the asymmetrical layout of the tomb. It has survived to a height of 1.22 m (13 courses) and shows a considerable gap behind chapel 2013/7. The east wall was originally 0.5 m thick (1 header + 1 stretcher), except for two blocks of masonry immediately flanking the entrance which were 0.9 m thick (and about 1.5 m wide). These may have been raised to a greater height than the rest of the wall, thereby giving this portion the appearance of a proper pylon. Apparently the whole north wing was secondarily given this greater thickness by adding an extra layer to the already plastered east face, but later this added layer was again partly dismantled when four Third Intermediate Period burials were installed in the porch.¹²

1.2.3. Courtyard

The courtyard measures 8.06 m from east to west and 9.42 m from north to south (Fig. IV.6). The east wall has already been described. The north wall is 8.06 m long and 1.78 m high (17 courses), with a thickness of 0.5 m. There is a layer of mud plaster on the interior face. The south wall has a length of 8.19 m and a preserved height

¹² Feature 2013/22a–d, see Chapter I, § 2.4.

Fig. IV.6. Tomb of Ry, courtyard from the south-west.



Fig. IV.7. Tomb of Ry, west wall of courtyard, north part with vertical join.



of 1.4 m (12 courses). Its bricks appear to be slightly different from those of the other walls ($31 \times 14 \times 11$ cm), and the sixth course from below shows bricks standing on their narrow sides. Moreover, the thickness of this wall is a full 0.7 m (2 brick lengths) and it continues for another 3.9 m beyond the courtyard's south-west corner, before turning southwards. It is not bonded with either the east or the west wall of the courtyard, and clearly belongs to the adjacent tomb in the south – about which nothing is known so far.

The west wall of the courtyard has only a single door, which is situated off-centre. In this respect it resembles the eastern access to the courtyard, though it is not aligned with the east door but has been shifted to the north for

an extra 0.4 m. As a result, the north wing of the west wall is no longer than 2.27 m, the south wing 5.67 m. The two blocks of masonry flanking the door (1.7–1.8 m wide) are set off by a vertical join from the rest of the west wall (Fig. IV.7). The whole north wing has a consistent thickness of 0.7 m, but the south wing is reduced to 0.5 m beyond the vertical join. The wall is still 1.5 m high in the north (13 courses), 1.2 m or 11 courses in the south.

The whole courtyard has a rubble floor. There is no trace of wall revetment or a colonnade, and therefore the construction again gives the impression of being unfinished. The south wall, which belongs to the adjacent tomb, was already there when the tomb was built. The east and west walls of Ry's courtyard were linked up with



Fig. IV.8. Tomb of Ry, west wall of courtyard with limestone bases and mud-brick platforms, from the south-east.

the neighbour's construction, however without bonding the masonry. As a result of this procedure, the courtyard is markedly asymmetrical, with a large south section and a much smaller north section. The shaft's aperture lies on the courtyard's north half, and its orientation differs from that of the tomb. This may indicate that the shaft was already there when the tomb was built, and that it belongs to the Old Kingdom. We shall describe the shaft and its aperture in the next section of this report.

Apart from the shaft, the courtyard has some more architectural features. The west door, which leads to the cult chapel, is flanked by two monolithic limestone bases. The southern one is 1.3 m wide, 0.77 m deep, and 0.17 m high, the northern base is 1.09 m wide, 0.66 m deep, and 0.2 m high. Both bases are carefully aligned with the mud-brick corners of the doorway, and show a line of gypsum on their upper face indicating that the bases once supported a stela of 0.18 m thick.¹³ At a later stage, both bases were partly overbuilt by more or less square platforms, built with a single line of mud-bricks as perimeter wall (Fig. IV.8). The southern platform measures 1.7 m from east to west and 1.65 m across and has a preserved height of 0.16 m (2 courses), its north perimeter wall overlapping the limestone base. The northern platform measures 1.7 m square and has a height of 0.25 m, while it overlaps the limestone base over a length of 0.49 m. Again, this indicates an asymmetrical layout, caused in this case by the limited space in the north, where the platform lies in the very corner of the courtyard. The fill of the platforms was excavated during season 2015 and proved to consist of broken offering vessels in a matrix of

clean sand with some remains of charcoal.¹⁴ Thus, their contents suggest that the platforms served as repositories for materials used in the offering ceremonies. At some stage, a pit had been dug right through the fill of the south platform. This pit (feature 2015/5) proved to be 1.2 m deep and contained nothing but clean sand plus a fragment of a wooden *djed* pillar.¹⁵

1.2.4. Chapel

The tomb of Ry has no more than a single western cult chapel.¹⁶ The presence of two joins in the masonry of the west wall may suggest that three chapels were planned originally, but were then not realized after all. The area between the existing chapel and the north wall of the anonymous southern neighbour proved to contain the remains of a miniature offering chapel (feature 2013/16–17, Fig. IV.9), perhaps belonging to the scribe and physician Akhpet,¹⁷ plus a substantial cache of New Kingdom pottery (feature 2013/18).¹⁸ However, it cannot be proved that these were already there when the tomb of Ry was built, and instead it rather looks as if they were installed secondarily. Possibly a gap in the south wing of the west wall of Ry's tomb was cut intentionally in order to provide access to this area, which was then clearly taken into use after the construction of the tomb of Ry only. To the north of the central chapel may have lain another New Kingdom

13 For the south stela, see below, scene [1].

14 For a report on this pottery, see *infra*, Chapter IX, Section 7.

15 Object Cat. 62.

16 Other contemporary tombs have either a single west chapel (such as the adjacent tomb of Iniua; Schneider 2012, fig. II.2a), or three (such as the tombs of Meryneith and Ptahemwia).

17 See Chapter VII, no. [18].

18 See Chapter IX, Section 8.



Fig. IV.9. Chapel perhaps belonging to Akhpet (feature 2013/17), from the north.

tomb-chapel (feature 2017/2), but again this was probably built later than Ry's structure. Ry's decision not to build a side-chapel there may have been made in view of the need to allow access to the tomb of Pay further west. Whatever may have been his considerations, his tomb was constructed with only one chapel, and the west wall of the courtyard was executed with a single door only. This doorway was found blocked with rubble, blocks of limestone, and bricks till a height of 1.3 m (feature 2013/5). Possibly, this blocking had been installed by art-robbers in the 19th century, who seem to have dismantled most of the wall-reliefs of this chapel.

The doorway has lost its jambs and most of its limestone reveals; only part of the south reveal is still present, which is decorated with an unfinished relief [2]. Originally, the reveals seem to have been 1.12 m wide and joined up with the stelae standing on top of the two limestone bases flanking the doorway. The width of the doorway between the reveals was 1.0 m, between the mud masonry 1.39 m. A limestone floor starts from a line delimitating the east face of the southern base and runs on till the west wall of the chapel. A raised sill of 80 × 14 cm and 8 cm high lies across the entrance to the chapel, with a pivot hole for a wooden door at its north end and another one a little further west.

Behind the door there is an antechapel of 2.0 m deep and 2.28 m wide (Fig. IV.10). These are the measurements as taken between the revetment, portions of which are still extant in the north-east corner [9–10] and the north-west corner [7–8], with visible setting lines in other places. The west sanctuary measures 1.08 m in depth (to be reduced by the 18 cm thickness of the stela, now Berlin inv. 7290)¹⁹

and 1.38 m in width between the limestone revetment. The walls of the chapel are rather dilapidated, especially in the west, and are nowhere higher than 1.34 m (12 courses, north wall of antechapel). The thickness of the brick side-walls increases from 0.7 m (at the antechapel) to 1.1 m (at the rear sanctuary). The west end of these side-walls was intentionally dismantled down to pavement level at some stage, including the whole west wall of the chapel which was about 1.7 m thick in solid masonry. This massive construction can only indicate that the exterior of the chapel was once fashioned as a pyramid.²⁰

When the western neighbour, Raia, decided to add a forecourt to his father Pay's tomb, the east façade of this extension almost touched the pyramid of Ry's pre-existing tomb. The presence of Ry's pyramid explains why the gateway of Raia's forecourt had to be shifted to a position well north of the axis of Pay's tomb.²¹ Later, the west face of Ry's pyramid was taken down, thereby creating a north-south passageway between the tombs of Pay/Raia and Ry.

Fortunately, the pyramidion of Ry has been preserved in the Cairo Museum (JE 48840).²² This object had an original height of 57 cm; its east and west faces are 40 cm wide, whereas the width of the north and south faces is 48.5 cm. This gives a gradient of about 65° for the east and west slopes, and 70° for the north and south faces of the pyramid. If we assume that the west face rose in one single slope from the foundation level retrieved in front of Raia's forecourt, and that the east face came down at roof level of Ry's cult chapel, just behind the entrance

19 See below, [6].

20 Again, this feature can be compared with the chapel of the tomb of Iniua (Schneider 2012, figs. II.4 and II.6).

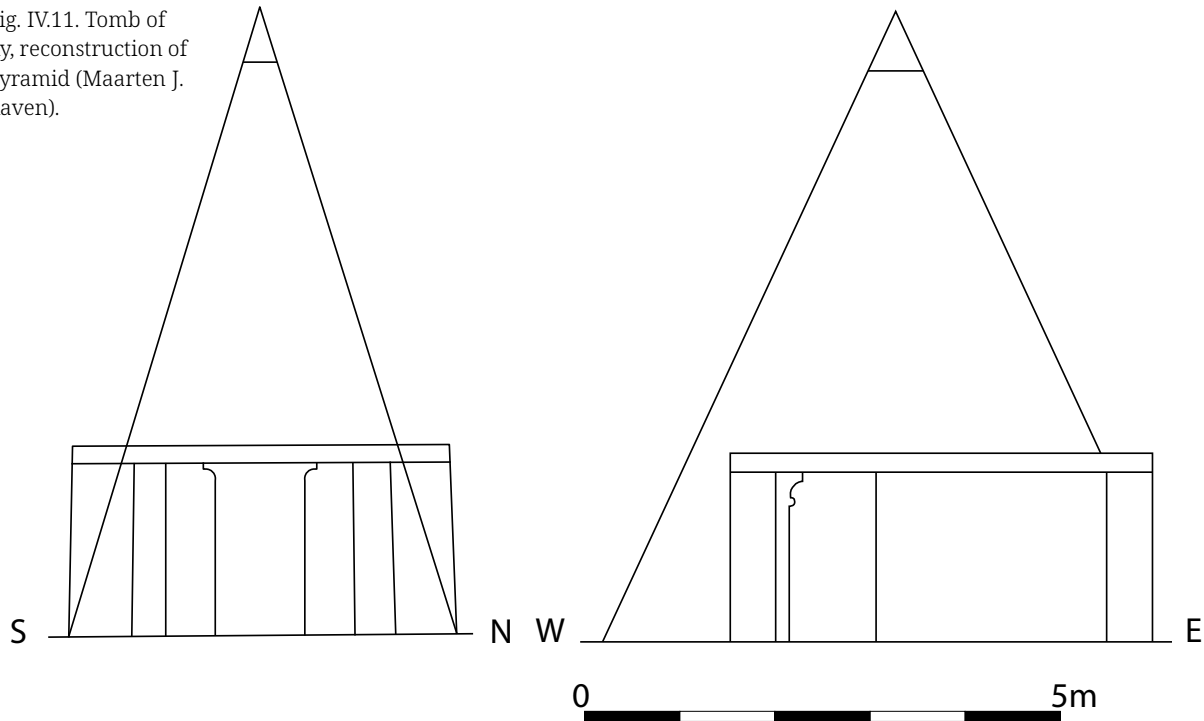
21 Cf. Raven 2005, 11–12 and fig. 3.

22 Staring 2020, 36–37, no. [13] and fig. 23. See below, [13].



Fig. IV.10. Tomb of Ry, chapel from the south-west.

Fig. IV.11. Tomb of Ry, reconstruction of pyramid (Maarten J. Raven).



door, then the pyramid would have stood to a height of about 6.65 m above pavement level (depending on the roof level of the chapel, here taken as about 2.0 m).²³ The north and south faces of the pyramid may have shown a visible ledge of the chapel roof (see Fig. IV.11).

²³ Cf. the reconstructed height of the pyramid in the tombs of Iniua (between 6–7 m, see Schneider 2012, 35) and Tia (6.35 m, see K.J. Frazer, in Martin 1997, 6).

1.3. Substructure

Above, it has already been noted that the aperture of the shaft is located in the north half of the courtyard of Ry's tomb. Its deviant orientation perhaps suggests that it was reused from an Old Kingdom tomb,²⁴ but this cannot be proved. The orifice is surrounded by a carefully made parapet of limestone slabs provided with a rounded top, just protruding above the level

²⁴ Cf. Raven 2020a, 61 *sub* (5).



Fig. IV.12. Tomb of Ry,
aperture of shaft as found.



Fig. IV.13. Tomb of Ry,
aperture of shaft after
clearing.

of the rubble floor of the courtyard (Fig. IV.13). The exterior measurements of this edging are 3.35×2.6 m, and it should be noted that opposite sides have been finished to exactly identical lengths. The thickness of all sides is 0.2 m and the inner faces have been plastered. Some unclear marks in red pigment can be seen under the plaster at the north-west corner. The height of these vertical sides is 0.37 m, and on the inside they are standing on a horizontal ledge all around the shaft's aperture, exactly 0.53 m wide on all sides (1 cubit).

This results in the shaft having an aperture of 1.94×1.11 m, again with carefully matching measurements for the opposite sides. When found, a single covering slab was still in position at the north end, measuring $0.22 \times 0.38 \times 1.27$ m. Otherwise, an extensive dry-stone wall was found around the aperture, constructed of bricks, chunks of *tafla*, and broken fragments of relief or inscription (feature 2013/11, Figs. I.15 and IV.12). Obviously, this must be dated to the period when the shaft was entered by tomb-robbers, presumably

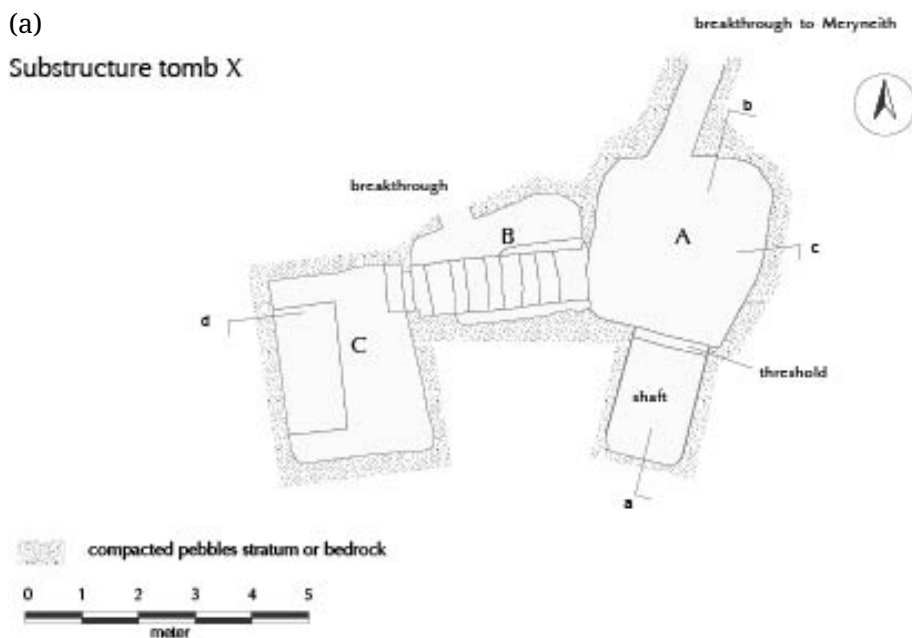


Fig. IV.14. Tomb of Ry, substructure: (a) drawing by Annelies Bleeker; (b) 3-dimensional render by Alessandro Mandelli/3D Survey Group, Politecnico di Milano/Leiden-Turin Expedition to Saqqara.

in the early 19th century. Dismantling this wall led to the discovery of several blocks of wall-decoration of other tombs,²⁵ including one fragment that could be associated with the tomb of Ry itself.²⁶

The first 1.72 m of the shaft's side-walls has been revetted in 5 courses of limestone. Below, it becomes rock-cut and the walls do not show any foot-holds or other structures. The walls are slightly diverging as they go down, with the result that the bottom (at a depth of 7.94 m) measures 2.18×1.45 m. The full extent of the substructure of Ry's tomb could be surveyed during season 2015 (Fig. IV.14). There is a doorway to a north room (Chamber A), having a

raised threshold and measuring 1.35 m high, 1.07 m wide, and 0.27 m deep. No trace can be seen of any mortar or blocking of this doorway. Chamber A is roughly square with a width of 3.02 m and a depth of 3.03 m; the ceiling lies flush with the top of the entrance doorway at 1.43 m above the floor. The ceiling and the upper 0.45 m of the side-walls are blackened by soot. There is a robbers' hole in the north wall, its aperture measuring about 0.8×0.75 m and situated 0.5 m above the chamber floor. The soot continues in this robbers' tunnel, which forms a connection to the substructure of the adjacent tomb of Meryneith.²⁷

²⁵ See Chapter VII, nos. [1], [10], [15-16], [34b], [38], and [40].

²⁶ See below, relief scene [9] (fragment SAK 2013-R35).

²⁷ This is where the present Expedition came in during season 2002, already inspecting Chambers B and C but not touching the debris amassed in Chamber A.

Fig. IV.15. Tomb of Ry,
Chamber B stairway as seen
from Chamber C.



Fig. IV.16. Tomb of Ry,
Chamber C with *mastaba*.



Another doorway in the west wall of Chamber A (1.3×0.87 m, deep 0.3 m) leads to Chamber B which is 3.06 m deep and varies in width from 1.93 m in the east to 1.67 m in the west (Fig. IV.15). The ceiling lies flush with that of Chamber A, and again the ceiling and part of the walls are covered in soot. The floor lies about 0.24 m above that of Chamber A but is largely cut back to form a descending staircase of 8 steps (wide 0.8–0.97 m, depth 2.75 m). It rather looks as if the stairway was once covered by horizontal slabs, since there are recessed ledges along the north and south sides for the support of such a lid. Another robbers' hole (0.68×0.58 m) enters through the north wall of Chamber B, a bit above floor level. This gives access to

a Late Period tomb complex with a shaft on the west side of the first chamber. This shaft must lie just outside the north-west corner of the courtyard of Ry's tomb.

At the bottom of the stairs, the last step has a groove (0.17 m wide, 0.09 m deep), possibly for inserting a slab blocking the doorway into Chamber C. This step forms the threshold of this doorway (1.22×0.79 m, 0.26 m deep) and is continued as a raised platform (0.85×0.42 m, 0.24 m high) on the floor of Chamber C. This last chamber is a rectangle of 3.11 m from north to south and 2.63 m east-west (Fig. IV.16). Here, there is hardly any soot on the ceiling, which lies at 1.77 m above the floor. There is a raised rock-cut *mastaba* against the west wall, its

top measuring 2.25×1.1 m and with a height of 0.35 m. Otherwise there are three recessed niches in the walls. The east niche is $0.2 \times 0.18 \times 0.09$ m, with a protruding frame and cornice around. The south wall has a niche of $0.28 \times 0.22 \times 0.8$ m, surrounded by a frame and cornice simply marked off by a groove in the rock. The niche in the north wall measures $0.25 \times 0.21 \times 0.12$ m, again with a groove around to mark its frame.

1.4. Proportional grid

In spite of all its apparent irregularities, the tomb of Ry seems to have been designed with more care than is immediately evident. Thus it can be seen that the axis of the east door is almost aligned with that of the entrance to the west chapel, and that various elements such as the bases against the courtyard's west wall and the two blocks of masonry flanking the east door are positioned symmetrically in respect to that axis. The decision not to build a south wall to this courtyard, but to use the existing north wall of the southern neighbour as a common demarcation line created a markedly asymmetrical structure, yet at the same time it can be demonstrated that the resulting courtyard measures about 18×18 cubits (if one adds the thicknesses of the east and west walls), which is totally conventional by contemporary standards.²⁸

Less regular is the proportional system of the single west chapel. One would expect a plan based on a square of 6×6 cubits, yet instead no single measurement seems to be based on a whole number of cubits. At the same time, it can be demonstrated that the layout of this chapel, including the pyramid, has a proportion of 4:3 (length to width), which must be intentional.

It has already been argued above how careful the design of the shaft must have been. Although its dimensions cannot be broken down to a whole number of cubits, the width of the ledge surrounding the shaft's aperture is clearly exactly one cubit. All this indicates that in fact the tomb's architect must have acted with a great measure of care, as can be expected at the time of its construction (which is established in Section 3 of this report as being contemporary with the reign of Tutankhamun).

2. Reliefs and inscriptions (N. Staring)

The only part of the tomb with wall-decoration was the western chapel.²⁹ Some of the reliefs were never finished. When the Leiden expedition excavated this part of the tomb, the fragments of four slabs of limestone bearing relief-decoration were found *in situ*. All other blocks had

been removed long ago. Probably, this happened largely during the early 19th century, as a number of the missing blocks have been identified in various collections around the globe that were formed in the 1820s. The blocking found in the eastern access to the chapel (feature 2013/5) should probably be seen in conjunction with the activities of the antiquities diggers; it allowed the robbers to do their work without being hampered by sand pouring in from the courtyard.

Below, all line drawings are reproduced at scale 1:6.³⁰

[1] Courtyard, west wall, south stela

PM III/2, 716; Anonymous 1915, 2, no. 14; Fründt 1961, 31; Stewart 1966, 54, 57, nos. IV, VI; Assmann 1969, 300, 376 (text III.3); James 1974, 178–179 [435], pl. 87; Staring 2020, 23–24, fig. 9

New York, Brooklyn Museum 37.46E. Lower part of a limestone stela originally positioned on a limestone base, the latter found *in situ*. The top part (the lunette) has been carefully sawn off, probably by 19th-century antiquities dealers. This part has not yet been identified in any museum collection, however. The lower part of the stela contains fourteen framed lines of hieroglyphic text, carved in sunk relief, identified as three hymns to the sun god.³¹ The first line of text is missing. The text runs as follows:

(1) [*May the ba of the chief of bowmen, Ry, go out with you to the sky.*] (2) *May he set sail in the Day Bark, may he moor in the Night Bark, may he join the unwearying* (3) *stars in the sky. The Osiris, chief of bowmen, Ry, true of voice, he says as he praises the Lord of Eternity: 'Hail to you, Horakhte,* (4) *this Khepri who created himself. How beautiful is your rising in the horizon, when you illuminate the Two Lands with your rays!* (5) *All the gods are in jubilation, when they see you as the king of heaven. The Lady of Wenut is fixed on your head,* (6) *the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt are on your brow. She has taken her place at your forehead. Thoth*

30 The reliefs found by the expedition in 2013 were drawn by Dorothea Schulz, while the line drawings of the reliefs kept in museum collections were made by Nico Staring. The latter were digitally copied in Adobe Illustrator by tracing orthorectified photographs produced in Agisoft Metashape (scenes [6], [7], [9]) or by tracing regular, high-resolution photographs (scenes [1], [4], [5], [11], [12], [13]). The photographs of the reliefs kept in the Berlin Egyptian Museum (both on permanent display and in storage) were taken by the author in September 2020, facilitated by Caris-Beatrice Arnst and Anne Herzberg, and funded with a NINO Outgoing Mobility Grant. Yekaterina Barbash and Monica Park arranged new photography of the stela kept in the Brooklyn Museum storage (December 2022), made possible with funding from the Friends of Saqqara foundation. Scene [3] was drawn by Geoffrey Martin and has been reproduced from Raven 2005, pl. 82. The drawings (single line thickness) adhere to the expedition's conventions as outlined in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 77.

31 For a study of sun hymns in Memphite tombs of the New Kingdom, see Van Dijk 1996. For sun hymns in mostly Theban tombs, see Assmann 1983.

28 Cf. Raven 2003, 56, 64; Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 67 and fig. III.20.

29 The scene descriptions largely follow those in Staring 2020. To avoid too much repetition, texts are concise and footnotes kept to a minimum.

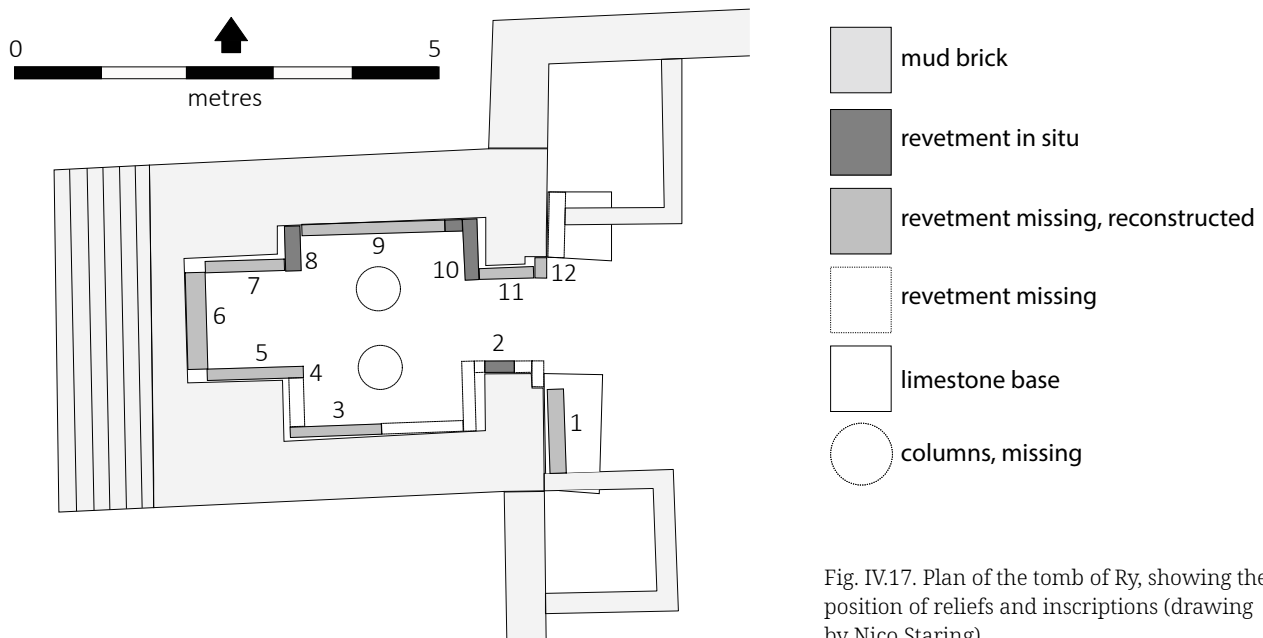


Fig. IV.17. Plan of the tomb of Ry, showing the position of reliefs and inscriptions (drawing by Nico Staring).

is established in the bow of your bark to (7) destroy all your enemies. Those who are in the Netherworld come forth at your approach to see this (8) perfect image of yours. I have come to you that I may be with you, so that I may see your body while beholding your perfection like all your praised ones, (9) because I am one of those who were honoured by you on earth. I have reached the land of perpetuity, I have joined (10) my place of eternity (for) you allotted it to me, my lord.' To the ka of the Osiris, the chief of bowmen, Ry, true of voice, he says: 'Hail (11) to you, as you rise in your horizon as Re, (one) satisfied with Ma'at. When you cross the sky, all faces (12) are looking at you, (although) your movements are hidden from their sight. When you show yourself in the morning every day, firm is the course under (13) Your Majesty. Your rays are in their faces, (although) they do not know you. (Even) fine gold is not like your splendour. The lands of the gods (14) about which one sees in writings, and the mountainous regions of Punt can inspect you while you are (still) hidden. You created (yourself) alone (as if) your manifestation was Nun. (15) May you grant a sweet breeze of the north wind to the ka of the noble and count, seal bearer of the King of Lower Egypt, sole companion, sab of the army, chief of bowmen, Ry, true of voice.'

Remains of colour: a vertical line in black to the left side of the text, and a horizontal line in black along the top of the stela. Dimensions: h. 111.5, w. 85, th. 14.5 cm.³²

Comments: The suggested position in the tomb is based on the discolouration on the upper surfaces of the two

Ry: stela Brooklyn 37.46E	Parallels	References
Lines 1-9	Iniuia [8], fragments, lines 5-12	Schneider 2012, 75
Lines 1-14	Pay [70], lines 3-10	Raven 2005, 44; <i>infra</i> , p. 180-183
Lines 6-13	Ptahmose, Vatican 251, lines x+1-x+8	Botti/Romanelli 1951, 77-78
Lines 10-14	Iniuia, Cairo JE 10079, lines 2-7	Schneider 2012, 72-73

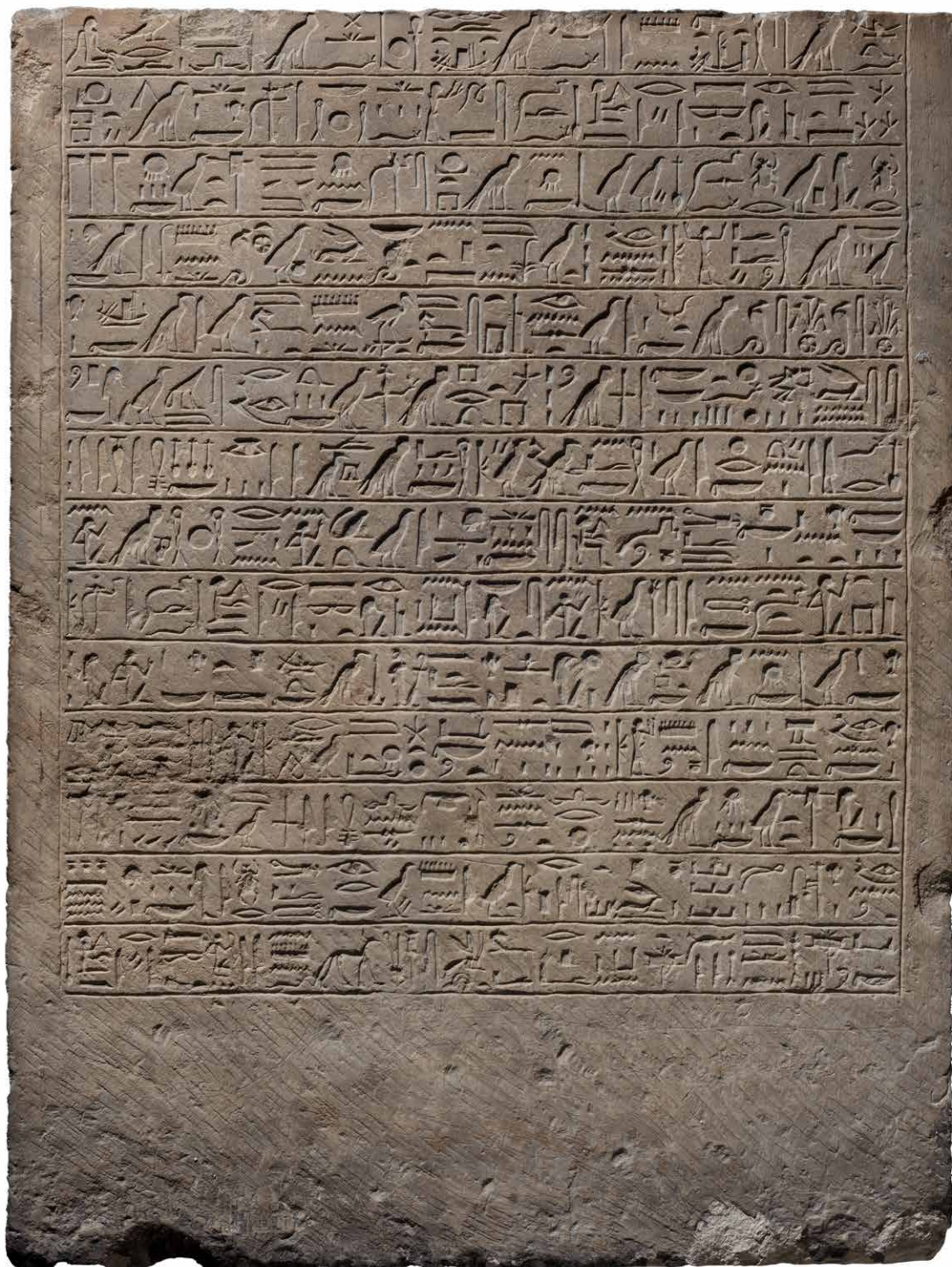
Table IV.1. Comparison of stela Brooklyn 37.46E with parallel texts.

limestone bases set against the west wall of the courtyard. In view of the orientation of the hieroglyphic signs, the stela stood on the southern base, against the south jamb of the doorway. Thus, the individual signs faced towards the entrance. Four stelae derived from three tombs located in the same general area of the necropolis offer close parallels to the selection of sun hymns carved on the stela of Ry. These are the tombs of Iniuia, Pay, and Ptahmose.³³ It is likely that the missing upper part of the stela of Ry also bore a double adoration scene like these other stelae. It would have depicted Ry standing with his hands raised in adoration before Atum and Re-Horakhte. The textual parallels are presented in Table IV.1.³⁴

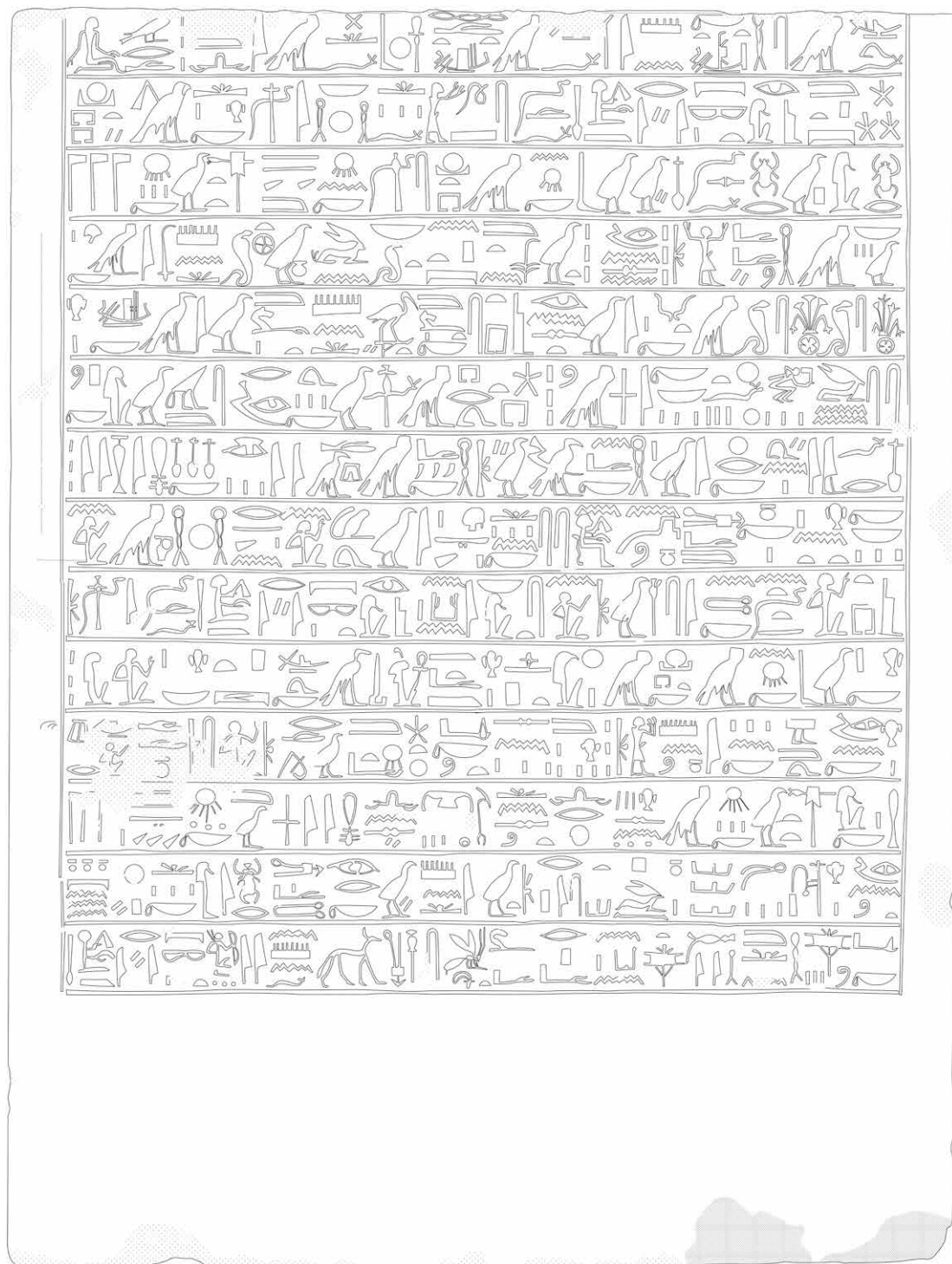
32 I thank Yekaterina Barbash of the Brooklyn Museum for providing me with these measurements.

33 Note that the location of the tomb of Ptahmose is today lost.

34 For a discussion of the text of Ry and its parallels, see also Staring 2020, 23-24.

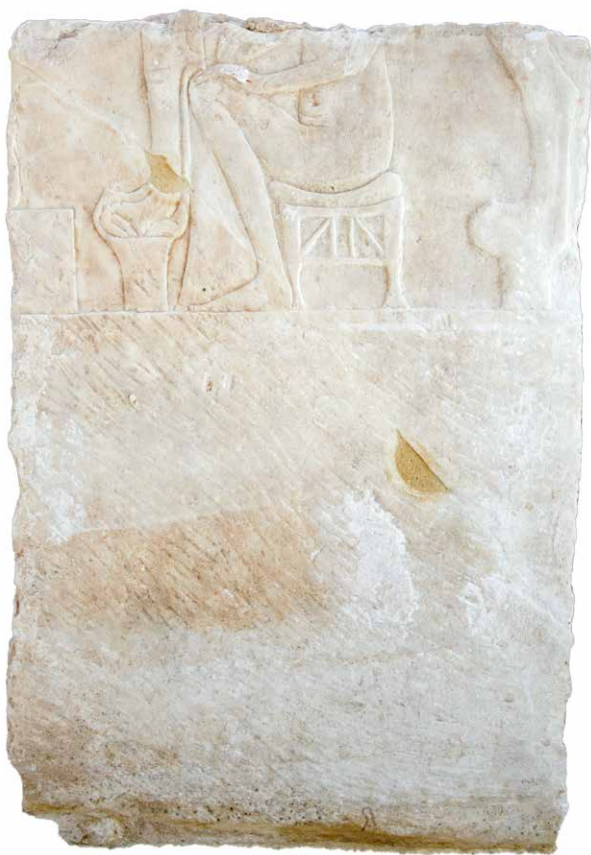


[1] © Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 37.46E.



[1]

[2]



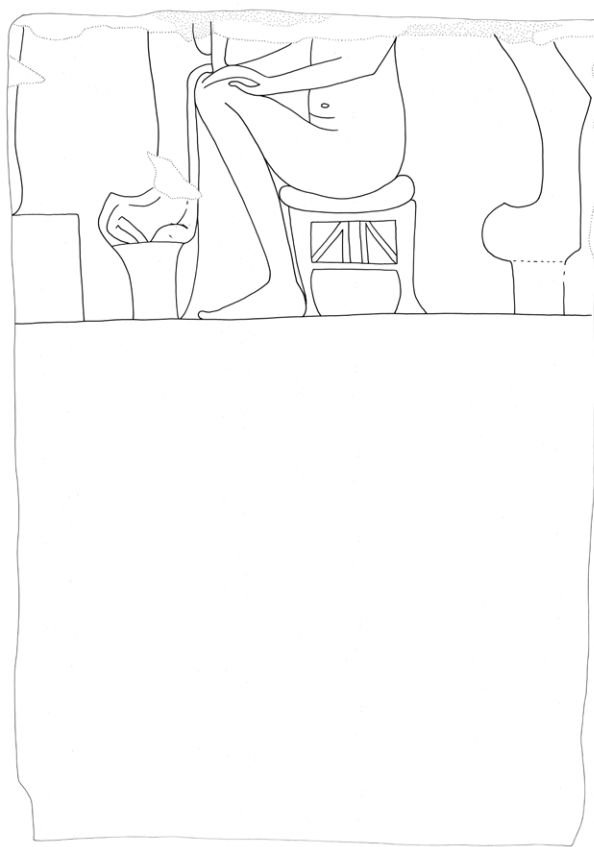
[2] Central chapel, entrance, south reveal

Staring 2020, 24–25, fig. 10

One block in raised relief. Found broken in two parts, the lower part *in situ* against the south reveal of the entrance, both fragments rejoined. Lower part of a scene, depicting a lion-legged chair, probably of the tomb owner. The heel of the seated figure is visible atop the footrest on the left-hand side. Underneath the chair, a woman or young girl is shown seated on a low, round-legged and latticed stool with a seat cushion.³⁵ She wears a plain dress, rests her left hand on her knee and raises her right hand, possibly to sniff a lotus flower. Blank dado below, no remains of colour. Dimensions: h. 66, of decorated part 23, w. 47 cm.

³⁵ For a three-dimensional representation of the stool, see e.g. the statue of Hel (Turin, Museo Egizio, cat. 7352; *temp.* Ramesses II: Poole 2019, 5, 12–13, fig. 2). Stools with turned legs seem generally to be reserved for females, see Van Walsem. in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 214–215. A scene in the rock-cut tomb of Raiay/Hatiay (Bub. I.27) depicts a male seated on a stool with turned legs. The tomb dates to the reign of Akhenaten.

[2]



[3] Antechapel, south wall, west end

Raven 2005, 47–48, [76], pls. 78, 82; Staring 2018, 40–41, fig. 9;

Staring 2019, fig. on p. 45; Staring 2020, 25–26, figs. 11–12

Three joining fragments of a limestone block, carved in sunk relief (SAK R94-78), found in clean sand outside the south wall of Ry's inner chapel. Right-hand side of a scene centred on a couple at an offering table, facing left. The male individual is seated on a low-backed chair and wears a 'Nubian' wig and a long tunic. The left hand holds a folded cloth, the right is extended to the offering table, while the feet rest on a low footstool. A monkey is depicted underneath the chair, bound to the chair-leg and eating a fruit. A bunch of grapes is represented in front of it. The female stands behind the man's chair, wearing a wide translucent dress and a long wig enveloping the shoulders. Her right arm is folded over her chest.³⁶ The offering table supports strips of bread, while below are two jars on stands wound with flowers. Two offering bearers approach the couple from the left. The male figure, in a tunic with pleated sash-kilt, presents a bundle of three stalks of papyrus and a bouquet of

³⁶ Parallels of this scene are found in the contemporary tombs of Pay and Iniuiia, see Staring 2020, n. 36.

[3]

flowers. The female offering-bearer brings various items: a bowl with three pointed loaves in one upheld hand, and a bunch of pomegranates and grapes in the other. Right-hand side of relief shows vertical border. No remains of colour, probably unfinished because of missing details of wigs and clothing. Dimensions: h. 110, of decorated part 44.5, w. 95, of decorated part 75, th. 13 cm.

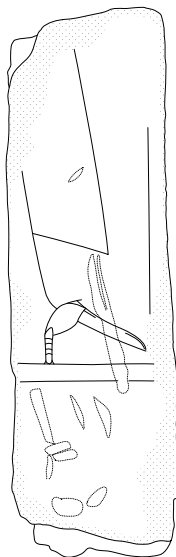
Comments: The suggested position in the tomb is based on the find-spot of the joining fragments, the relief's style and iconography, both in line with that observed elsewhere in the tomb of Ry, and the wall space available in the chapel. A line of plaster along the right-hand edge of block R94-78 indicates that another slab once abutted it. That block depicted the striding tomb owner, mirroring the scene on the north side of the chapel, scene [8]. One of his feet is visible on the head-end of scene [4], block Berlin ÄM 7277.



[3]. Drawing scanned from Raven 2005, scene [76].



[4] Photo ©SMB Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung/
Sandra Steiß.



[4]

[4] Antechapel, west wall, south end

Passalacqua 1826, 73 [1406]; Martin 1987, 21–22, no. 43, pl. 16;
Staring 2018, 37, fig. 6; Staring 2019, fig. on p. 43, bottom right;
Staring 2020, 26, fig. 13a

Limestone block, Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum 7277. This is the head-end of scene [5]. It depicts the lower part of the front leg of a striding male, the tomb owner, facing right (north). He wears a long, plain garment and sandals. This scene mirrors that in [8].

No remains of colour. Dimensions: h. 42.5, w. 11.5 cm.

[5] Inner chapel, south wall

PM III/2, 716; Passalacqua 1826, 73 [1406]; Fründt 1961, 26, fig. 3;
Martin 1987, 21–22, no. 43, pl. 16; Staring 2018, 37, figs. 5–6;
Staring 2019, fig. on p. 43; Staring 2020, 26–27, fig. 13b

Limestone block, Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum 7277. The scene is carved in sunk relief. The head-end of this block contains scene [4]. The present scene is framed by a register line along the bottom and top edges, and a vertically carved block frieze frames it along the left end. The scene depicts seven male offering-bearers proceeding towards the right (west). The third and fifth men wear wigs, the others have shaved heads. Six offering bearers wear pleated sash kilts. The kilt of the man on the right-hand side is plain, which may be indicative of the scene being unfinished. The first offering-bearer raises the left hand (lost), while carrying a bouquet in the right. The second offering-bearer supports with both hands a bowl on his right shoulder, filled with food offerings. The third leads a bull calf, while holding a papyrus umbel over the shoulder. The fourth cradles a crane, the fifth raises a bouquet and holds a bunch of

[5a] Opposite page, top. Photo © SMB Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung.

[5b] Opposite page, middle. Photo ©SMB Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung/Sandra Steiß.

fruit, the sixth carries a bowl with two pointed loaves and a papyrus stalk, the last in the row holds a similar papyrus stalk and shoulders a large bouquet. No remains of colour. Dimensions: h. 42.5, w. 110.5, th. 11.5 cm.

Comments: The suggested position in the tomb is based on the relief's iconography, which mirrors that on the opposite north wall [7], and the setting lines in the floor of the inner chapel. This block might possibly be the lower part of a larger relief block. The upper part may have been sawn off by antiquities dealers in the early 19th century. This process may have caused the fragment along the top of the block to chip off (this fragment includes the head of the central offering bearer). Additional damage has been caused while the relief was in Berlin. The block has been broken in two and the break line is well visible running through the third figure to the right. Fragments have been chipped off along the edges of the block. As a result, the lower end of the block frieze on the left and the papyrus stalks held by the offering bearer on the right are now missing, and patches of plaster that had been applied on the stone's surface by the ancient craftsmen, and into which the reliefs were carved, have disappeared.

[6] Inner chapel, west wall

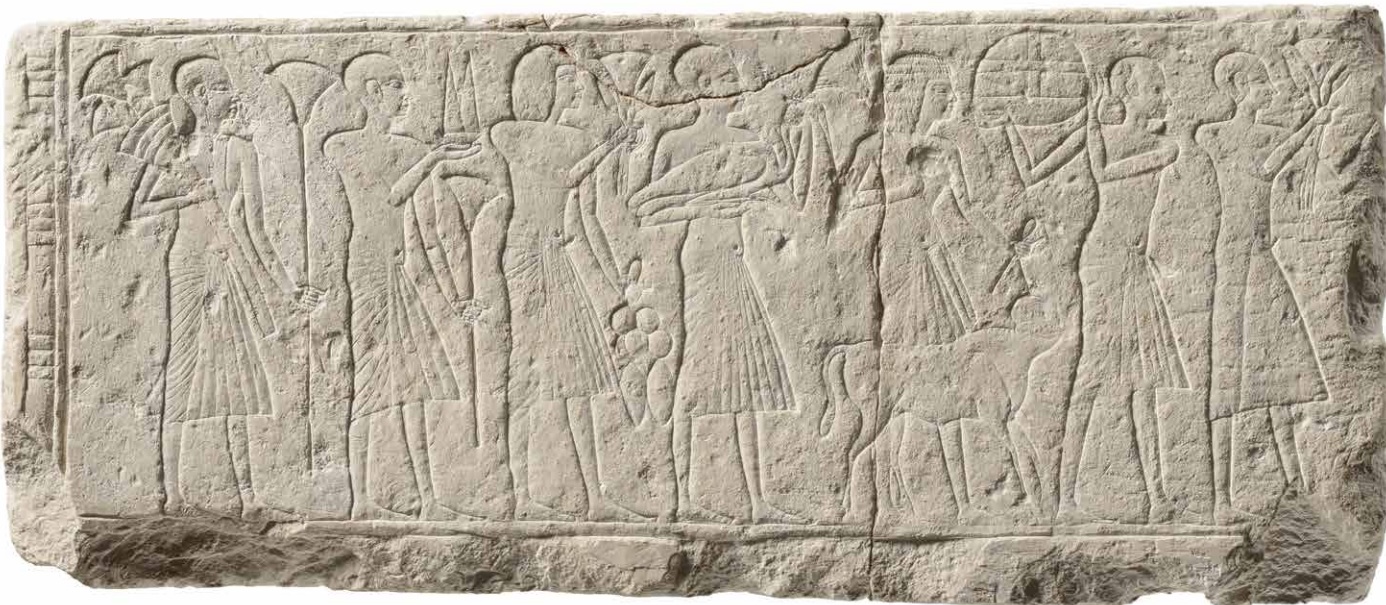
PM III/2, 715; Erman 1899, 163–164; Roeder 1924, 182–184;
Schäfer 1974, pl. 45 (lower scene); Herzberg 2017, 198–199;
Staring 2019, fig. on p. 45; Staring 2020, 27–29, fig. 14

Limestone stela, Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum 7290. The west wall of the chapel accommodated the stela cut from a single block of limestone. The rectangular stela sits on a low base and is framed by a torus. The protruding lintel and jambs are inscribed with two offering formulas set in framed lines and columns, respectively, carved in sunk relief. The text on the left-hand side reads: (1) *An offering which the king gives to Osiris, foremost of the West*, (2) *Lord of Busiris, sovereign, ruler of the gods of the netherworld, may he grant that (I) may go out as a living ba to see Re when he rises in the horizon, that (I) may not be warded off or held back to see your body at the sight of your beauty, for the ka of the one praised by the Perfect God (i.e. the king), chief of bowmen, Ry, true of voice*. The text on the right-hand side reads: (1) *[An offering which the king gives to ? and Re- (2) Hor[akhte Lord of ?, may they grant a sweet breeze of the north wind, that (I) may drink water from the river, that (I) may go forth by day as a follower of Horus to see Re as he rises every day, for the ka of the one praised by the Perfect God (i.e. the king), the chief of bowmen, overseer of horses, Ry, true <of voice>*. In the centre, the lintel depicts Ry and

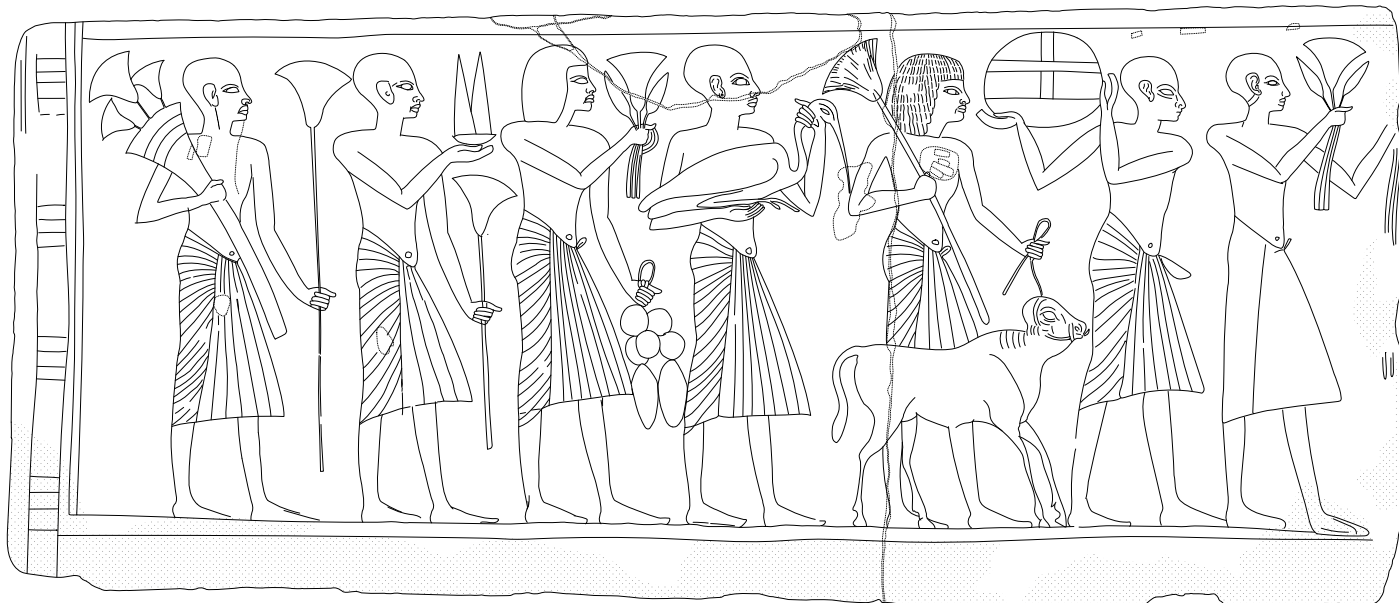
[5]



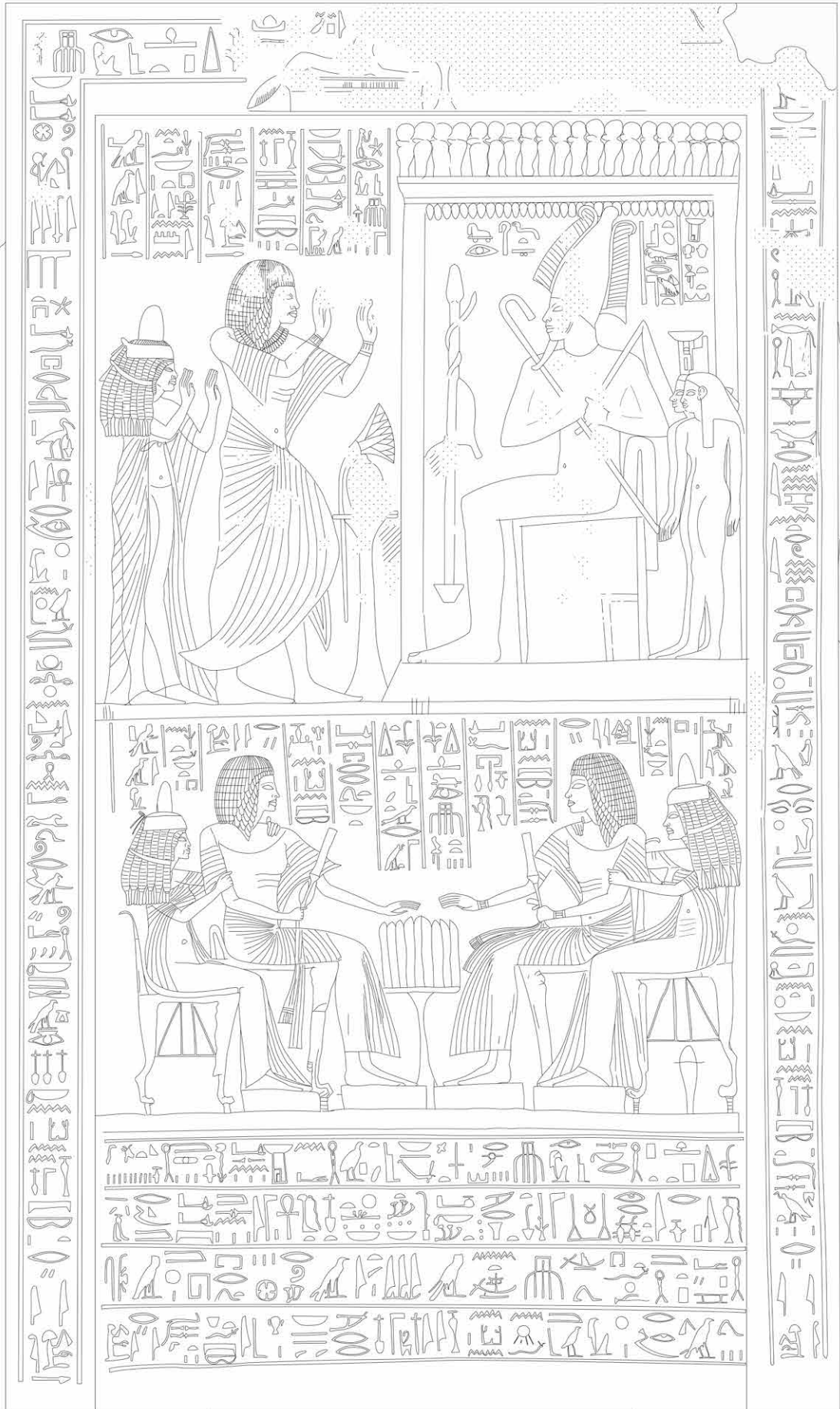
[5]



[5]







his wife Maia, both kneeling in adoration before the god Anubis recumbent on a shrine. The caption of the scene on the left reads: *Anubis [who is in the place of embalming] (and) who is on [his] mountain*. The caption of the scene on the right has not preserved any legible traces of text.

The recessed central panel is divided into three parts. The upper section contains a scene carved in raised relief, the middle section a scene carved in sunk relief, and the lower comprises four framed lines of hieroglyphic text.

Upper section. The scene in the upper section depicts Ry and Maia standing, facing right, raising both hands in adoration before Osiris. Ry wears a layered 'Nubian' wig and an elaborate garment consisting of a bag tunic and pointed apron. The pleated, wrap-around sash kilt is executed in a peculiar manner, shaped in a semi-circle pointed backwards.³⁷ Ry wears the two-row *shebyu* collar, the Gold of Honour, around his neck.³⁸ Maia is depicted standing behind her husband, and is much shorter than he is. She wears an ankle-length pleated dress, a head band, and a perfume cone atop her elaborately braided wig. A short inscription in six framed columns is incised above the couple: (1) *Adoring Osiris, foremost of the West, [great] god, (2) Lord of the Sacred Land, may he grant [entering and] leaving the necropolis (3) [for] one praised by the Perfect God, truly his beloved,*³⁹ *chief of bowmen, (4) overseer of horses, Ry, true of voice, (5) (and) his sister (i.e. wife), lady of the house, songstress of Amun, (6) Maia, true of voice.* Osiris, accompanied by his *imiut* symbol, is depicted seated on a low-backed throne under a canopy, which is lined along the top with cobras supporting sun disks and a frieze of pendant bunches of grapes. The mummiform god wears the *atef* crown and holds his distinctive regalia. A short inscription in raised relief identifies the god as *Osiris, ruler of eternity*. The goddesses Isis and Nephthys are standing behind (or rather, beside) Osiris. The signs for their names are situated atop their heads. Two framed columns of text in raised relief identify the goddesses: (1) *Isis the great, mother of the god. (2) Nephthys, who resides in the West.* An offering stand supporting a *nemset* jar and lotus flower stands between the deceased couple and the gods.

Middle section. A mirrored representation of the deceased couple Ry and Maia sitting vis-à-vis at a single offering table covered with slices of bread. The couple are seated on lion-legged chairs and their feet are positioned on foot rests. Underneath Maia's chair, on the right, is an oil jar. Ry and Maia wear elaborate, long garments. Perfume

cones are positioned atop Maia's wig in both images. In the left-hand image, Ry holds a short *sekhem* sceptre in combination with a 'lettuce' sceptre and folded napkin in his right hand. He extends his left hand over the offering table. In the right-hand image, it is his right hand which he extends over the offering table. The *sekhem* sceptre and folded napkin are held in his left hand. In the image on the left, the cloth is represented in front view (hanging down straight), and in the right image in side view (hanging down over the knees).⁴⁰ In both scenes, Maia embraces her husband. Each image of the deceased couple carries an offering formula set in framed columns. Image on the left: (1) *An offering which the king gives to Isis the Great, mother of the god, (2) may she grant all that comes forth (3) upon the offering table for the ka of the chief of bowmen, (4) Ry, (5) (and) his sister (i.e. wife), lady of the house, (6) Maia.* Image on the right: (1) *An offering which the king gives to Osiris, foremost of the West, (2) may he grant an invocation offering of bread, beer, libation and incense (3) for the ka of the chief of bowmen, overseer of hor<ses>, (4) Ry, (5) (and) his sister (i.e. wife), lady of the (6) house, (7) Maia.*

Text. Four lines of text, encompassing one elaborate offering formula: (1) *An offering which the king gives to Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, foremost of Rosetau, who is in the place of embalming, Lord of the necropolis, it is Isis together with Nephthys, may they grant 1,000 of bread, beer, beef, fowl, (2) libation, wine, milk, alabaster, linen, incense, ointment, all fresh (plant-)offers, and all good and pure things from which a god lives, that which the sky gives, that which the earth creates, that which (3) the Nile brings forth from its source, sailing downstream and upstream in the Field of Rushes, going forth by day as a follower (4) of Horus in order to see Re as he rises, for the ka of the one greatly praised by the Perfect God (i.e. the king), one loved by the Lord of the Two Lands on account of his character, the chief of bowmen and overseer of horses, Ry.*

No remains of colour. Dimensions: h. 157, w. 94.5, th. 18 cm.

[7] Inner chapel, north wall

PM III/2, 716; Passalacqua 1826, 55–56 [1378], Roeder 1924, 198; Fründt 1961, fig. 2; Hofmann 2004, fig. 120; Staring 2019, fig. on p. 44; Staring 2020, 29–30, fig. 16

The narrow strip on the right-hand side of the wall was found *in situ*, and forms the head-end of the block with scene [8]. The scene on the block's head end preserves traces of scenes in two superimposed registers, carved in sunk relief. The relief block Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum 7275 joins it on the left-hand side. The two blocks account for the total width of the wall, measuring 127 cm.

37 The closest parallel from the New Kingdom necropolis at Saqqara is found in the tomb of Horemheb, where a scene on the east wall of the inner courtyard, south end, depicts a group of six army officials: Martin 1989, scene [69], pls. 85 [top], 86; Hofmann 2004, Appendix B, *Bekleidung*, no. 20, *Militärschurz* 2; Staring 2020, fig. 24.

38 Binder 2008, cat. no. [148].

39 Alternatively *true <scribe> whom he loves*.

40 As observed by Gessler-Löhr 2011, 293.

Upper register. This depicts the deceased couple Ry and Maia standing before the god Re-Horakhte. Both raise one hand in adoration (Ry, left hand; Maia, right hand), and hold three papyrus stalks in the other. Ry wears a plain, layered wig and an elaborate garment consisting of a bag tunic and a pleated wrap-around sash kilt goffered in front.⁴¹ It is worn in combination with a pointed apron. Over his tunic, Ry wears a two-row *shebyu*, or Gold of Honour. Only half of Maia's figure is preserved on the Berlin block. The lower end of her dress is just visible on the block found *in situ*. It is not clear what type of wig she wears. Only a lotus flower with a closed bud is visible hanging down on her forehead. Her plain dress reaches to the ankles and the contour lines of her body are visible underneath. Seven framed columns of hieroglyphic text carved above the couple's heads, the remains of the lower parts preserved, read: (1) ... *created* (2) ... ?? (3) ... *the Heliopolitan, adoring* (4) *your appearances??* (5) ... *you go to rest in* (6) ... ?? (7) [R]y. Re-Horakhte is represented in his falcon-headed anthropomorphic form and wears a short kilt and a collar. A sun disk encircled by a cobra is placed atop his head. In his left hand he clasps a *was* sceptre and in his right hand he holds an *ankh* sign. The god stands under a canopy. The latter structure is placed on a raised pedestal shaped as the hieroglyph *ma'a*. A single framed column of text identifies the god, the lower part preserved, reading: [*Re-Horakhte,*] *great god, Lord of the sky*. An offering stand supporting a *nemset* jar stands between the god and the deceased couple. Two lotus flowers, one with a closed bud, the other one open, are laid across the jar, oriented towards the god.

Lower register. Seven male offering bearers, facing left. All wear sash kilts; the second, fourth and seventh are wearing wigs, the others have shaved heads. The first carries a bowl with a pointed loaf and a bouquet, the second a stalk of papyrus and a bunch of fruit, the third brings two bowls with pointed loaves, the fourth holds the horns of an ibex, the fifth shoulders a large amphora, the sixth carries two stalks of papyrus and a pendant duck, and the seventh (depicted on the block *in situ*) guides a bull calf. A framed column of incised hieroglyphic text identifies the offering bearer heading the group: *The servant, Ka*. The double register line under the scene is not finished. It is carved as a single line under individuals 2-4, and is missing under the first offering bearer.

The block *in situ* preserves traces of colour: red on skin, black on wig; a band of yellow and red decorates the dado. Block frieze to the right. All traces of colour have

vanished from the block now held in Berlin. Dimensions: block *in situ*, h. 73, of decorated part 35, w. 16.5 cm; Berlin ÄM 7275, h. 132, w. 92, th. 13.5 cm.

[8] Antechapel, west wall, north part

Raven 2013, figs. 5–6; Staring 2020, 30–31, fig. 17

Block, found *in situ*, with part of a scene carved in sunk relief. Lower part of a man, presumably the tomb owner, facing left (south). He wears a plain garment and sandals (soles not indicated). This scene mirrors scene [4] on the opposite south wall of the antechapel. Remains of colour: red on skin (pink under the translucent kilt); dado with bands in red, yellow, and red, the lower framed by black lines and the register line also black. Dimensions: h. 76, of decorated part 30.5, w. 48, of decorated part 38 cm, th. 16.5 cm.

[9] Antechapel, north wall

PM III/2, 716; Passalacqua 1826, 72–73 [1405]; Roeder 1924, 181; Fründt 1961, fig. 1; Martin 1987, 20–21, no. 42, pl. 15, front and back cover; Martin 1991, fig. 122; Schäfer 1974, pl. 52; Raven/Hays 2013, 44, fig. 8 [left]; Staring 2018, fig. 8; Staring 2019, fig. on p. 44; Staring 2020, 31–34, figs. 18–19; Weiss/Staring/Twiston Davies 2020, fig. 4.8.

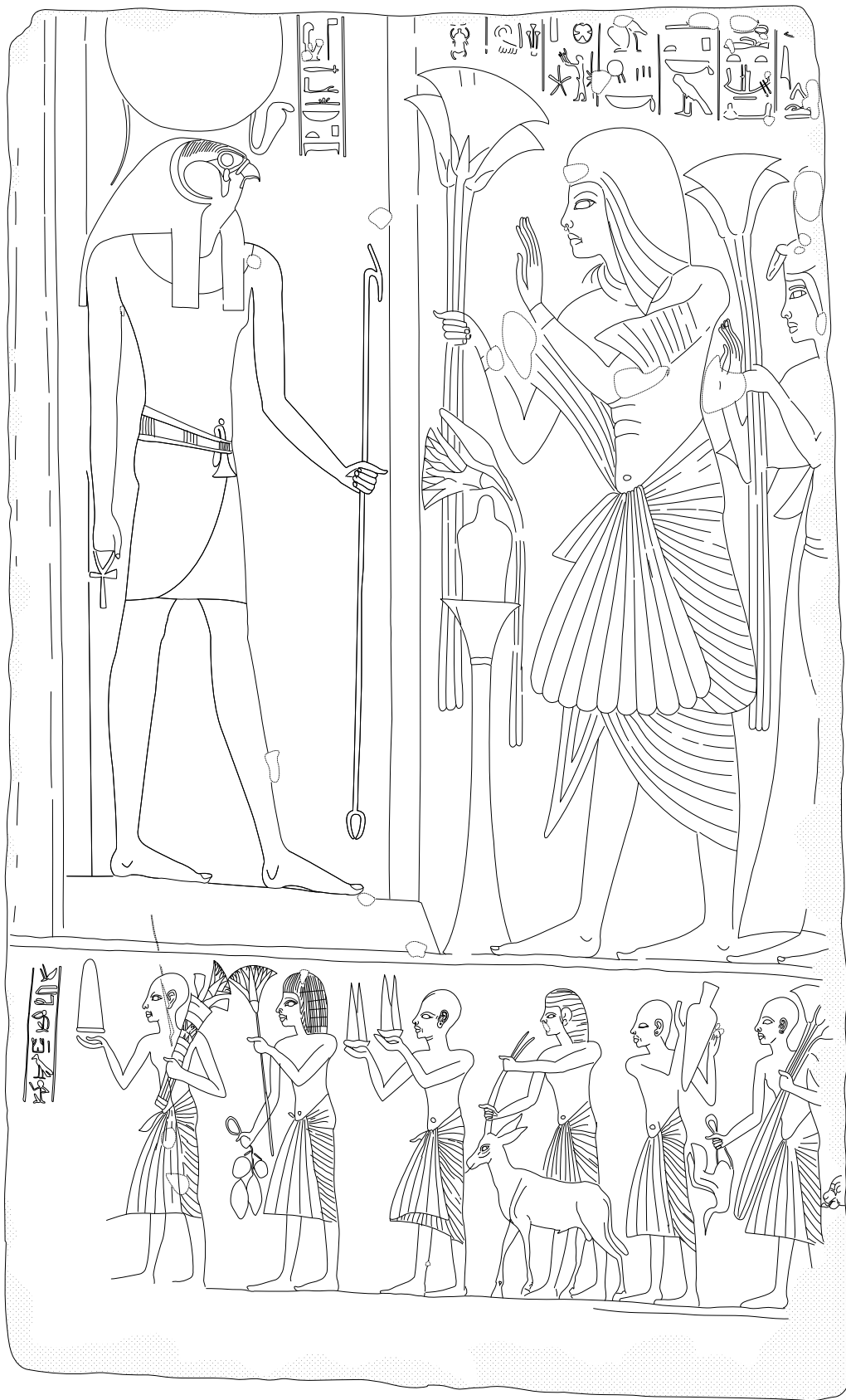
One relief-decorated block was found *in situ*, positioned perpendicular to the block bearing scene [10]. On the left-hand side it joins Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum 7278 (two blocks). A small relief-decorated fragment found during excavation (SAK 2013-R35) joins the Berlin block on the upper left-hand side; it was reused in the dry-stone wall built around the tomb shaft, possibly in conjunction with the early exploration of the tomb by Passalacqua between 1820 and 1825. The four blocks combined depict a single scene carved in sunk relief extending over the full width of this wall (198 cm).

The offering and purification scene is centred around the tomb owner and his wife, who are seated on the left on two distinct lion-legged chairs. A leashed monkey stands below (or rather, beside) Maia's chair. The couple rest their feet on low footrests. Ry wears a composite garment, consisting of an ankle-long bag tunic with ample pleated 'sleeves' in combination with a wrap-around sash kilt tied in front. The short end of the tied sash kilt is represented as a short 'apron' with fringed ends. Over his tunic, Ry wears a broad collar, and a perfume cone is positioned atop his duplex wig. He extends his left arm towards the offering table and in his right hand he holds a folded cloth and *sekhem* sceptre. Maia wears an ankle-length pleated robe knotted below her breasts, over which she wears a broad collar. A lotus flower and perfume cone are positioned atop her elaborately braided wig. She embraces her husband with her left arm, her hand reappearing on Ry's chest. In her right hand she holds four lotus flowers, two with open, the other two with closed buds. For the text

41 Cf. Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 183 n. 252. Compare Ry (posture, garment, execution) to relief-decorated block Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian inv. no. 205 of the army general Amenemone, a contemporary of Ry and his superior in rank in the military: Assam 1991, 62–63 [15]. The block's dimensions are: h. 66, w. 36 cm.



[7] Photo Berlin 7275 ©SMB Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung/Jürgen Liepe.





associated with Ry, see below. Another hieroglyphic text carved in five framed columns is positioned over Maia: (1) *His sister* (i.e. wife) *whom he loves, lady of the house*, (2) *songstress of*⁴² *Amun-Re*, (3) *Maia*, (4) *lady of reverence*, (5) *in peace*.

In front of Ry stands an offering table carrying various loaves, a leg of beef and other meat, and assorted fruit, with a bouquet of flowers and three stalks of papyrus on top and two jars on stands below the table. A group of five individuals approach the table from the right. The group is composed of two male officiants, followed by two female offering bearers flanking a male one. The man standing next to the table is dressed in an elaborate garment, consisting of a bag tunic and a pleated wrap-around sash kilt goffered in front, and wears a short wig.⁴³ His raised left hand holds a long-armed censer, with his raised right

hand he pours a libation from a spouted *nemset* jar. A framed column of hieroglyphs under the table identifies him as: *The stablemaster Maia, true of voice*. He is followed by another male with shaved head, clad in a sash kilt and wearing a leopard skin over his shoulder. In his two upraised hands he holds a spoutless jar from which he pours a libation of water. The water is represented by two wavy lines that extend over Ry and Maia. A single framed column of hieroglyphic texts identifies this man as: *The servant, Ahanefer*. The offering bearers are anonymous. The first woman raises a platter of loaves and fruit, while holding three stalks of papyrus in the left hand; a brace of four pendant ducks is slung over the right elbow. The male offering bearer leads a bull calf while raising a bouquet with the left hand. He is followed by another woman raising both hands.

A hieroglyphic text carved in seventeen framed columns is set above the offering table scene, starting in front of Ry's face and extending all the way to the second officiant facing him. There is some loss of text along the upper edge. The wavy lines of water poured from the jar cut through the text. From column 3 onwards, the text can

42 The genitive adjective *n* appears to be graphically represented by the wavy line of water that cuts through the text.

43 Ry wears the same garment in scene [7], block Berlin ÄM 7275. See also Hofmann 2004, appendix B, *Bekleidung*, no. 20 (*Militärschurz* 1).

be identified as an excerpted version of BD spell 149l:⁴⁴ (1) *Words spoken by the Osiris, the Embalmed One, chief of bowmen and overseer of hor-* (2) [ses,] Ry: ‘O morning star, who emerges (3) from the horizon, (and) Anubis who is on his mountain, may you grant that I walk, (4) my legs <being mine> forever, while I rise and am powerful (5) because of this Eye of (6) Horus which raises (7) my heart after it had weakened, (8) [I being a spirit] in heaven and powerful (9) [on] earth. I fly up (10) [as a] falcon and I cackle (11) [as a] goose. To me has been given (12) my place in the dis- (13) [trict] of {my} lake. (14) [I stand] on it and I sit (15) [on it,] while appearing as (16) a god. I eat of the food of the Field (17) [of Offer-]ings.’

The scene is bordered along the lower edge by a register line and on the right and left-hand edges by a vertical block frieze. The four blocks preserve ample traces of colour: black on wigs; red on skin, face of monkey, vases under offering table. Block frieze with rectangles of blue, yellow, green, and red between green frames and with green-blue-green triglyphs. Dado with bands in red, yellow, and red, the lower framed by black lines and the register line also black. The joining Berlin blocks preserve only part of this decorative band. It stands to reason that at some point in time after their removal from the tomb wall excess stone was sawn off from the blocks’ lower edge. Dimensions: block found *in situ*: h. 94, of decorated part 49, w. 31.5 cm; Berlin ÄM 7278, right block: h. 89.5, w. 86, th. 14.5 cm; Berlin ÄM 7278, left block: h. 96.7, w. 80.5, th. 14.5 cm; fragment SAK 2013-R35: h. 25.5, w. 17.3, th. 11 cm.

[10] Antechapel, east wall, north part

Raven/Hays 2013, fig. 8 (right); Staring 2018, 38, fig. 7; Staring 2019, fig. on p. 43; Staring 2020, 34, fig. 20

Block found *in situ*, with a scene carved in sunk relief. Three male offering bearers facing left. All men wear sash kilts and have shaved heads. The central offering bearer balances a bowl filled with food offerings on his left shoulder with both hands. The other two men carry bundles of three papyrus stalks in bloom. The scene is framed by a register line along the bottom edge and a vertically carved line along the right end. Undressed chisel marks below. No remains of colour, though the undecorated dado shows faint traces of black paint, the

outlines of a decorative band.⁴⁵ Dimensions: h. 92, of decorated part 48, w. 53.5 cm.

[11] Entrance doorway, north reveal

PM III/2, 716; Anonymous 1915, 2, no. 14; Fründt 1961, 27; James 1974, 175–176 [431], pl. 85; Martin 1987, 22 [44], pl. 17; Raven/Hays 2013, fig. 8 (left), Staring 2018, fig. 7; Staring 2019, fig. on p. 44; Staring 2020, 34–35, fig. 21

A narrow strip of the left-hand side of the scene is preserved on the head-end of the block with scene [10]. It comprises a vertical and horizontal block frieze in sunk relief along the left and lower ends of a scene which decorated the adjoining block to the right. A block now held in the Brooklyn Museum, inv. no. 37.39E, appears to join the block to the right. This fragment depicts a scene showing an alternation of three female and two male offering bearers bringing assorted goods. The women wear wide translucent dresses and wigs enveloping the shoulders, the men have shaved heads and are clothed in long sash-kilts. The first woman leads a live bull calf, the man following her holds a latticed offering stand in front of him, with stalks of papyrus bound to the legs and a triangular loaf on top. The second woman carries a tray with offerings in her left hand, while holding three stalks of papyrus and a bound duck (?) with the right. The second man likewise holds stalks of papyrus in the forward hand, while supporting a leg of beef with the other. The third female again carries stalks of papyrus with a bird (?) in the right hand, with a closed box or basket in the left. The block is much worn and damaged. For example, only the outlines of the head of the fourth offering bearer are visible. Still, faint traces of a framed column (?) of hieroglyphic signs incised over the second offering bearer seem to read *lector priest*. No remains of colour. Dimensions: block *in situ* h. 90, w. 11.5 cm; Brooklyn 37.39E, h. 65.5, w. 87, th. 11 cm.

Comments: The suggested position of block Brooklyn 37.39E in the tomb is based on the individuals that are carved (in sunk relief) in a style similar to that observed in the reliefs mentioning Ry. The iconography would indeed fit the north wall of the entrance doorway and the block has the correct dimensions. If indeed correctly placed there, the row of offering bearers would continue their ‘procession’ on the east and north walls of the antechapel. However, the horizontal block frieze bordering the bottom edge of the *in situ* fragment [11] is not the same as the frieze bordering the scene in block Brooklyn 37.39E. On the other hand, the frieze bordering the Brooklyn relief on the right-hand side is the same as that observed on the *in situ* block in the tomb of Ry. It is possible that the lower line of the horizontal frieze

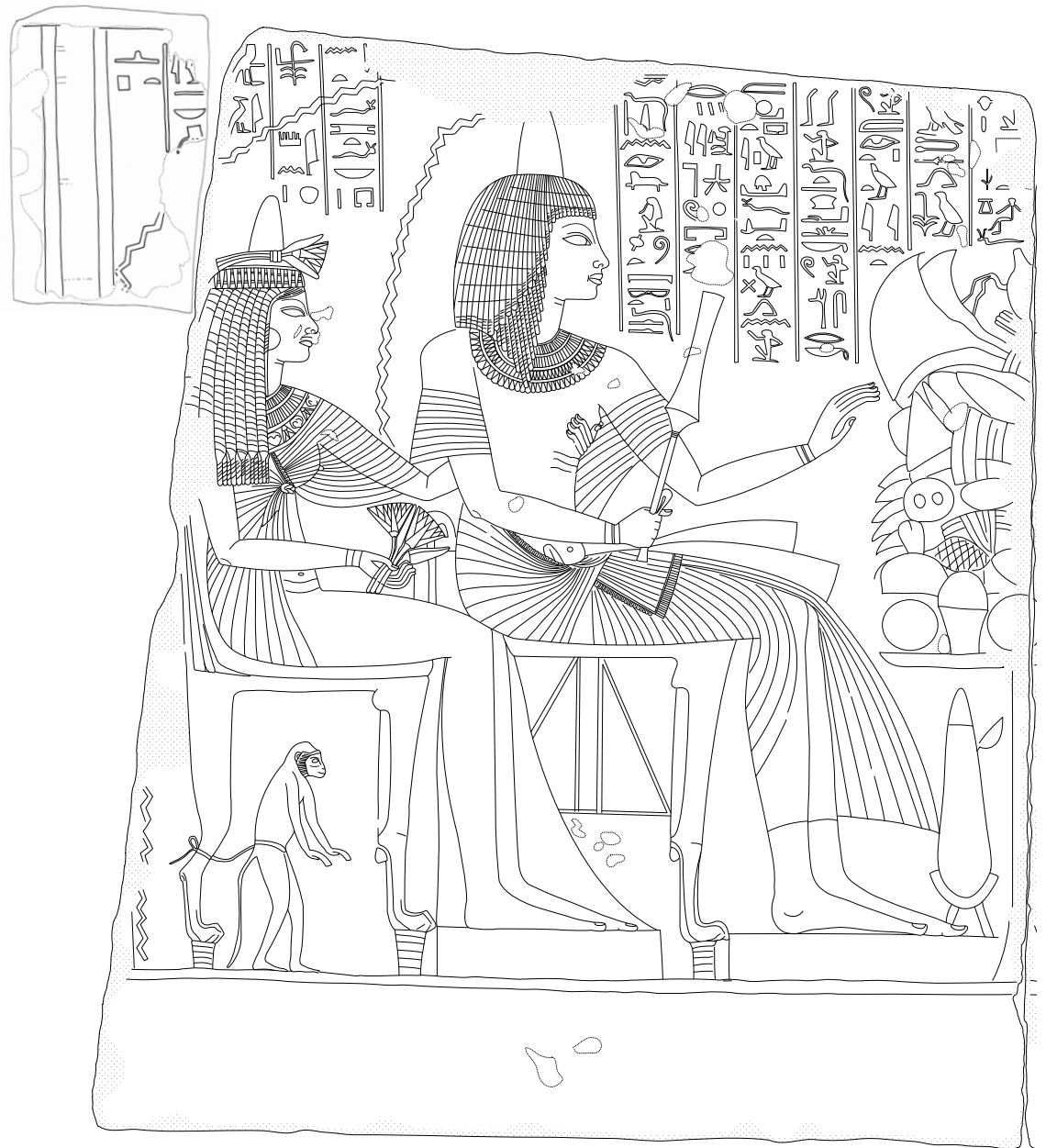
44 BD Nav. 149l, lines 71–74. The correct BD chapter was already noted by Martin 1987, 46 n. 45c, although erroneously written as 14gl. For a more detailed treatment of this text, see Staring 2020, 33–34; Weiss 2022, 173–175; Twiston Davies [in preparation], chapter 4.3. For BD 149 more generally, see also Lüscher 2010; Quirke 2013, 362. The origins of BD spell 149l can be traced back to CT spell 278. See Faulkner 2004, 209–210.

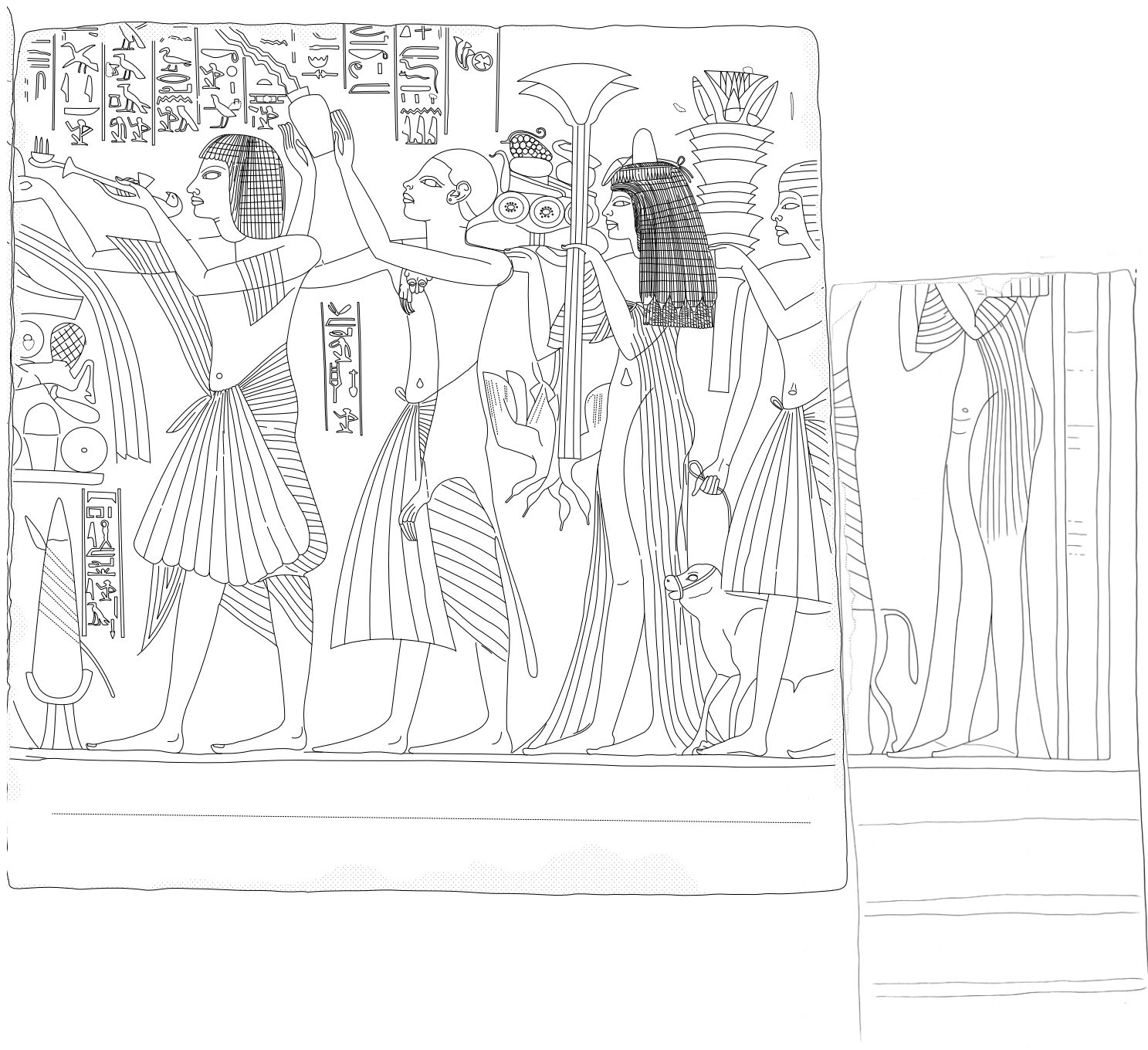
45 Only visible when manipulating a digital photograph of this scene by enhancing colour separation using decorrelation stretching (DStretch).

[9] Photo Berlin 7278 ©SMB Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung/Jürgen Liepe.





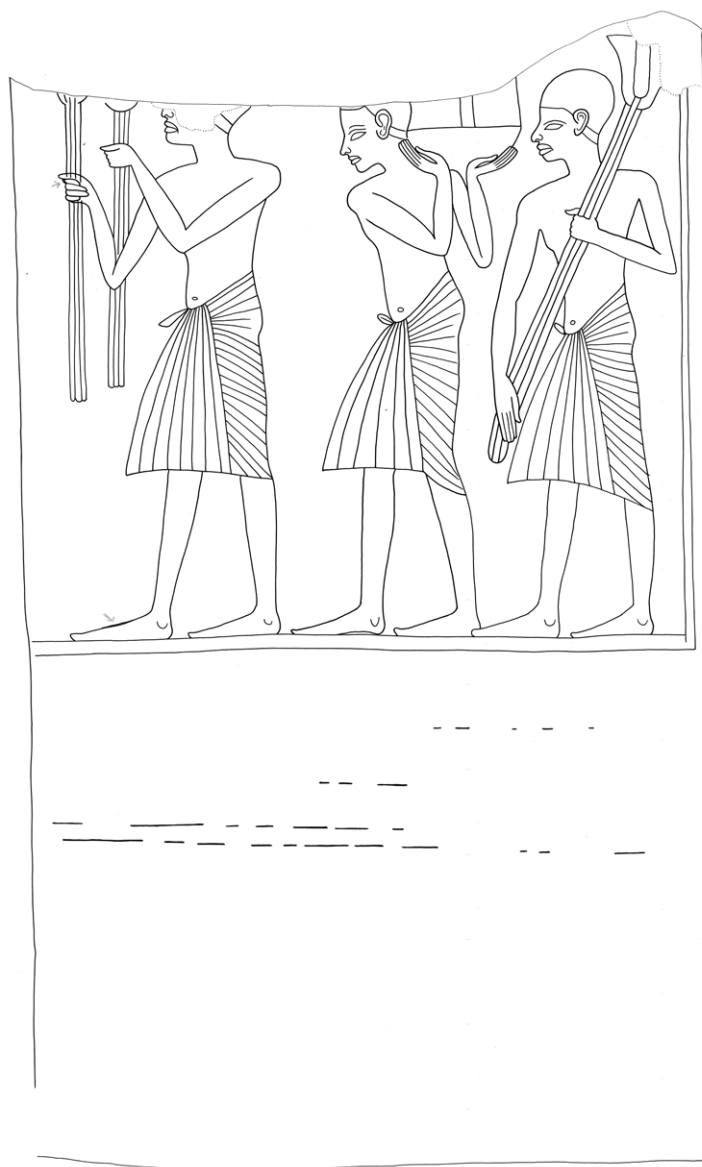




[10]



[10]



[11] © Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 37.39E.



bordering the scene along the bottom was not finished in its entirety, comparable to block ÄM 7275, scene [7]. Thus, even though there is no direct join, it is highly likely that the Brooklyn block derives from the north reveal of the entrance to the tomb chapel of Ry. The block's dimensions neatly fit the space available on the tomb wall.

[12] *Entrance doorway, northern doorjamb, east face (?)*

Piccirillo 1983, 79, with fig.; Martin 1987, 22 [45], pl. 14; Staring 2020, 36, fig. 22

Relief fragment Jerusalem, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, inv. no. CTS-SB-06202.⁴⁶ Fragment of a relief-decorated block executed in sunk relief depicting Ry, kneeling and facing left, both hands raised in adoration. He is wearing a short plain wig and a bag tunic without details. Above the figure, the remains of six framed

46 I would like to thank Benedetta Torrini (Polo Museale della Toscana, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze) for kindly providing me with the photograph produced for her catalogue of Egyptian objects held in the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, and for granting permission to publish it here.



columns of hieroglyphic text have been preserved: (1) *The Osiris*, (2) *chief of bowmen* (3-5) *Ry*, (6) *true of voice, possessor of reverence <in> peace*. The surface is covered in various patches of plaster. The top, right side, lower edge and back of the block have been sawn off.⁴⁷ Remains of reddish-brown colour on the lower arms and hands. Dimensions: h. 42, w. 25.8, th. 4.3 cm.

Comments: On account of the block's dimensions and the scene depicted, it probably formed part of the right-hand jamb of the doorway into the chapel, or, alternatively,

the right-hand side of the lintel over the doorway into the chapel.⁴⁸ A similar scene of the tomb owner in adoration, facing right, would have been present on the opposite side of the doorway.

[13] Pyramidion

PM III/2, 770; Mariette 1880, 558-559, no.1432; Rammant-Peeters 1983, 24-25, pl. 16 (43), doc. 21; Staring 2020, 36-37, fig. 23

Limestone pyramidion, Cairo, Egyptian Museum JE 48840 (formerly JE 14975), SR 13738. The pyramidion bears decoration and texts on its east side. Below, Ry and Maia are represented as half-statues, sculpted in a shallow niche. They kneel side by side and raise their hands in adoration.

47 According to Martin 1987, 22, the relief shows traces of considerable modern repair. It is unclear to me what traces he refers to. The patches of plaster do not appear to be modern, because the relief decoration has been modelled partly in the plaster. This is a very common practice at Saqqara.

48 As suggested in Staring 2020, 36.

[12] Photo ©Studium Biblicum
Franciscanum/Roberta Meriano.



[12]



Maia wears a plain robe and heavy wig with an unguent cone on top. The area of her face and wig is weatherworn. Ry also wears a plain wig with two voluminous lappets, revealing the ears, and a pleated goffered sash kilt worn over a bag tunic. The text starts as a single framed column running from the top of the pyramidion down to the statue niche, and continues as a single framed line of text along the base of the pyramidion, reading: (1) [*Adoring*] *Re when <he> rises in the eastern horizon of the sky* (2) *for the ka of the Osiris, chief of bowmen, Ry, true of voice, (and) the lady of the house, Maia.*

Dimensions: h. 49 (orig. 57), w. base east 40, south 48.5, west 39 (orig. 40), north 47.5 cm (orig. 48.5).

3. Iconography, style, workmanship, and date (N. Staring)

3.1. Introduction

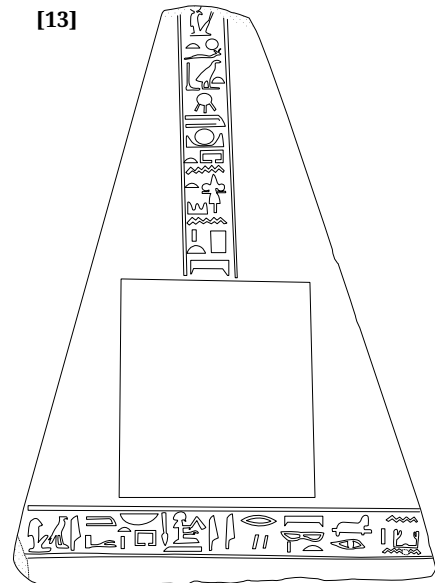
This section engages with the style, iconography, workmanship and date of the tomb's decoration. It is meant to situate the tomb of Ry in its spatiotemporal context. Before entering into a more detailed treatment of these topics, it should first be emphasised that the relief-decorated blocks of ancient Egyptian tombs were usually produced before the tomb's commissioning patron, i.e. the tomb owner, had died. Tombs of this size and complexity were normally commissioned during the life of their prospective deceased denizens, not least because such structures had a function to fulfil *during* their lives.⁴⁹ The

49 E.g., Weiss 2022, 52.

[13] Photo
Nico Staring
© Egyptian
Museum
Cairo.



[13]



exact moment when work started on the tombs probably varied from one person to the other, though overall, work started when such individuals had already made a proper career and attained a certain (elevated) rank in their office.⁵⁰ The commissioning patrons were normally

50 I know of only a small number of examples of tombs in which the progression of the patron's career can be observed in the marked changes of style of relief decoration resulting from the extended periods of time during which the tombs were created. For example, construction and decoration of the contemporary tomb of Iniua was started when this individual held the titles of 'scribe of the treasury of the Lord of the Two Lands' and 'overseer of cattle of Amun'. He attained the office of 'chief steward of

at the peak of their careers.⁵¹ At that stage, they were strongly embedded in certain socio-professional networks that gave them access to the required human (e.g., skilled artists),⁵² material (e.g., building material), and immaterial (e.g., religious knowledge) resources to realise their funerary monuments.⁵³ It means that the date of death of a tomb owner – as inferred from the dating of objects that were specifically produced for the funeral, such as certain types of pottery – need not coincide with the date of the carving of the relief-decorated blocks.⁵⁴ The chronological sequence of the funerary pottery rather offers a *terminus ante quem* for the creation of the relief decoration, because work on the tomb's decoration programme usually stopped at the moment when the commissioning patron died. In this respect, the tomb of Ry presents a problem, because a precise date of burial cannot be firmly established on present evidence, mainly because very little material remains can be linked to the funerary arrangements made by his surviving relatives. All that was found upon excavating the burial chamber (2002/17) was a 20 cm thick layer of dark fill containing decayed wood, glass beads, flakes of gold leaf, and pottery. The latter has been dated to the late 18th-Dynasty reign of Tutankhamun,⁵⁵ which (if indeed representing the remains of the interment of Ry) provides the *terminus ante quem* for the production of the tomb's relief decoration.

The decoration of the tomb of Ry yielded neither a king's name, nor were objects found that contained a written date. Therefore, in order to propose a date-(range) for the production of its reliefs, style presents one important analytical tool to date and place such works of art.⁵⁶ A stylistic analysis also enables us to trace relationships between monuments (at Saqqara and beyond), and to investigate individual and group

techniques. The present evaluation of the reliefs suggests a date in the late 18th- Dynasty reign of Tutankhamun,⁵⁷ which accords well with the date suggested for the ceramic evidence found in the burial chamber. A number of the neighbouring tombs in the cemetery were also built during this time, and these structures offer ample parallels for the scenes and scene details included in the iconographic programme of Ry's tomb. Such parallels will be highlighted in the following paragraphs.

A final note concerns the life history or biography of the tomb.⁵⁸ While such structures were built during the life of their owner, a tomb usually outlived its commissioning patron. The activities pertaining to the planning, building, and decorating of a tomb, and the subsequent burial of the tomb owner, members of his family and extended household, and (a selection of) their descendants, all occupied a comparatively short period of time in the biography of a tomb. Yet, all these activities and later transformations of the structure formed part of that biography, and should therefore be an integral part of the archaeological treatment of the tomb, even if the memory of its erstwhile occupant had long faded when certain changes were made to the tomb's super- or substructure.⁵⁹

3.2. Iconography

When the tomb of Ry was excavated in 2013, not much more than its decayed mud-brick skeleton was found to be extant. Much of the limestone revetment had been removed from the walls long before the present expedition started excavations in this part of the necropolis, and only small

Memphis' at a later stage of his career, and this is clearly reflected in the different style of relief decoration associated with this later stage of construction. For the tomb, see Schneider 2012, who does not discuss the topics of style and iconography, however.

51 Whether somebody has attained the peak of his or her career could of course be determined only with the benefit of hindsight.

52 For the notion of artists in Ancient Egypt, I refer to Laboury/Devillers 2022 (with references to earlier discussions).

53 Staring 2021.

54 The making of a tomb could have been a process involving multiple years. This would certainly have been the case with Memphite monumental tombs and their time-consuming relief decoration. Indeed, the passage of time can be gleaned from the changing style of the reliefs, as had been pointed out in the example of the (post-) Amarna tomb of Meryneith (Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 183–186) and the early 19th-Dynasty tomb of Ptahmose (Staring 2014, 494). The relief-decorated chapel of Ry is comparably small, and the wall surface modest in comparison to these two examples. The time-investment by the craftsmen making the tomb would have been considerably lower by comparison.

55 Cf. *infra*, Chapter IX, Section 6.

56 Cf. Hartwig 2015, 39.

57 Berlandini 1979, 212, concluded that the relief-decorated blocks of Ry were executed in the 'style of Horemheb'. She argued that their style was the same as observed in the tombs of the overseer of the treasury Maya, the overseer of craftsmen and chief of goldsmiths Amenemone, the general of the army Amenemone, the scribe of the treasury Ptahnefer, and the royal scribe Ptahmose. The style observed in the reliefs of all these officials is indeed quite comparable, although close scrutiny of the material reveals slight differences between the various tombs as well as within the corpus of each tomb individually (see e.g. Staring 2014, 455–518). Moreover, the tombs listed by Berlandini represent a much broader chronological range, extending well beyond the reign of Horemheb. For example, the overseer of craftsmen Amenemone built and decorated his tomb during the reign of Tutankhamun, Maya started his tomb-building project under the same king and continued for nine years into that of Horemheb, while the major of Memphis Ptahmose may have started under Horemheb and finished his relief-decoration in the second or third decade of Ramesses II. We should acknowledge that, while Berlandini had to work with loose relief blocks, we now have the advantage of having the rediscovered tombs at our disposal, along with additional textual and iconographic material, as well as archaeological and ceramic evidence, to substantiate our arguments.

58 For the notion of life history or biography, see Tringham 1995.

59 To avoid too much repetition, the reader is referred to Staring 2023, 127–135, for a treatment of the place of Ry's tomb in the ever-changing cemetery during the remainder of the New Kingdom.

fragments of the original relief decoration were found *in situ*. Still, the few remaining fragments offered sufficient pictorial evidence to relocate joining yet dispersed blocks held in museum collections. Approximately 60% of the tomb chapel's iconographic programme could be virtually reconstructed, and at present only the south side of the antechapel's east wall still represents a major lacuna. There is a chance that future excavations will enable us to fill some of the gaps. Missing blocks such as those from the chapel's south wall might be expected in the area south of Ry's tomb, hitherto unexcavated. It is equally well possible that fragments of this tomb have remained unidentified amongst the reliefs found in previous excavation seasons of the present expedition or in one or more public or private collections in or outside Egypt,⁶⁰ or that (some of) the missing blocks have been destroyed in the past.⁶¹

The analysis of the tomb's iconography will be necessarily limited to the single chapel located at the west end of the superstructure. The walls of the superstructure outside the chapel never received relief decoration, and we cannot tell if the tomb's commissioning patron ever intended to have these walls decorated as well. Indeed, we cannot simply argue that the tomb remained 'unfinished', because it would make assumptions about the perceived *emic* 'ideal' of what ancient Egyptian tombs should look like. Instead, such an argument reflects an *etic* ideal, conforming to the expectations of the modern researcher. All we can say is that the walls at the tomb's entrance in the east were provided with a limestone revetment, yet no traces of even initial stages of carving were observed. The mud-brick walls of the courtyard had once been plastered and there is no indication to suggest that these were ever intended to receive a limestone revetment either. When looking beyond the tomb of Ry, we may find various examples of Memphite New Kingdom tombs that include decorated walls of the entrance gateway or the open courtyard(s). However, the presently available corpus offers not a single example of a tomb that received wall decoration throughout its built superstructure. In that sense, the case of Ry offers no exception, and one cannot therefore draw far-reaching conclusions from its supposedly 'unfinished' state. What we can say is that the walls of the most important space of the tomb's superstructure – the chapel – were equipped with a limestone revetment, and that the cutting and painting

of the reliefs had largely been completed. Clearly, in the tomb-making process, the western chapel had the highest priority (together with the subterranean burial chamber).

In a semantical sense, the architectural spaces of private tombs and their decoration were intimately tied. This is clearly demonstrated in the Memphite New Kingdom temple-tombs⁶² that have the outward appearance of temples built for the gods and kings. The texts and decoration programmes corroborate the view that these monuments should be regarded as private mortuary temples wherein the tomb owner enjoyed the proximity of the gods and where he, along with his family, could worship them in perpetuity,⁶³ while at the same time acting as the recipients of a mortuary cult. The pictorial evidence gathered from the tomb chapel of Ry adheres to this observation, because the pictorial motifs pertaining to the cult of the deceased and the adoration of the gods Osiris and Re-Horakhte play a central part in the tomb's decorative programme. The layout is furthermore aligned with the east-west axis of the tomb.⁶⁴ Thus, the entrance faces east, towards the rising sun/Re-Horakhte, and the stela placed against the west wall of the cult chapel faces west, the place where the sun sets and where the realm of Osiris, the nocturnal manifestation of Re,⁶⁵ is supposed to be located. In addition, in tomb decoration, the north is often associated with the god Re-Horakhte and the south with Osiris.⁶⁶ The decoration of the north and south walls of the inner chapel of Ry adhere to such spatial distribution, with Re-Horakhte being venerated on the north wall, and either Re-Atum or Osiris depicted on the south wall. Returning to the east-west orientation of the tomb's architecture and its associated iconographic programme, we may add that it not only reflects the daily cycle of the sun: metaphorically,

60 Certainly if a relief block contains no text listing a name or title and it does not provide a direct join to any of the known blocks, it is incredibly difficult to assign it to a tomb, even in such cases when the style and iconography would render it a possibility. Scene [11] presents a case in point.

61 In addition to the reuse of limestone material in later construction works, such as in the nearby monastery of Apa Jeremias, a large(r) number of blocks may have been burnt in the lime kilns and should be regarded as lost.

62 For this term, see: Van Dijk 1988.

63 Van Dijk 1988, 42–45.

64 A study conducted by two MA students (Andrea Tenconi and Mattia Zambarnardi) in Landscape Architecture and Landscape Heritage at the Politecnico di Milano, School of Architecture and Urban Planning (2021), observed a strong correlation between the orientation of monumental New Kingdom tombs and the sun at dawn, suggesting that the tombs were built in such a manner that they received sunlight straight along their east-west axis during two days a year (Corinna Rossi, personal communication on 06.03.2022).

65 See e.g. Van Dijk 1996; Weiss 2017.

66 Interestingly, a gloss of Book of the Dead (BD) spell 17 describes the mythological locality Naref as the 'southern gate' of the necropolis of Memphis, which is where Osiris sits upon his throne. Not coincidentally, in the tomb of Horemheb, Naref is referenced in a hymn to Osiris, which was carved over a scene depicting Horemheb standing in adoration (?) before Osiris enthroned, and placed on the south wall of a doorway (Martin 1989, 63, 67(s), [64], pls. 66–67). Van Dijk 1993, 134, notes that whoever recited the hymn was thus facing Osiris himself, seated on his throne in Naref. For a comprehensive study of the toponym and its association with Osiris, see most recently Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2017.

it also reflects the tomb owner's passage from life to death to rejuvenation. The two themes are of course not mutually exclusive; in fact, in a funerary setting, the daily cycle of the sun and the metaphorical journey of the deceased were very much intertwined. It was after all the deceased's wish to join the sun god in his daily journey and to appear rejuvenated with the rising sun every morning.

Let us now turn to the veneration of the gods. This theme is first met on the west wall of the courtyard, where the façade of the tomb chapel was embellished with two monumental stelae set on low bases. The discoloration visible on the limestone bases and on the adjoining, plastered mud-brick wall bears witness to their former presence. A large fragment of the southern stela **[1]** has been identified in a museum collection. The near-complete hieroglyphic text carved on its surface can be identified as a series of hymns to the sun god. Out of a reconstructed number of 15 lines of text, only the first one is now missing. Parallels for the stela of Ry suggest that the now-missing upper part was shaped as a lunette that contained a mirrored scene depicting the tomb owner standing in adoration before the gods Re-Horakhte and Re-Atum, the rising and the setting sun. It is likely that the stela's pendant on the north side of the doorway had the same shape, and that its contents were comparable.

In the immediate vicinity of the tomb of Ry, there are two parallels for the two stelae flanking the entrance to the tomb chapel. The first is found merely a few metres to the west, where Raia erected two stelae flanking the entrance of the tomb built for his father, Pay.⁶⁷ The southern stela is inscribed with hymns to Osiris and the northern one to Re-Horakhte. The scenes in the lunette of the two stelae depict Raia in adoration before a deity, Osiris (south) and Re-Horakhte (north). The second parallel can be found west of Pay and Raia, in the tomb of Iniua,⁶⁸ another contemporary of Ry. Both stelae of Iniua were dedicated to the sun god, and the lunette of the completely preserved northern specimen contains a mirrored scene depicting Iniua standing in adoration before Re-Horakhte and Re-Atum.⁶⁹ Only fragments of the southern stela have been recovered during excavation. The fragments of the hieroglyphic inscription and the scene carved in the lunette indicate that the contents of its texts and images were comparable to its northern pendant. The stelae of Iniua and Raia do not just compare to the form and

placement of Ry's stelae. They also serve as parallels for the selection of hymns (see Table IV.1).

In terms of inscriptional content, iconography, and placement, the close parallels between the stelae of Iniua and the single surviving one of Ry may inform us about the second, now-missing stela of Ry that stood on the north side of the chapel entrance. The parallels suggest that it was likely dedicated to the sun god Re-Horakhte also. In their original setting, flanking the doorway in the western wall of the open courtyard, the two stelae faced east, which means they were oriented towards the rising sun, while the reader of the texts faced west to where the sun sets.

Upon entering the chapel, it becomes clear that the iconography further adheres to a general movement from east to west, as reflected by the individuals depicted in the various wall scenes. Their movement indicates a passage from the world of the living to the realm of the netherworld deities. The offering bearers depicted on the north wall of the entrance doorway **[11]** proceed from east to west. Further offering bearers are depicted on the east wall of the antechapel, north side **[10]**, and the row continues on the adjoining north wall, where the group proceeds towards the deceased couple, Ry and Maia, who are depicted seated at the west end of the antechapel's north wall **[9]**. This scene depicts the act of censuring and libating at the offering table. A similar motif was depicted on the opposite south wall of the antechapel **[3]**, if indeed reconstructed correctly. The blocks positioned perpendicularly to the north and south walls of the antechapel depict the tomb owner as if 'leaving' the respective offering scenes and moving on towards the inner chapel. There, the scene in the upper register of the north wall **[7]** depicts the deceased couple standing in adoration before the god Re-Horakhte. The scene in the upper register of the south wall presumably held a similar scene. That scene would have depicted the deceased couple in adoration before the god Osiris or, perhaps more likely, Re-Atum. The offering bearers that we have met in the east part of the tomb 'reappear' in the low register beneath the offering scenes of the inner chapel. They continue their east-west movement first observed in the entrance doorway. The north and south group of offering bearers proceed towards the chapel's west wall, which is where the monolithic stela **[6]** once stood. Now that we know the original spatial setting of the dispersed blocks, it is possible to explain the unique representation of the deceased couple sitting vis-à-vis at a single offering table. The scene in the lower register of the stela was situated at the same level as the offering bearers on the adjoining north and south walls, and the three reliefs form a sort of a triptych, being part of a larger composition. Thus, offering bearers depicted on the north and south wall each proceed towards one of the deceased couples sitting at the offering table: those on the south wall are linked to the couple on the left, and those on the

67 Raven 2005, 23–24 [5–6], pls. 17–19. The two stelae were found by Carl Richard Lepsius in 1843 and subsequently taken to the Berlin Egyptian Museum, inv. nos. ÄM 7270–7271. Pay was a contemporary of Ry, while Raia erected the stelae and built an additional forecourt after Ry had his tomb constructed.

68 Schneider 2012, 71–75 [7–8], figs. III.23–24 (the published photographs and line drawings are of little use).

69 Stela Cairo, Egyptian Museum JE 10079.

north to the couple on the right. While the scenes in the lower registers of the chapel's decoration focus on the cult for the deceased, those in the upper registers focus on the veneration of the gods by the deceased. The two manifestations of the sun god are depicted on the side walls, whereas the god of the Netherworld, Osiris, features prominently on the west wall, in the upper register of stela [6]. The gods Osiris, Isis and Nephthys are mentioned as part of the offering formulae inscribed in the lowermost part of the stela, thus tying the two scenes above together. The text also makes reference to the west and east, albeit implicitly, as the wishes are expressed for the deceased to be 'sailing downstream and upstream in the Field of Rushes' (a place usually associated with the realm of Osiris) and to be 'going forth by day as a follower of Horus in order to see Re as he rises' in the east.

The only apparently divergent orientation of a scene is found on the south wall of the entrance, scene [2]. Presumably, it depicts the tomb owner, Ry, and his wife, Maia, seated and facing east.⁷⁰ Of course the two can be seen elsewhere in the tomb facing east; however, in those instances, they were depicted as the recipients of offerings brought by individuals moving in a westward direction. In scene [2], on the other hand, we can probably rule out the possibility that they were in the company of others. There simply does not seem to be enough space in front (east) of the surviving relief block to accommodate more figures. The limited space would allow for the depiction of an offering table at the most. The eastward (or outward) orientation of the two figures (Ry and Maia) caters to the tomb's living visitors, who were (ideally) meant to bring foodstuffs (in perpetuity). Thus, the eastward orientation is here implied by the movement of the beholder. A parallel for this scene is found in the lower part of the south wall of Iniua's antechapel.⁷¹ That scene is accompanied by an offering text (reading: 'That which comes forth upon the altar of Ptah...') and two sons of the deceased bringing offerings. The hieroglyphic text written over the offering table reads: 'May you receive a thousand pieces of everything'. The upper register of the same wall depicted the deceased couple (i.e. Iniua and his wife Iuy) standing in adoration, facing east (i.e. outward). Scenes depicting the deceased leaving their tomb in a gesture of adoration, often accompanied by a text in praise of the sun god Re-Horakhte, are not uncommon. However, it is not likely that a similar scene was included above scene [2], because the dimensions of the surviving remains of the seated tomb owner suggest the figure measured c. 75 cm high, which means the top of the seated man's head was

at c. 135 cm above floor level, merely 45 cm below the level of the ceiling (reconstructed at 180 cm, see below). Thus, at the most, a few short columns of text could be hypothesised in the space remaining in the upper part of the wall. Such a text may have carried a message similar to that found in the tomb of Iniua just mentioned, written over the offering table and expressing the wish that the deceased may receive many offerings for ever. The wall on the opposite side of the entrance doorway [11], containing a row of offering bearers, could have been divided in two registers. On present evidence, it is impossible to suggest what sort of iconographic motif such an upper register may have held.

The iconography of scene [9], depicting the purification of the deceased couple accompanied by a text excerpt of BD spell 149l, is of particular interest. To my knowledge, there exists no parallel for BD 149 spells or their accompanying vignettes in the iconographic programme of a single New Kingdom tomb at Saqqara.⁷² As a matter of fact, the spell has not been widely observed outside of the Memphite necropolis either. Only four Theban tombs are known to have included text excerpts and/or vignettes illustrating BD 149.⁷³ If we consider media other than tomb walls, it is interesting to note that in the late 18th Dynasty BD manuscripts were often concluded with exactly this chapter, entitled 'Spells for knowing the mounds of the house of Osiris in the Field of Rushes'.⁷⁴ It has also been noted that some BD papyrus manuscripts add to it a final vignette showing the rising of the sun.⁷⁵ This goes to show that, supposedly, the deceased passes the underworld mounds in the great bark of Re and, together with Re,

70 The limited available space to the east of the surviving relief fragment suggests that they were the sole individuals depicted in this scene.

71 Schneider 2012, 80–81, scene [15], fig. III.20, pl. I [lower].

72 For a comprehensive study of BD vignettes and texts in the iconographic programmes of New Kingdom tombs at Saqqara, see Twiston Davies [in preparation] (BD 149 is treated in Chapter 4.3).

73 TT 11, Djehuty, Dra Abu el-Naga North, 18th Dynasty, *temp.* Hatshepsut-Thutmose III/Amenhotep II (Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2019, 152; Galán 2014, 257); TT 32, Thutmose III, Khokha, 19th Dynasty, *temp.* Ramesses II (Kákosy 2004, 232–233, fig. on p. 53); TT 353, Senenmut, Deir el-Bahri, 18th Dynasty, *temp.* Hatshepsut (Dorman 1991, 126–133; BD 149l: 131, pl. 73); TT 359, Inherkhau, Deir el-Medina, 20th Dynasty, *temp.* Ramesses III–IV (Saleh 1984, 83; exclusively vignettes, illustrating four mounds).

74 See e.g. Milde 1991, 113. Compare also the papyrus of Yuya, in which BD 149–150 (texts and vignettes) feature quite elaborately: Davis 1908, pls. 30–35. In the Ramesside period, the 'preferred choice' of the final vignette includes BD 110 (depicting the Fields of Iaru) and BD 186 (depicting the Hathor cow emerging from the West Mountain, protecting the tomb chapel). They replace the fiery and difficult to traverse regions of the underworld as illustrated by BD 149. The regions described in BD 149 are said to be the BD version of the Two Ways of Rosetau, separated by the Lake of Fire, as described in the CT (Milde 1994, 32–33). Lucarelli 2006, 173–174, points to the problematic fact that the mounds thus described are not at all pleasant places, whereas their placement at the end of BD manuscripts seems to suggest that they form the final point of destination of the deceased.

75 Milde 1991, 114.

enters the horizon after completing the nocturnal journey. Given the fact that, in contemporary papyrus manuscripts, the spell was selected to conclude the document, and that the deceased passes the domain of Osiris and enters the horizon with the sun god, rejuvenated, the spell seems rather fit for inclusion in this specific architectural space, the antechapel. In the chapel proper, onward to the west, the deceased can be seen as he venerates the netherworld deities, Osiris and Re-Horakhte. It is where he remains forever in their presence. In the antechapel, the deceased is shown on his way to those netherworld deities. As such, the antechapel may perhaps be seen as a space of transition between the world of the living (outside, i.e. the open courtyard) and the realm of the Netherworld deities.⁷⁶

In order for the deceased to make this transition and reach those deities, rituals such as the Opening of the Mouth were performed on the mummy. Such rituals took place in the open courtyard of the tomb, preceding the chapel, as is frequently illustrated in tomb scenes.⁷⁷ There seems to have been a preference to depict scenes from the Ritual of Opening the Mouth on the north walls of tombs, possibly because the mummy had to face south during the ritual.⁷⁸ The relationship between the Ritual of Opening the Mouth and the act of purification of the mummy (or statue) and the offering table is nicely illustrated on a 19th-Dynasty stela from Deir el-Medina, dated to the reign of

Ramesses II.⁷⁹ The lower register of the stela made for a sculptor named Qen depicts the ritual performed by his son on his mummy, standing in front of the tomb chapel. The upper register of the stela shows the son, Merymery, purifying his deceased parents by pouring water from a *nemset* jar. As in scene [9] of Ry, the wavy lines of water extend over the seated deceased couple. According to the principles of Egyptian art, and in conceptualising the stela as a model of the entire tomb,⁸⁰ the scene in the lower register may be situated spatially closer to the beholder than the scene in the upper register. As such, the iconography offers an excellent illustration of the course of events during the Ritual of Opening the Mouth, or rather, a selection of various stages of this elaborate and complex ritual, which also included multiple acts of offering and the purification of the offering table.⁸¹

The spatial arrangement of the scenes in the tomb of Ry shows that, following the purification and bringing of offerings,⁸² the deceased tomb owner is ready to proceed to the west, where he will be able to give reverence to the Netherworld deities. The BD spell carved over the scene of purification further emphasises the transformation that he underwent. The text claims that Ry, now addressed as an 'Osiris' and an 'embalmed one', has transformed into a goose, a reference to the sun god, and has ascended to the sky ready to partake in the offerings in the domain of Osiris – another sign of the unification of the latter god with Re. Following the purification ritual, here performed by members of Ry's social circle (or household), Ry reappears on the west wall of the antechapel, depicted in a striding pose as he faces the doorway into the inner sanctuary, which he is about to enter (scene [8]). Inside the westernmost part of the chapel, Ry and Maia face Re-Horakhte, the morning sun, and make adoration before the god (scene [7]). A similar scenario will have unfolded on the south walls of the antechapel and inner chapel (scenes [3–5]). There, Ry and Maia likely stood in adoration before Osiris or Re-Atum, the evening sun. The two manifestations of the sun are also the subject of the hymns carved on the stela(e) flanking the entrance to the west chapel. The stela set against the chapel's west wall

76 In this respect, it is noteworthy that the tomb chapel of Iniua includes two nearly identical scenes of the tomb owner seated at an offering table with his wife standing behind him. The two scenes are situated on the south walls of the antechapel and inner chapel, respectively. The scene in the inner chapel depicts Iniua sporting a short beard, indicating that he attained a different status compared to the scene in the antechapel, which shows him without that beard. While the antechapel may have been a space of transition, we should not forget that the necropolis itself was also (or perhaps first and foremost) the abode of several deities. It means that the tomb was not just considered a 'vehicle' to attain closeness to the gods, it was also a means to anchor in this landscape a permanent house (a *hwt n.t nhh*, 'house of eternity') amongst the gods.

77 See, for example, the relief-decorated blocks from the Saqqara tomb of NN, joining blocks Havana, Museo Nacional de Belles Artes 94-15 and Birmingham, City Museums 688'66 (late 18th Dynasty, *temp.* Horemheb/ early 19th Dynasty: Álvarez Sosa 2015, 126–128; Martin 1987, 14, [21–22], pl. 8). For Theban examples, see e.g. the scenes published in Hofmann 2004: Amenmose, TT 19 (pl. 6, fig. 14); Khons, TT 31 (pl. 7, fig. 15); Amenemone, TT 277 (pl. 11, fig. 31); Ramose, TT 250 (pl. 16, fig. 47); Kenro, TT 178 (pl. 25, fig. 69). In the tomb of Ry's necropolis neighbour to the north, Meryneith, the Ritual of Opening the Mouth is depicted on the north wall of the courtyard (Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scenes [28–30]).

78 I owe this observation to Maarten Raven. Cf. Otto 1960, II, 36–37.

79 Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet AA.d.11 (h. 50 cm, w. 30.2 cm): Davies 1999, 176–178; Staring 2020, fig. 28; Manniche 2004, 200, no. 90. For the ritual of offering and purification, compare the advanced stages of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony: Otto 1960, 153–155, scenes 69A–C (A and B: glorifications and libation; C list of offerings; see also Quack 2022, 74).

80 Following Assmann 2003, 48.

81 See the summary of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth in Quack 2022, 73–74. The scenes of purification of the offering table are numbered 68, 65A, 65B, 63A (following the numbering introduced by Otto 1960).

82 Which, it should be added, need not necessarily be part of the Ritual of Opening the Mouth.

depicts the deceased couple venerating Osiris. Below that scene, the mirrored image of Ry and Maia shows them sitting at an offering table. They receive food offerings brought to them by the offering bearers depicted on the north and south walls of the inner chapel. From the above interpretation it follows that the wall scenes in the tomb chapel of Ry should be seen in the context of the solar-Osirian union, which includes the incorporation of the deceased and his family in this cosmological cycle.⁸³ A more comprehensive examination and deeper analysis of this subject are of course needed, but fall beyond the scope of the present publication.

The iconographic programme of Ry's tomb compares well with two other tombs situated in the Memphite necropolis, namely Pay, the overseer of the royal household (*temp.* Tutankhamun),⁸⁴ and Paatenemheb, the royal butler (*temp.* Tutankhamun–Horemheb).⁸⁵ The former tomb is located immediately west of Ry, while the precise location of the latter is lost.⁸⁶ The size and architectural layout of the three tomb chapels differ,⁸⁷ yet certain aspects of their iconographic programmes agree quite well. Most notably, the west walls of the chapels of Pay and Paatenemheb are decorated with scenes depicting the respective tomb owners and their spouses

in adoration before a deity.⁸⁸ These mirrored scenes are situated to either side of the stela set in the chapel's west wall.⁸⁹ The chapels of Pay and Paatenemheb allow for such a layout because they are broader than Ry's. Like Ry's, the walls of the chapels of Pay and Paatenemheb are divided in two registers. Thus, the lower registers of the walls adjoining the stela of Paatenemheb each depict a row of offering bearers; these are situated below the scenes of the deceased couple venerating the gods. The walls adjoining the stela of Pay depict scenes of the tomb owner kneeling and presenting trays with offerings before various columns of hieroglyphic text identified as hymns to the sun god. On the north and south walls of their (inner) chapels, the two contemporaries of Ry include scenes of the deceased couple seated before an offering table. Their overall compositions differ, however. For example, the north wall of the chapel of Paatenemheb includes a group of musicians along with the so-called 'blind' harper and a number of framed columns of hieroglyphic text recording an excerpted version of the Harper's Song (see *infra*, Chapter VI, Scene [3]).⁹⁰ The tomb of Pay offers even more parallels for the chapel of Ry. The mirrored scenes [4] and [8] depicting the tomb owner striding towards the inner chapel are also found on the east faces of Pay's screen walls (i.e. forming the west wall of the antechapel).⁹¹ Thus, like Ry, Pay can be seen striding towards (the doorway to) the inner chapel, turning away from the offering scenes on the abutting north and south walls of the antechapel. In addition to the striding figures of Pay, the protruding doorjambs are each inscribed with four columns of hieroglyphic text (offering formulae and hymns to the sun god). A final parallel, concerning Ry scene [3] (situated on the south wall of his antechapel), can be observed on the south wall of Pay's courtyard, west end. Here we see the

83 See e.g. Weiss 2017, 215–229, with further references to recent scholarship on the subject. Weiss (*ibid.*, 218) notes that for the New Kingdom only a handful of examples are known for the combined worship of Osiris and Re on a single stela, and that they all derive from Saqqara, perhaps pointing to a Memphite tradition. The disposition of the adoration scenes of Re and Osiris in the chapel of Ry likely hints at the same underlying concept, even though the scenes are differently arranged, i.e. not together on one stela, but displayed on three walls which together form the focus of the cult chapel. Note, for example, that the offering formulae framing the stela (ÄM 7290) invoke Osiris and Re-Horakhte, respectively.

84 See Raven 2005, 36–38 [53, 55], pls. 56–57.

85 See Boeser 1911, 1–5, pls. 1–18.

86 The relief-decorated limestone blocks of the tomb's chapel, along with the monolithic stela and two papyriform columns, form part of the collection of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, inv. nos. AMT 1–35 (blocks and columns) and AP 52 (stela). Given the date and office title of the tomb owner, this tomb should probably be located in close proximity to that of Ry, which is in turn situated close to the tomb of the Amarna/post-Amarna period royal butler Ptahemwia (for which, see Raven 2020a).

87 The chapel of Pay is broader than Ry's, measuring 3 m deep and 2.9 m wide. Two so-called screen walls divide the chapel area in two, thus creating an antechapel and inner chapel. The measurements of the chapel of Paatenemheb differ not much, as it is 2.8 m deep and 3.18 m wide. There is no differentiation between antechapel and inner chapel. Note that the shape and dimensions agree quite well with the chapel area of the anonymous tomb located east of Ry, now usually referred to as the 'tomb of Sethnakht' (after a later user of the burial chamber), see: Raven 2020a, 55–56, fig. III.22. Its internal dimensions are: 2.51 m deep and 3.14 m wide.

88 In case of the chapel of Paatenemheb, the upper row of blocks is missing, and therefore we cannot identify the deities. In the tomb of Pay, only the deity depicted on the north side has been partly preserved, again making it impossible to identify the god.

89 The recessed planes of the stelae of Pay and Paatenemheb are both carved in raised relief (texts incised). In the upper register, Pay is depicted (twice) standing in adoration before Osiris (left) and Re-Horakhte (right). Paatenemheb, on the other hand, is standing in adoration, with his wife, Typwy, before Osiris only. Osiris is enthroned under a canopy supported by poles and a base shaped as the hieroglyphic sign for *mꜣꜥ*, and all along the roof are cobras (uraei) each supporting a sun disk. The canopy of Ry displays largely the same iconography. The only major difference is observed in the space in front of Osiris. On the stela of Paatenemheb, the four sons of Horus are depicted standing atop a lotus flower, whereas the stela of Ry depicts the *imiut* symbol.

90 Twiston Davies 2019.

91 Note that the west face of the same screen walls depict the tomb owner striding in the opposite direction, as if exiting the chapel. In so doing, he is given assorted items by his servants. The same motif is also depicted on the north end of the east wall of the chapel of Paatenemheb.

tomb owner seated at an offering table while his spouse stands behind him, folding her arm over her chest.⁹² The tomb of Iniuiia offers even two examples of this motif. The scene is depicted on the south walls of the antechapel⁹³ and inner chapel (the latter minus the offering bearers).⁹⁴

More parallels might be expected in the tombs that stood in the vicinity but are now lost. Foremost amongst this large group of lost tombs is that of Amenemone, the late 18th-Dynasty general of the army. He was not just Ry's contemporary, but also a higher-ranking colleague of his in the military. Early 19th-century diggers of antiquities took numerous relief-decorated blocks from the tomb, and these items have been subsequently dispersed over various public and private collections around the globe.⁹⁵ Parallels that can be noted despite the fragmentary nature of the corpus include the wife of Amenemone, Takha, standing behind her seated husband and folding her arm over her chest (compare scene [3]),⁹⁶ and a relief depicting Amenemone standing before an offering table while raising one hand in adoration (undoubtedly before a deity) and holding various papyrus stalks in the other (compare scene [7]).⁹⁷ The parallels in the tomb of Ry and others can, in turn, help to virtually reconstruct the iconographic programme of Amenemone's tomb. Thus, the 'unique' representation on the stela, scene [6], of Ry and Maia sitting vis-à-vis at a single offering table allows for the reconstruction of Amenemone's stela, presumed lost. Four dispersed relief fragments now held in museum collections can be puzzled together. The fragments now held in Copenhagen and Paris are of particular interest, as these must have formed part of the stela's middle section, depicting Amenemone and his mother Depet sitting

vis-à-vis at a single offering table.⁹⁸ The parallel forges a strong link between the tombs of Ry and Amenemone. The parallels suggest that the iconographic programmes of the two tombs were perhaps comparable overall.

To conclude the assessment of the chapel's iconographic programme, let us now focus on one specific motif, namely the depiction of the spouse seated on a stool underneath (or rather, besides) the chair of the tomb owner.⁹⁹ There are three Memphite parallels for Maia seated on a stool underneath the lion-legged chair of Ry in scene [2]. These parallels are all situated close in date to the making of his tomb, and it is not unthinkable that (one of) the scenes served as inspiration for the conceptual artist responsible for the design of the iconographic programme of the tomb of Ry (if not the same artist worked in more than one of these tombs). The first parallel is found close by, less than 20 m to the north, in the tomb of the immediate neighbour, Meryneith.¹⁰⁰ There, the west wall of the courtyard, between the central and north chapel, includes a scene (now largely lost) depicting the couple probably seated under a canopy. Meryneith sits on a chair (not visible), his feet placed on a foot rest. His wife, Anuy, is depicted at a much smaller scale, and sits beside him on a stool with turned legs and thick seat cushion. She wears the same long dress as Maia, which in Anuy's case almost completely covers the feet. Interestingly, the lower hem covering the feet has been identified as a secondary correction in gypsum; originally, the lower hem reached to the ankles and the feet were left bare. The change reflects a change in fashion. The scene was carved in

92 Raven 2005, 29–30, [22], pls. 34–35.

93 Schneider 2012, 80–81, [15], fig. III.30, pl. 1.

94 Schneider 2012, 87–88, [20], fig. III.35, pl. 7.

95 The corpus of reliefs of Amenemone has been collected by Djuževa 2000, who also offered a proposal for their spatial arrangement within the tomb's superstructure. It should be noted that this reconstruction could be amended following the rediscovery and publication of various contemporary tombs since 2000, most of them located in the Unas South Cemetery.

96 Geneva, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art FGA-ARCH-EG-0656 (acquired from Phoenix Ancient Art, Geneva, 2015; ex-coll. K. & B. Deppert, before 1970; unpublished). Note that this fragment contains no text; however, the style strongly points in the direction of Amenemone.

97 Fragments Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian 205 and Paris, Musée Rodin Co. 06417. The latter fragment preserved no name or title, see: Djuževa 2000, 82, Dok. 18 (listed as Paris, private collection); Carpano 1994, 63, cat. no. 46, fig. 29, pl. 9 (already pointing to the Ry material for a parallel). The parallels in the tomb of Ry and others can, in turn, help to virtually reconstruct the iconographic programme of Amenemone's tomb.

98 The two fragments are discussed in Djuževa 2000: Dok. 5, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. no. ÆIN 715 ; Dok. 6, Paris, Musée du Louvre inv. no. 237 = Musée Rodin inv. no. Co. 03076. Djuževa suggested the reliefs marked the jambs on either side of the entrance into the tomb's central chapel, though not vis-à-vis but positioned back-to-back: Djuževa 2000, 86–87, plan on pl. 4. Note that Carpano 1994, 63 (cat. no. 46, fig. 29, pl. 9) already pointed to the Ry material for a parallel of the block now held in Paris. The third relief is also discussed in Djuževa 2000: Dok. 18, Paris, Musée Rodin inv. no. Co. 06417 (listed as 'Paris, private collection'). The fourth fragment, not listed by Djuževa, is Paris, Musée du Louvre inv. no. C. 143 (PM 8.4, 287, no. 803-055-844). A publication of Amenemone's stela is in preparation by the present author. For a full list of dispersed tomb elements, see: Staring 2023, 309–310 (tomb no. 005/USC).

99 There are also examples of females depicted seated on a cushion under (or rather besides) the chair upon which the tomb owner is seated. See e.g., Amenemone the goldsmith (relief Cairo T 27.6.24.2: Ockinga 2004, scene [11], pl. 66); Amenemone the army general (Leiden RA39a: Schneider 1985, fig. 6, Djuževa 2000, Dok. 14; the relief was reserved for Caspar Reuvens [Leiden] by Jean-Emile Humbert, who had purchased it in Livorno, 1831; however, the block got lost during transport over sea and is now only known by a facsimile drawing made by Reghini Costa in 1834); Paatenemheb (Leiden AMT 1–35, two scenes, each showing two seated daughters).

100 Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 109, scene [23].

between years 5 and 9 of Akhenaten ('Phase I'), and the correction may have been made during the early years of Tutankhamun ('Phase III'). In the case of the scene in the tomb of Ry, the lower hem of the long dress was intended to cover the feet from the beginning (although the feet are visible in carving), which therefore may reflect the fashion of the early years of Tutankhamun.¹⁰¹ The posture of Anuy and Maia also differs somewhat. Anuy holds a lotus flower flanked by two buds, which she rests on her lap, while she clasps the calf of her husband with the other hand. Maia rests her left hand on her knee, while in her right hand she presumably holds a lotus flower, which she brings to her nose. The latter can also be observed in the second parallel, a relief block (Cairo T 3.7.24.12) from the lost tomb of Ptahmay, the chief of makers of gold leaf of the temple of Aten.¹⁰² The scene shows Ptahankh, son of Ptahmay, seated on a stool (without a seat cushion) situated underneath (besides) the chair of his mother, Ty. Ptahankh rests one hand on his knee and with his other hand brings a lotus flower to his nose. The third parallel can be found on the rectangular stela (Cairo CG 34049) of Ahmose, a scribe and reckoner of cattle (var. of the overseer of the seal) dated to the late 18th-Dynasty reign of Amenhotep III.¹⁰³ The scene shows an anonymous female seated on a stool (without seat cushion) underneath the chair of a lady named Puhu, probably her mother, the wife of Ahmose.¹⁰⁴ The anonymous female rests one hand on her knee and with the other hand brings a lotus flower to her nose. The lower hem of her dress reaches to the ankles, thus leaving the feet uncovered.

No two tombs within the corpus of more than 500 such structures built during the New Kingdom at Saqqara were identical.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the select parallels noted in neighbouring tombs indicate that the iconographic

programme devised for the tomb of Ry was thematically closely linked to those designed for his contemporary peers. Yet despite the similarities, the tomb of Ry clearly stood out. In terms of architectural layout and iconographic content it conformed to contemporary elite fashion, while at the same time, the commissioning patron, together with the makers of his funerary monument – foremost amongst whom was undoubtedly the conceptual artist – intended to distinguish it from those that were (being) made by others belonging to the same social stratum. The similarities noted in the iconography, and those that will be noted in the section on style (*infra*, § 3.3), invite us to also take a closer look at the makers of the relief decoration, and ask if (some of) these structures were perhaps made by the same craftsmen and artists (*infra*, § 3.4).

The tomb's relief decoration offers no information about Ry's personal life and career, and it is at present unknown if texts or scenes on that subject were ever included on the walls currently deprived of their relief-decorated blocks. However, if we take into consideration that the potentially available wall surface for such scenes is rather limited, this option should probably be ruled out.¹⁰⁶ If such scenes were indeed absent from Ry's iconographic programme, he would not have been alone in omitting such information from his tomb; a glance at the contemporary post-Amarna period tombs in this part of the necropolis shows that such scenes were not included in the funerary

101 Also compare to the dress worn by Maia in scene [9], Berlin ÄM 7278.

102 The tomb has long been situated at Giza (see e.g., Zivie 1975, 301–303, no. 5, pl. 56), although it is more likely that it stood in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery at Saqqara; see Staring 2021, 37–41. Meryneith would have been Ptahmay's superior in the Memphite temple of Aten, and it is possible that the same artists were responsible for the making of the relief decoration in both tombs. The relief style of Ptahmay's block corresponds to Meryneith's 'Phase II', which dates between year 9 of Akhenaten and the early years of Tutankhamun.

103 Found at Saqqara in January 1862 by Luigi Vassalli, assistant of Auguste Mariette. The precise find spot is not known. See PM III/2, 736; Mariette 1872–1889, 18, pl. 56 [left]; Lacau 1909–1916, 84–86, pl. 29; Pasquali 2017, 571.

104 The stela also depicts a man named Ry (who, on present evidence, cannot be identified as 'our' Ry), who bears the title of child of the nursery (*hrd n.y k3p*). He sits beside his mother, Puhu. This lady might be the same as Ahmose's wife, making Ry their son. Or, alternatively, there were two ladies named Puhu, one of them being the mother of Ry and Ahmose, making them brothers.

105 For this number, see Staring 2023.

106 It is tempting to assign relief 2015-R5 (see *infra*, Chapter VII, [41]) to the tomb of Ry also. After all, the block was found in the fill of his tomb shaft and depicts a high-ranking military official wearing a three-row *shebyu* collar (Gold of Honour). The style is comparable to that observed in the reliefs of Ry; however, looking at the scene's composition, with the figures facing right and a block frieze on the left-hand side, with a blank strip to the left to which another block must have abutted, precludes its positioning in the tomb of Ry. The scene displays one noteworthy stylistic characteristic that allows to link it to the tomb of Horemheb: the representation of the near and far hemline of the sleeves of the garment worn by the main figure. The double hemline produces the impression of a representation in perspective. Berlandini (1976, 311) was the first to observe this trait in the reliefs of Amenemone, the overseer of craftsmen and chief of goldsmiths, where apart from the sleeves, also the underside of the long kilt is variously represented with a double hemline (see Ockinga 2004, 35; and now also the tomb of Meryneith: Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scene [27] and p. 185). In the tomb of Amenemone, the double hemline of the sleeves is visible in the stela, Cairo T 10.6.24.4 (Ockinga 2004, scene [1], pls. 5, 6b, 7, 55) and relief Cairo JE 11975 (Ockinga 2004, scene [2], pls. 8, 56), each time associated with the figure of the tomb owner. The only tomb in the Unas South Cemetery displaying this stylistic characteristic, is that of Horemheb, although only in scenes located in the inner courtyard, which was decorated first, early in the reign of Tutankhamun (see Martin 1989, scenes [69], [70], [76]). Again, this feature is associated exclusively with the figures of the tomb owner. So, based on this stylistic feature alone, the block could be tentatively assigned to the tomb of Horemheb, although it is unclear where the block should be positioned.

monuments of Pay and Ramose,¹⁰⁷ and they are equally absent from the tomb of Amenemone located at a larger distance in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery. On the other hand, the tombs of Horemheb, Maya, Iniua, Ptahemwia and Meryneith all have scenes pertaining to the daily life professional activities of their commissioning patrons.

3.3. *Style*

The following discussion of style adheres to the descriptive analysis of tangible evidence as introduced for the present Expedition in the publication of the tomb of Pay and Raia at Saqqara,¹⁰⁸ and primarily focuses on the proportions of the human body, hair styles, and clothing. The proportions of the human body as rendered in Egyptian art were subject to change during the period of the late 18th to the 19th Dynasty, while hair styles and clothing were particularly fashion-sensitive at all times. Therefore, all three aspects serve well to date certain representations and compare them to those found in other tombs at Saqqara and beyond. Formal descriptions of style do not necessarily reveal anything about the people who made the carvings, because style is very much interwoven with decorum and expectation. However, since ‘no designer can make bad workmen produce good workmanship’,¹⁰⁹ the makers of the reliefs affected to a large degree how contemporary ideas of style (the intentions of the designer) were translated in stone. The veil of the makers of the relief decoration will be lifted (if only partially) by including a discussion of workmanship, which follows in §3.4. This study will show that, even though the iconographic programme was designed as a unity, the workmanship exhibited in the various scenes differs. The observed differences, such as in aptitude, may hint at the involvement of different ‘hands’ that created the reliefs.

The present analysis starts with an evaluation of the proportions of the human body as represented in the tomb of Ry. These were found to conform to those typically employed in the post-Amarna period, reflecting a ‘return’ to the art of the late 18th Dynasty before King Akhenaten. It means that the standing figures are based on a hypothetical¹¹⁰ 18-square grid, and those seated on a 14-square grid.¹¹¹ Throughout the tomb of Ry, the hair lines of standing figures are on horizontal 18 and the height of the lower legs (conforming to the height of the line above the knee, at horizontal 6) equals to one third

of the full height to the hair line.¹¹² The lower border of the buttocks varies from a position just above horizontal 9 (e.g. the officiant Maia in scene [9]) to a position at horizontal 10 (e.g. Ry in adoration before Osiris in scene [6]). The bottom of the belly fold and the convexity of the buttocks lies at horizontal 11 (or just below 11, e.g. Ry in adoration before Re-Horakhte in scene [7]), and the chest at 14. The junction of the neck and the front shoulder lies near horizontal 16 (e.g. Ry in scene [6] and the offering bearer in scene [10]) or between 15 and 16 (scenes [7] and [9]). In the latter examples, the heads of the figures (of Ry and the officiant Maia, respectively) are 2.5 squares from the hairline to the junction of the neck and shoulders, with horizontal 16 running through their throats. These proportions remind us of the large Amarna heads.¹¹³

More remainders of the Amarna period can be spotted, for example the marked difference in the length of the male and female tomb owners.¹¹⁴ The difference in height between the figures of Ry and Maia is most pronounced in the scene in the upper register of stela [6], depicting the two standing in adoration before Osiris. The top of Maia’s head reaches to a level below the shoulder of her husband Ry. The difference is a little less pronounced in the double offering table scene in the register below, which depicts them both seated. However, something else strikes the eye in that scene, namely the fact that the two depictions of Maia are of a different size. Her figure on the left-hand side of the offering table is distinctly smaller than her image to the right. Apart from their sizes, the physiognomy of their faces differs also.¹¹⁵ For instance, in the right-hand image the line from her forehead to the tip of her nose smoothly curves outward, whereas that of her mirrored image on the left runs in a near-straight line. In addition, on the left, part of her eye disappears under her heavy wig, which is not the case with the figure on the right-hand side. One may also note clear differences in the physiognomy of the faces of Ry as depicted in the same scene, for example the shape of his nose. The tip of the nose of the figure on the right is fairly rounded, whereas that on the left is rather pointed. Bearing in mind that it would have been nearly impossible (and perhaps not desirable either) to create two identical faces for both couples, one wonders if the marked differences are the result of two different sculptors who worked on the scene. One may also consider the possibility that the different orientations of the figures simply resulted in two different renderings of the faces,

107 However, one should keep in mind that the iconographic programmes of both tombs were not completely preserved.

108 Raven 2005, 53–56.

109 Pye 1968, 17, cited by Russell 2021, 71.

110 No actual traces of such a grid have been observed.

111 In contrast, during the Amarna period, the standing and seated figures were drawn according to a 20-square and 15-square grid respectively. See Robins 1994a, Chapter 5 and Section 6.7.

112 Only measurable when not obscured from view by the garments worn by the respective figures.

113 These proportions are also observed in the seated figure of Ry in scene [9].

114 Compare, for example, the depiction of Meryneith and Anuy (Phase 2): Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scene [29].

115 Compare to the relief decoration in the tomb of Iniua, scene [21a], pl. 10 and scene [19], pl. 9.

because the artist was used to (or better skilled at) creating figures facing either left or right.

A few concluding observations regarding the anatomy of the figures firmly situate the making of the reliefs in the immediate post-Amarna period. The first notes relate to the physiognomy of the figures' faces. These include the finely carved, almost 'soft' facial features of Ry and Maia such as visible in the upper register of scene [6]. In the lower register of the same scene, we have seen that the shapes of the foreheads and noses of the two couples differ markedly, and the two styles may be symptomatic of the time of their creation, which was a period of transition from the Amarna to the post-Amarna period. Such differences have also been observed in the depictions of Ptahemwia, the royal butler,¹¹⁶ in his tomb situated north-east of that of Ry, and the same can be seen when comparing the reliefs of the inner and antechapel of Iniua, situated to the west of Ry's.¹¹⁷ The physiognomy of the seated couple Ry and Maia on the left compares to those of the earlier carvings in the tombs of Ptahemwia and Iniua, dated to the reign of Akhenaten or very early in that of Tutankhamun respectively, while the couple on the right compares to the later carvings in the tombs of Ptahemwia and Iniua, firmly dated to the reign of Tutankhamun. The physiognomy of the couple on the right side of the offering table in scene [6] has also been adopted to depict the couple elsewhere in their tomb. It is perhaps not too surprising to find two different styles on the cult stela. It was the most essential part of the tomb's superstructure and therefore it would have been made first, early in the reign of Tutankhamun. The conceptual artist(s) and sculptor(s) who worked on the tomb of Ry may have worked previously at Amarna and moved north to Memphis when the former capital of Akhenaten entered a process of abandonment.¹¹⁸ With the abandonment of the capital came a gradual abandonment of the era's characteristic artistic expressions, which resulted in a new style harking back to the time before Akhenaten and wherein traces of the previous Amarna style still resonated. This new style was not created overnight, of course, and the progress of time is thus also clearly reflected in the reliefs of Ry.

In addition to the shape of the noses, one may also point to the sharply marked and full lips with a downward line or depression at the corner, the almond-shaped eyes with a deep incision above the eyelid, sharply pronounced eyebrows, and globular chin.¹¹⁹ The seemingly double chin

of Maia in the upper register of scene [6] finds a parallel in a depiction of Anuy, wife of Meryneith, again in a scene dated to the reign of Tutankhamun.¹²⁰ Furthermore, Ry's breasts are heavy and accentuated by three skin folds, and the bellies of the main figures are full, but do not sag over the waistband of the kilts. These qualities all remind us of the post-Amarna period. Further, the navels are round or drop-shaped, not crescent-shaped as at Amarna.¹²¹ Additional details betraying a date close to the end of the Amarna period in scene [9] are the sagging bellies of the deceased couple, the Amarnesque curvy fingers of Maia, and the pierced earlobe of the servant Ahanefer.

The fingers of Maia in scene [9] execute a very specific embrace. It is rendered in such a way that the left arm of the female is wrapped around the male and her left hand reappears on his chest. This embrace is known from a limited number of representations.¹²² It is much more common for the spouse of the tomb owner to place her hand on his far shoulder. As far as I am aware, there are only three New Kingdom Memphite parallels for the unusual embrace of Maia:

1) Nefertary (also known as Tahesyt), seated, embraces her husband, the overseer of craftsmen and chief of goldsmiths of the Lord of the Two Lands, Amenemone, in a scene on the southern screen wall, east face, of the antechapel, thus facing the entrance to the inner chapel.¹²³ The two sit before an offering table. Nefertary sits on a stool with turned legs and seat cushion, Amenemone (presumably) on a chair. Nefertary, facing right, presses four fingers of her left hand against the chest of Amenemone, just below his nipple, while her thumb faces up. The tomb is located in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery and is dated to the reign of Tutankhamun.

2) Tia, seated, embraces her husband, the lector priest of Amenhotep II, Neferhat. The scene is depicted on the lower register of the stela of their son Ipu, a royal butler whose tomb is lost and who dates to the early reign of Tutankhamun.¹²⁴ The deceased couple is seated before an offering table, while their son, Ipu, libates. Tia, facing left, presses four fingers of her right hand against the chest of Neferhat, just below the nipple, while her thumb juts out. She supports the left lower arm of her husband with her left hand.

116 Raven 2020a, 142 with n. 92.

117 Schneider 2012. Compare, in particular, scenes [15] (pl. 1) in the antechapel and [20] (pl. 8) in the inner chapel, representing the same iconographic motif executed in two different styles.

118 Even if the conceptual artist(s) and sculptor(s) had been stationed at Memphis during that time, they would have adhered to the predominant style of the period.

119 See also Raven 2020a, 142, on Ptahemwia.

120 Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scene [29].

121 The same observations were made in the neighbouring and contemporary tomb of Pay, the overseer of the royal household at Memphis: Raven 2005, 54.

122 See the observations in Staring 2014, 484–487 (embrace no. 4).

123 Relief Munich G1 298: Ockinga 2004, 60–63, scene [6B], pls. 13, 61. This scene measures roughly 40 × 30 cm (h x w).

124 Leiden AP 9: PM VIII/4, no. 803-045-300; Boeser 1913, 4–5, pl. 4. Given the fact that the tomb of the royal butler Ptahemwia, probably Ipu's predecessor in office, lies in the Unas South Cemetery, it is likely that his tomb might be situated there also.

3) Iuy, standing and facing right, embraces her husband, the chief steward of Memphis and overseer of cattle of Amun, Iniuiia.¹²⁵ The tomb of Iniuiia is located ca. 30 m west of that of Ry and dates to the reign of Tutankhamun. Fragments of this scene were found during excavation. The block formed part of the southern screen wall, east face, of the antechapel. Iuy presses four fingers of her left hand against the chest of her husband while her thumb faces up.

Within the corpus of the above scene, the ‘Amarnesque’ hands of Maia find their closest parallel in the hands of Iuy in the tomb of Iniuiia.¹²⁶ It is tempting to regard these rather unusual features as being the products of a single artist. While it may not be too far-fetched to view multiple tombs as the products of a single group of artists, this feature alone cannot be decisive in recognising the hand of an individual artist. The more so if we take a wider view, as parallels can be found outside Memphis. The rock-cut tomb of the royal butler Parennefer at Amarna (TA 07), situated within the south group of tombs at that site, depicts the royal family on the north thickness of the entrance doorway, facing right, as if entering the tomb.¹²⁷ Akhenaten and Nefertiti are engaged in a fairly unusual, intimate embrace. The king wraps his right arm around his spouse and holds her right hand. The fingers of their right hands are clasped. Nefertiti also embraces her husband. She wraps her arm around him and the fingers of her left hand reappear on his chest, just under the armpit, her thumb jutting out. Could the embrace observed in a limited number of elite tombs at Saqqara have been inspired by the imagery of the royal couple at Amarna?¹²⁸ This is not unthinkable, certainly if we bear in mind that an unknown number of artists responsible for the Amarna tombs may have moved to Memphis to work on the private tombs there, in some instances for the same commissioning patrons at both necropolises.¹²⁹ Similarly, the royal butler Parennefer (Amarna tomb TA 07) forges a link to Thebes. It is where he had started building a

tomb (TT 188 in the Asasif) before his move to Amarna.¹³⁰ Construction and decoration of his Theban tomb started early in the reign of Amenhotep IV. At around the same time, the embrace (observed in Ry scene [9]) was also included in the iconographic programme of another tomb situated in the Theban necropolis. The tomb of two chief sculptors Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181 at El-Khokha), dated to the reign of Amenhotep III–IV, displays (or rather displayed) what can now be regarded as the first attestation of this embrace.¹³¹ We may thus tentatively hypothesise that the motif of the embrace observed in the tomb of Ry had been transmitted from Thebes via Amarna to Memphis.¹³² We cannot tell if the same individuals were involved in the process, but this is certainly not unthinkable given their closeness in time and the geographical mobility of artists.

Let us now concentrate on the clothing of the different individuals depicted in the tomb. Ry occurs eleven times, although his representation in scenes [2] and [4] are too fragmentary to be of any relevance to the present discussion. Intact standing figures of Ry occur in scenes [6] and [7], while scene [8] contains only the lower part of the body to the level of the knees; seated figures in scenes [3], [6], and [9]; and kneeling figures in [12] and [13]. He is depicted wearing a total of three different outfits.

The first can be observed in scenes [3], [6] (lower register), [8] (possibly), [9], and [11], where he is depicted wearing a long, pleated bag-tunic without sleeves. A pleated sash kilt has been wrapped around the hips and knotted at the waist.¹³³ The kilt worn in scene [8] is not pleated. Only in scene [9] can we observe the ends of the wrap-around sash kilt with weft-fringe hanging down the front of the tunic. The shorter end of the sash has the appearance of an apron, and displays both the weft-fringe

125 Schneider 2012, 78–79 [13], fig. III.28, pl. 1.

126 One may also compare it to the hand of Anuy in the tomb of her husband Meryneith, Ry’s neighbour to the north: Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 122–123, scene [29].

127 Davies 1908, pls. 3 [right], 8 [left].

128 This imagery is not limited to the iconographic programmes of the private rock-cut tombs. Items such as furniture and decoration of palaces and temples were also a source of such imagery, but these have not survived so well in the archaeological record. See Staring 2021 for examples of iconographic motifs in Saqqara post-Amarna tombs that potentially took inspiration from imagery in the Amarna and post-Amarna royal sphere.

129 Meryneith, Ry’s neighbour to the north, presents one example. He is likely to be identified as Meryre I of tomb TA 04. For a treatment of the arguments in support of and against this identification, see Van Walsem in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 51–53.

130 PM I.1/2, 292–295; Pieke 2021, 110 with references to earlier literature in ns. 7–8.

131 Davies 1925, pls. 5, 6 [right]: south wall, banqueting scene. The depiction of the couple displaying the embrace at the centre of the wall, in the topmost of three superimposed sub-registers, has been lost after the tomb was recorded. The now-missing wall fragment containing the depiction of the couple – a certain Mutemwia and her husband, who is now anonymous and who holds a scribe’s palette – is now held in Hannover, Museum August Kestner, inv. no. 1962-71.

132 Bělohoubková 2021, 94, suggests that the workshop scene of carpenters in the tomb of Huya, steward of the great royal wife Tiy, at Amarna (TA 01) was inspired by the workshop scene in the tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky, thus forging another link between the latter and Amarna.

133 Cf. Raven 2005, 53.

and warp-fringe.¹³⁴ The legs often shimmer through the translucent cloth of the tunic. This has been indicated very subtly in scene [8], where the feet and lower legs are brightly coloured reddish-brown, whereas the part of the legs covered by the kilt have a light, barely visible pinkish colour.

The second type of garment is depicted in scenes [7] and [13]. Ry wears an elaborate garment consisting of a bag tunic and a pleated wrap-around sash kilt of which the longer end is goffered in front.¹³⁵ It is worn in combination with a pointed apron under the sash kilt.¹³⁶ The closest parallel for this garment can be found in the corpus of Amenemone, the general of the army. In a relief now in Lisbon,¹³⁷ Amenemone is depicted wearing exactly the same clothing as he stands in adoration before a deity. As such, the scene presents an almost mirror-image of Ry's scene [7]. Another fragment, now in Paris, depicts Amenemone in the same pose, facing left.¹³⁸ In the tomb of Ry, the officiant Maia wears the same garment in scene [9].

The third garment worn by Ry is found in the upper register of stela [6]. It is a long, pleated bag-tunic without sleeves, in combination with a pleated sash kilt which has been wrapped around the hips and knotted at the waist. The distinguishing feature is the long end of the sash, which is shaped in a semi-circle pointed backwards. A pointed apron (or short end of the sash?) is visible underneath. A close parallel for this garment is found in the nearby tomb of Horemheb, where three (military) officials in a group of six wear it as they introduce a row of foreign captives before the general-in-chief. One of the three officials wears the long garment over the pointed military kilt.¹³⁹ The only other parallel that I am aware of, is found in the Amarna tomb of Mahu (TA 09), the chief of Medjay of Akhenaten, although the precise rendering differs slightly.¹⁴⁰ The vertically carved lines indicating the pleating of Ry's pointed apron were not carved throughout, which gives it

the impression of being unfinished. Whether the carving had indeed remained unfinished is questionable, however, because there are more examples of sash kilts where the pleating does not run all the way to the lower hemline. Such an example is found in the tomb of Paatenemheb, both on the stela and in the scene adjacent to the left (south).¹⁴¹ If intentional, the rendering of the pleating in relief may conform to reality.

Maia, wife of Ry, occurs eight times in the preserved relief decoration, in scenes [2], [3], [6] (three times), [7], [9], and [13]. In all scenes she wears an ankle-length dress. The level of detail in their execution differs between the scenes. Thus, the dress in scene [2] is plain, whereas that in scene [9] is carved with a keen eye to detail. The latter depicts Maia wearing a complex wrap-around dress with characteristic weft-fringes. The dress consists of a smooth lower layer and a pleated upper layer. A knot fixes the latter, wrap-around, below the breasts.¹⁴² The knot is not indicated in any of the other depictions of Maia.

The female offering bearers wear dresses similar to that worn by Maia. The dress of the female situated in the middle of the group of five individuals depicted before the offering table in scene [9] even includes the knot fixing the wrap-around. The male offering bearers wear simple wrap-around sash kilts, most of which are pleated and reaching to just over the knees.¹⁴³ The officiant Ahanefer wears a leopard skin in addition, which has been fixed around his right (far) shoulder. The officiant Maia wears a more elaborate garment, as already observed above, which conforms to the style of clothing adopted by members of the elite, such as Ry.

The last attribute to consider with regards to the figures is their hairstyle. The reliefs of Ry display a range of hairstyles, or rather wigs, worn by Ry, Maia, and various other individuals. Ry is depicted wearing either a duplex or layered ('Nubian') wig. The duplex wig worn in scene [9] consists of undulating tresses ending in corkscrew curls worn over a pointed lappet of long plaits.¹⁴⁴ The depictions of Ry display a variety of (long) Nubian wigs

134 The amount of detail displayed in the representation of this garment, such as the various fringes, finds their closest parallel in a number of representations of Amenemone, the army commander: Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek ÆIN 714; Paris, Louvre B 8; Geneva, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art FGA-ARCH-EG-0656; Paris, Musée Rodin Co. 03076 (on permanent loan from the Louvre, NI 237).

135 Cf. Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 183 n. 252. Compare Ry (posture, garment, execution) to relief-decorated block Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian inv. no. 205 of the General Amenemone, a contemporary of Ry and his superior in rank in the military: Assam 1991, 62–63 [15]. The block's dimensions are: h. 66, w. 36 cm.

136 For a comprehensive treatment of the heart-shaped apron, identified as the Medjay foreign insignia, see: Michaux-Colombot 2022.

137 Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian 205: Djuževa 2000, Dok. 7.

138 Paris, Musée Rodin Co. 06417: Djuževa 2000, Dok. 6. See also n. 98, above.

139 Martin 1989, 82, scene [69] with pls. 85–86.

140 Davies 1906, pls. 26, 41 [top].

141 Boeser 1911, pls. 9–10.

142 The dress compares well to that worn by Anuy, wife of Meryneith: Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scene [29]. It is also worn by Amenia (?) seated alongside her husband, Horemheb, dyad statue London, BM EA 36: Raven/Van Walsem 2011, 375–378; Vogelsang-Eastwood 1993, fig. 7:11. For complex wrap-around dresses, see further Vogelsang-Eastwood 1993, 107–111.

143 The simple wrap-around sash kilts worn by two of the offering bearers in the tomb of Maya, depicted e.g. on the north wall of the pylon gateway (Martin 2012, scene [4], pls. 9, 11, 82 [lower]), are markedly longer, reaching to a point halfway between the knee and ankle.

144 For an actual wig of this type, see e.g. London, British Museum EA 2560: Strudwick 2006, 194–195.

(covering the nape),¹⁴⁵ the difference being the number of layers of curls cut in steps along the brow and sides. In scene [7], the wig consists of five layers, whereas the three representations in scene [6] consist of four layers. The wig worn in scene [12] has the same shape, but no layers of curls are indicated. The wig worn in scene [13], the pyramidion, is again different. There, Ry wears a heavy lappet wig, without any further modelling. Interestingly, the lappets do not cover the large ears.

Maia wears the same type of wig in all scenes that preserve her posture in full. In scenes [6] and [9] she wears a heavy enveloping wig of thick strands of hair ending in thin corkscrew curls.¹⁴⁶ This type of wig was in vogue from the time of Thutmose IV into the reign of Ay.¹⁴⁷ Maia wears her wig in combination with a fillet (the three depictions on stela [6] include one additional hairband)¹⁴⁸ and a steep cone of unguent. The enveloping wigs reveal Maia's natural hair on the brow, and one tassel or 'tendrill' frames the face, ending in a corkscrew curl.¹⁴⁹ Such strands of natural hair were first represented in painting, in tombs dated to the late reign of Amenhotep III to Amenhotep IV (e.g., Nebamun and Ipuky, TT 181), and followed, after the Amarna period, in relief and sculpture (statues). The depictions from the tomb of Ry have been identified as belonging among the first examples in relief.¹⁵⁰ The wig worn by Maia in scene [13] is devoid of any details. The surface is smooth, while the lower ends of the strands (not modelled in the stone) are cut back to indicate where the thin corkscrew curls were supposed to be modelled (if that were indeed ever the intention of the sculptor).

The secondary figures depicted in the tomb of Ry display a variety of hairstyles, including various male individuals with clean-shaven heads. Thus, five of the seven offering bearers in scene [5] have shaved heads. The wigs of the two remaining individuals received little

modelling. The wig of the third individual from the left is plain, whereas the tresses of the third offering bearer from the right have been indicated by shallow scratches. The most remarkable representation is that of the female offering bearer in scene [9]. She wears the exact same wig as Maia, wife of Ry, but the thick braids are depicted with much more care for detail. In fact, when comparing the two wigs, that of Maia almost has the appearance of being unfinished. For example, the thick strands of hair are only divided by horizontal lines, whereas those of the offering bearer are further subdivided by vertical strokes. The modelling at the lower ends of the strands is also different. The modelling of the strands and corkscrew curls creates a nearly three-dimensional effect, whereas the suggestion of depth is practically absent from Maia's wig.

Let us now shift focus to the ancient visitors of the tomb of Ry, and explore how they would have experienced the relief decoration and the chapel space. In order to do so, we first need to establish the original heights of the chapel walls. Nowhere were the walls preserved to their full height. Still, the original height of the interior space can be reconstructed by combining information from the standing architecture, dimensions of the reliefs, and parallels from other tombs that stood nearby. The stela [1] adjoining the entrance to the chapel has been reconstructed to a height of c. 2 m, which includes the pedestal. The cult stela [6] was slightly smaller, measuring 157 cm in height in its current condition. Originally stela [6] was slightly taller, because the cavetto cornice along the top is now missing. Such features observed on contemporary specimens from the same cemetery measure around 24 cm,¹⁵¹ which would account for a total height of around 180 cm for the stela. The top of the stela may have been flush with the chapel's ceiling.¹⁵² If such were the case, the ceiling compared well with Iniuia's, which was 175 cm high,¹⁵³ and would have been just a little lower than Paatenemheb's, as based on the measurements of that chapel's columns, c. 190 cm.¹⁵⁴ No columns are known for the tomb of Ry, nor were any traces of their former presence (e.g., position marks) noted during excavation. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the ceiling of Ry's chapel was not supported by columns. The only plausible place for the pair would have been in the centre of the antechapel. The reconstructed height of the chapel's ceiling indicates that we miss only a narrow strip of the relief block on the north wall of the inner chapel. A larger part of the antechapel's north wall is missing,

145 For this type of wig, see Aldred 1957. The wig was introduced during the Amarna period by members of the royal family and grew popular with the elite also.

146 Like the dress worn by Maia, her hairstyle also compares very well to that of Anuy in the tomb of Meryneith: Raven/Van Walsem 2014, scene [29].

147 Van Walsem, in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 198–199, sub K (on the dyad statue of Meryneith and Anuy, Cairo, Egyptian Museum JE 99076).

148 For the combination of fillet and hairband, see Iuy in the tomb of Iniuia: Schneider 2012, scene [21a], fig. III.36a, pl. 10; scene [22c], fig. III.39, pl. 12.

149 For a further discussion of this feature, see Van Walsem, in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 204–207.

150 Van Walsem, in Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 207 with n. 154. At Saqqara, the depiction of Maia in relief Berlin ÄM 7278, our scene [9], is mentioned together with a relief (Louvre B 6) from the tomb of Amememone, the army general (Djuževa 2000, Dok. 11). The earliest representation at Thebes, in the post-Amarna period, is found in the tomb of Neferhotep TT 49 (Davies 1933, pls. 3, 36–37, 50, 52), dated to the reign of Ay.

151 Stela of Pay: Raven 2005, pl. 59 [54].

152 The roof was obviously higher, and the precise measurements depend on the thickness of the roofing blocks and the beams supporting them. The stelae placed against the façade would not have risen above the level of the roof.

153 Schneider 2012, 35. The columns that supported the lintel measure 152.5 cm (Berlin ÄM 1627) and 152 cm (Berlin ÄM 1628).

154 Leiden AMT 1-35, 186 and 190 cm.

c. 50 cm. Much of that space might have been decorated with a *kheker* frieze, although, at present, there is no tangible evidence to corroborate this suggestion. That is, unless we consider a block found near the surface south of Ry's chapel, which depicts a *kheker* frieze surmounting a fragmentarily preserved scene with (originally) three booths reminiscent of a funerary scene.¹⁵⁵ The finish of the relief's surface, covered in chisel marks, may be suggestive of a provenance from the tomb of Ry (cf. *infra*, § 3.4), although it cannot be positioned with any certainty.¹⁵⁶ The total height of the frieze surmounting the scene measures 30 cm. Such would largely close the gap between the reconstructed top of the wall and the extant relief decoration.

A reconstructed height of the ceiling of c. 180 cm would have been sufficient for an adult individual to stand upright inside the chapel. Nevertheless, the ancient beholders would have found themselves in a rather cramped space in which the two columns further limited movement and highly impacted on the visibility of the reliefs. The ancient visitor first passed through a fairly narrow entrance doorway, measuring just under 1 m wide (note that the wooden door's pivot hole takes up space as well, which further narrowed the doorway) to enter a wider albeit darker space. The lighting conditions and the limited space both affected the way in which the texts and images could be perceived.¹⁵⁷ The roughly 1 m square inner chapel would have been darker still, and we may assume that the space barely allowed for more than two people to stand in front of the stela together.

Now that we have established the possible height of the walls, we can turn to the scale of the decorative scenes. First of all, the extent of decorated wall surface was rather uniform throughout the chapel, covering the wall space from a level of c. 50 cm above the floor to c. 30 cm below the ceiling. A decorative band ran under the baseline and a *kheker* frieze may have surmounted the scenes. The picture plane of each wall was approximately 120 cm high. The west wall of the chapel presents an exception, as the monolithic stela covered the wall surface from floor to ceiling. The north wall of the antechapel [9] and presumably also the opposite south wall [3] each contained

a scene in a single register, and the same is probably true for the south wall of the entrance doorway [2]. The stela [6] in the west wall was divided in three parts, and the north [7] and south [5] walls of the inner chapel were divided in two registers. The same may have been the case for the east wall of the antechapel, for which only decoration on the north side [10] is partly preserved, and the north wall of the entrance doorway [11].

The measurements of the human figures preserved on the various walls seem to support these divisions. Starting outside and working our way in, the kneeling figure of Ry in scene [12] measures c. 34 cm, the offering bearers of scene [11] measure c. 40 in height, the offering bearers in scene [10] c. 45 cm, those in scene [9] 65 cm, and in [5] c. 55 cm,¹⁵⁸ while the main figures, those of Ry and Maia in scene [9], seated, measure c. 70 cm; the striding figure of Ry in scenes [4] and [8] can be reconstructed to c. 90 cm,¹⁵⁹ the individuals in the upper register of scene [7], including Re-Horakhte, c. 77 cm, the offering bearers in the register below measure c. 30 cm, and the figures of Ry in the upper (standing) and lower register (seated) of stela [6] measure no more than 50 and 37 cm, respectively. Finally, the half-statues of Ry and Maia kneeling in adoration in the east face of the pyramidion [13] measure c. 18 cm. If we again consider the decoration from the perspective of the visitor, we will see that the heads of the figures depicted on the walls would have been just below eye-level of most (adult) tomb visitors. The striding figures of the tomb owner depicted on the north and south side of the west wall of the antechapel would have stood taller than all others seen in the eastern part of the tomb. The heads of the figures depicted on the walls of the inner chapel would have been flush with those of scenes [4] and [8]. The figures in this space, scenes [5] and [7], are depicted on a smaller scale; however, since the walls are divided in two registers, and the upper registers start at a higher level than the baseline on the walls outside, the heads of the standing deceased couple and the various deities were all on eye-level of the ancient beholder of the images.

3.4. Workmanship

This section investigates the material dimensions of the artists' work.¹⁶⁰ It deals with the workmanship of the reliefs, and shifts focus from the iconographic content to the makers and the work processes involved. Although this section does not present an in-depth discussion

155 Compare to the depictions of booths below a *kheker* frieze as reconstructed to the east wall, south part, of the antechapel of Ptahemwia: Raven 2020a, scene [19].

156 Block 2013-R46: *infra* Chapter VII, [40]. The booths likely form part of a funeral scene. At present, only the east wall of the antechapel, south side, presents a lacuna in the relief decoration. It seems that block 2013-R46 is too wide for inclusion in the space available, however.

157 The lighting conditions could be enhanced by creating openings high up in the mud-brick walls. Such a rectangular skylight has been attested in the west wall of the southwest chapel of Meryneith: Raven/Van Walsem 2014, 65, fig. III.15.

158 While the figures of scene [5] are somewhat smaller than those on the opposite north wall, scene [9], the dado of the south wall is higher than that on the north wall. As a result, the heads of the figures on both walls are at the same level.

159 The knee-cap is at c. 30 cm from the base line, and in Egyptian art that distance equals about one-third of the total length of the standing figure to the hairline.

160 Cf. Laboury 2012, 203–206, who calls it an 'archaeology of art'.

of the topic (which would be too broad for the scope of the present publication), it is necessary to consider the craftsmen and their work, because their involvement presents an integral part of a tomb's biography. Indeed, there would not have been decoration for us to study without their work. The following analysis, although brief, enables us to draw some preliminary conclusions about the work procedures and workmanship underlying the production of the reliefs, and to say something about the artist(s) responsible for carving them. Still, the analysis will not change anything about the fact that the artists remain anonymous to us.

The process of creating ancient Egyptian reliefs – a subtractive or reductive exercise – is well established.¹⁶¹ It proceeded through a number of steps.¹⁶² First, stone was quarried, which, in case of Saqqara, meant in the nearby Tura/Massara limestone quarries on the east bank of the Nile. Alternatively, suitable stone was taken from extant Old Kingdom structures that stood in the vicinity of the construction site.¹⁶³ Stonemasons dressed the larger blocks, probably using stone tools, and these were subsequently cut and sawn to their required sizes, which likely happened on the spot. The slabs were subsequently set on the pavement stones with a pinkish lime mortar (the remains of mortar can be observed on the chapel's paving stones, where they appear as the negative imprints of removed blocks), and mounted against the tomb's mud-brick walls. The blocks were not placed directly against the mud-brick core structure. Instead, a space of c. 10 cm was left between the rough backside of the revetment blocks and the mud-brick wall, and this cavity was filled with a mixture of fragments of mud-bricks and limestone, mud and lime plaster that served as an adhesive. At this stage, the wall surfaces were only roughly dressed, as can be observed on the far edges of some of Ry's blocks, e.g. [8], indicating the former

position of adjoining block [9].¹⁶⁴ Then, the rough surfaces were trimmed, using stone pounders and copper or bronze chisels or adzes. The tool marks left by the chisels belonging to this step of production can be observed on most blocks, specifically on their undecorated dados. The orientations of the marks on the wall surface can inform us about the haptics and ergonomics of work. For example, the slots (the width of the chisel blade) traverse the various walls in one particular direction (the dado of scene [10] being an exception). These slots suggest that in the tomb of Ry the worker responsible for preparing the wall surfaces was left-handed (holding the chisel in the right hand and the mallet in the left), because the chisels would have started from a top left position and travelled diagonally downward to the right.¹⁶⁵ The chisel marks on the dado of scene [10] follow a clear pattern of concentric semi-circles. It illustrates the systematic manner in which the stone cutter proceeded as he sat or squatted in front of the wall. The marks indicate that a fairly broad chisel was used.¹⁶⁶ These marks are different from those visible on the dado of scene [2]. The latter were made with a thinner blade, while the patterns left by the chisel impacts are indicative of a different posture employed by the cutter. In case of the stela [6], the slots of the chisel blade are horizontal near the vertical edges of the recessed plane, while the slots in the lowermost part of the right-hand protruding jamb run vertically. Clearly, the stoneworker had to continuously adapt his posture and handling of the chisel and mallet in order to reach the various areas of the stela surface.

Next, any defects such as those in the stone joints were concealed by applying a gypsum plaster. Remains of plaster are well visible in those positions where blocks were positioned perpendicularly to each other, such as on the right-hand side of scene [8], where block [9] was positioned, or in the join between blocks [9] and [10].

Once the wall surface was smoothed, the main artist (or his assistant) divided the walls into sections by using red paint.¹⁶⁷ The outlines of the anticipated decorative band below scene [10] show up when enhancing colour differences of the digital photograph by using decorrelation stretch (DStretch) software. These lines were coloured black. Traces of the red painted preparatory drawing

161 The sequence of the removal of stone has been studied in particular based on unfinished reliefs, or reliefs left in various stages of completion. Finished reliefs are less frequently used to study the work processes.

162 This is the operational sequence or *chaîne opératoire*, first introduced to archaeology by Leroi-Gourhan 1964. For an application of the method in Egyptian archaeology, see e.g. Stupko-Lubczynska 2022, 87–91. The process outlined by the author applies to walls made of limestone blocks, as exemplified by the temple of Hatshepsut at Thebes, and not to purpose-made slabs of stone that were mounted against a mud-brick wall. Therefore, the early stages of production differ between the two settings. To date, no attempt has been made to systematically analyse the process of creating wall reliefs in the Memphite New Kingdom tombs.

163 For examples of relief-decorated blocks that were sawn and cut for reuse in New Kingdom private tombs, see Staring [in preparation]. The nearby Old Kingdom pyramid of Pepi I offers archaeological and textual evidence for the exploitation of the extant structures by individuals in the New Kingdom, quarrying the site in search of suitable stone building material. See: Collombert [in preparation].

164 The anonymous tomb east of Ry, also known as the 'tomb of Sethnakht', illustrates these early stages very well. The slabs were only roughly dressed when mounted against the mud-brick walls. See Raven 2020a, figs. III.18, III.21.

165 Cf. the observations in Stocks 2003, 31.

166 The precise width of the marks could not be ascertained by the present author, because the reliefs were bricked up at the end of the 2013 season of fieldwork, and the tomb was backfilled with sand in 2017.

167 These lines are well visible in the unfinished north section of the courtyard east wall of Ptahemwia's tomb, see Raven 2020a, 94–98, scenes [15] and [16].

made by the conceptual artist (the *sš kdw*, ‘scribe of forms’) were not noted on any of the reliefs. This is of course not surprising, since such drawings disappeared during the next step of carving the reliefs. For the same reason, no traces of a square grid were noted, although its application need not have been a necessity.¹⁶⁸ Research of New Kingdom Theban painterly practices learns that master draughtsmen were able to produce ungridded free-hand compositions.¹⁶⁹ Such a pre-planned composition was sketched in red paint, followed by the addition of details and corrections.¹⁷⁰

The coherent iconographic programme and well-balanced composition throughout the entire chapel strongly suggest that a single conceptual artist was responsible for it. Signature details such as the ways in which two of the offering bearers in scenes [5] and [10] carry their fruit baskets on their far shoulder corroborate this suggestion. The folds in their necks, also observed in scene [9] (figure of Ahanefer), present another distinguishing feature. In fact, the solution devised by the artist to depict the basket carriers and the folds in their necks were so distinctive, that, for me, they were the keys to unlocking the identity of the previously anonymous tomb owner.¹⁷¹ Texts were inscribed after the figural composition had been laid out, and this may or may not have been done by the same draughtsman.¹⁷² This cannot be known on present evidence. On the other hand, it seems clear that the reliefs were cut by more than one sculptor. This observation nourishes the suggestion of a workshop organisation (see below).

Two different types of relief were used throughout the chapel: raised and sunk relief. Each involved their idiosyncratic work processes.¹⁷³ Raised relief was the most labour-intensive of the two. It was created by lowering the background, thus leaving the figures and objects raised from the field. Sunk relief, on the other hand, was created

by cutting the outlines of the figures and objects deeply into the background. Further modelling was done within the contours, giving it the appearance of raised relief.¹⁷⁴ Raised relief can be observed in various post-Amarna tombs at Saqqara, although no tomb was carved in raised relief throughout.¹⁷⁵ In the chapel of Ry, raised relief is found on the south wall of the entrance, scene [2], and in the upper register of the cult stela [6].¹⁷⁶ If we compare the workmanship of the sunk reliefs, two different styles of execution become apparent. Most scenes were carved rather deeply and the modelling within the contours of the figures is pronounced, almost resembling proper raised relief carving. In contrast, the outlines of the figures in the lower registers of the inner chapel's south and north walls, [5] and [7], are pronounced but not very deeply cut, while internal modelling is very shallow, especially on the south wall.¹⁷⁷ The depth of the relief and the modelling are stylistic parameters that can be used as underlying criteria for analysing the work of artists and distinguishing individual hands.¹⁷⁸ We will examine this point further below. We will first continue our review of the work processes.

168 No red-painted square grids were observed in the scenes referenced in the previous note. It may suggest that the ‘scribe of forms’ made the preliminary sketches without the help of a grid.

169 Bryan 2001, 70. Bryan argues that square grids were used for the benefit of regular artists (as opposed to master artists) and apprentices. I wonder if the slightly different sizes of the figure of Maia on stela [6] (see § 3.3) are perhaps the result of working without a square grid.

170 Details and corrections were usually made in black paint. However, this stage is absent from the red-painted sketch on the courtyard east wall, north side, of Ptahemwia, where the sculptor(s) had started work on select figures: Raven 2020a, 94–98, scenes [14] to [16].

171 Staring 2018.

172 For the order of 1) figural composition and 2) texts, see Stupko-Lubczynska 2022, 90. Alternatively, the texts may have been drawn by a scribe.

173 For a concise description of the types of relief, see e.g. Woods 2015, esp. 219.

174 At this stage, the sculptors may have used (a combination of) metal chisels and tools from chipped stone lithics (e.g., flint), such as scrapers and chisels, to render fine details.

175 The tombs of Meryneith and Ptahemwia are particularly noteworthy, because their raised reliefs are associated with the phases dated to the reign of Tutankhamun, whereas the earlier, Amarna period reliefs were carved in sunk relief.

176 The central area of the stela is recessed, which required an additional step before proceeding to the sculpting of the reliefs. There are a number of contemporary parallels from Memphis for stelae comprising superimposed scenes that are carved in raised and sunk relief. Examples from the Teti Pyramid Cemetery include stela Cairo TN 2.11.24.1 of Hatiay, chief of craftsmen of Ptah (Mariette 1880, 379–380, no. 1054 [provenance given as Abydos]; Gaballa 1979, 47–49, fig. 3, pl. 3; Youssef 2017, 129–189, pls. 75–92); and Cairo JE 25641 of Hatiay, head of makers of lapis lazuli (late 18th Dynasty; Gaballa 1979, 46, fig. 2, pl. 2; Youssef 2017, 220–227, pls. 114–121). The stela Leiden AP 56 of Djehuty, overseer of cattle of Amun, is of unknown provenance (late 18th–early 19th Dynasty, *temp.* Horemheb–Seti I; Boeser 1913, 11, no. 40, pl. 22; Affara 2010). The alternation of scenes carved in raised and sunk relief is not limited to stelae dated to the immediate Amarna period. An early example dates to the reign of Amenhotep II: round-topped stela of the vizier Thutmose (ex-coll. Lord Nugent, present location unknown; Blackman 1917, 40–41, pl. 10.2; Gessler-Löhr 1995, 143, pl. 5b). An example dated to just before the Amarna period is the stela of Amenmose, head of quartermasters of the army, dated to the reign of Amenhotep III (Cairo CG 34054; Lacau 1906–1916, 95–97, pl. 32).

177 The carving of relief [11], which has been reconstructed to the north wall of the chapel's entrance doorway, is difficult to assess because of its poor state of preservation. In addition, the present author has not been able to examine the original.

178 Following Pieke 2011, 217.

After finishing the sculpting of the reliefs, the surfaces were further smoothened. Traces of the abrasive tools¹⁷⁹ used to achieve a polished result can easily be observed on the legs and garment of the figure of Ry in scene [8], where they show through the later added whitewash as fine scratches. Not all wall surfaces received this final treatment, however. The reliefs of a number of the walls retained the chisel marks made when smoothing the surface in preparation of the initial sketch drawings.¹⁸⁰ The thin, diagonal marks are easily noticeable in the picture plane of stela [1] and in scenes [7] and [9]. These cover not just the background, but also the most elevated parts of the figures and objects (i.e. the stone surfaces not cut back by the sculptor).¹⁸¹ The marks are less visible on the relief fragments bearing the same scenes found *in situ* that preserve their thin layer of whitewash (scenes [7] and [9]).¹⁸² The layer of whitewash was applied after the reliefs were carved, and before they received their final painting. Paint may or may not have been applied by the same individuals that were responsible for carving the reliefs. In general, paint could be used to adapt certain details of the images or even mask mistakes made by the sculptors. Such corrections could then be taken as evidence for the existence of a dedicated group of painters, arriving at the scene after the sculptors had finished their work.¹⁸³ The preserved reliefs of Ry do not show any such signs. Colour – where preserved – is usually added neatly within the sculpted outlines of figures. One exception might be noted on the sandals worn by Ry in scene [8]. There, the reddish-brown paint used to colour Ry's skin has also been applied partly onto the straps of his sandals. Whether the inaccuracy should be taken as a mistake made by the painter is not entirely clear, however. It is possible that the sandals were meant to receive colour as well, which would

have obscured what we might consider to be 'mistakes'.¹⁸⁴ Overall, the various reliefs showcase big differences in the preservation of paint. While most fragments found *in situ* preserve much of their original colours,¹⁸⁵ nearly all paint has vanished from the fragments held in museum collections. The differences suggest that colour disappeared after the blocks were taken from their original position. The loss of colour can probably be ascribed to the production of casts¹⁸⁶ or to a too rigorous cleaning of the reliefs when they were prepared for museum display.

The above discussion raised the possibility of identifying multiple sculptors that were involved in the work process. We will now treat this subject more closely. To start with, select studies of tomb and temple decoration have revealed that multiple artists and craftsmen were usually involved in the production of relief decoration.¹⁸⁷ The main conceptual artist, in Egyptian known as the 'scribe of forms', was responsible for the composition and details of scenes, and the master sculptor executed the design with the assistance of ordinary sculptors and apprentices. In large architectural spaces, the walls were divided in equal sections enabling multiple sculptors to work simultaneously. The wall surfaces were divided in manageable sections of c. 1 to 1.5 m wide.¹⁸⁸ It is questionable whether the same applied to the work on a small chapel such as Ry's. The longest wall measures only c. 2 m wide, and one may presume that this could probably be covered by a single sculptor. Moreover, from a practical point of view, it would have been quite difficult to have more than one sculptor at work in the inner chapel. That space measures not much more than 1 m square, which means sculptors

179 For a 'rubbing' stone of granite found in the tomb of Horemheb, see Schneider 1996, 52, cat. 334e, pl. 34 (measuring 5 × 17 × 15 cm). See also a sandstone polishing stone, *infra* Chapter VIII, Cat. 44. Abrasives were usually worked in combination with water.

180 This observation reminds us that we should not view the *chaîne opératoire* too rigidly. Certainly, carvers typically progress from the general to the specific, from roughing-out, through progressively finer stages of modelling, smoothing of certain surfaces, etc. However, processes in this sequence can be skipped or condensed (Russell 2021, 78). Not every sculptor worked in the same sequence on every project, and the work processes could be adapted to the circumstances, for example the time available for the project.

181 The same unsmoothed surfaces can be observed in various reliefs from the neighbouring and contemporary tombs of Pay and Iniuiat.

182 The initial layer of whitewash and the subsequent stucco coating (?) are perhaps best visible in the block frieze marking the right-hand side of scene [7], on the fragment preserved *in situ*. The remaining fragment of the stucco coating was painted green and blue.

183 Pieke 2011; Pieke 2023.

184 Similarly, a comprehensive analysis of the painted relief/decorated walls of the burial chamber in the Old Kingdom mastaba of Khuwy at Saqqara South revealed many cases of paint layers that do not neatly cover the carved reliefs (Pieke 2023). The study further suggests that the painters and sculptors were not the same individuals.

185 Only scene [2] on the south wall of the entrance doorway preserves no colour, apart from isolated spots of red on the hand of the female and the hind leg of the chair. These traces appear not to be the last preserved remnants of a fully painted scene, the more so since no trace of whitewash is preserved. Manipulation of a digital photograph using DStretch software reveals no additional traces of colour either. One may conclude that this relief, like that of scene [11], never received any paint and may therefore be regarded as unfinished.

186 I know of the existence of a plaster cast of relief [7] held at the KU Leuven. I owe this information to Marleen de Meyer and Vincent Oeters.

187 Baines 1989; Bryan 2001; Pieke 2011; Hartwig 2013 (paint, no relief); Stupko-Lubczynska 2022.

188 As observed in the Old Kingdom mastaba of Mereruka: Pieke 2011. See also the unfinished east wall of the courtyard in the tomb of Pthahemwia: Raven 2020a, scenes [15–16] with sculptors clearly having started work at three distinct spots lying about 0.9 m apart. It suggests that the east wall, north side, was divided in three sections to allow three sculptors to work simultaneously.

would have been sitting back to back when working on the north and south walls simultaneously. Their work would have also produced considerable amounts of dust in a small room that was probably fairly dark.¹⁸⁹ All these factors appear to speak against the involvement of a large crew of sculptors. Still, a closer look at the workmanship of the reliefs might suggest the involvement of multiple individuals. The quality of workmanship (arguably a somewhat subjective qualification) varies throughout the chapel and within single scenes. The impression is that an experienced ‘master’ sculptor carved the most important parts and finer details, whereas an assistant or apprentice may have worked on the more straightforward areas of the compositions. The contrast is perhaps most obvious when comparing the workmanship of the scene of offering bearers on the south wall of the inner chapel [5] with human figures elsewhere in the chapel’s decoration. The sunk relief carving is fairly shallow, marking the outlines with little internal modelling. The ears of the offering bearers show little internal detail, the wig of the third figure to the left is plain (no braids were carved), as is the kilt of the first figure to the right. The row of offering bearers depicted on the opposite north wall [7] show more internal detail of the ears and the modelling is somewhat more pronounced. On the other hand, the base line under this scene has not been carved to completion. The distinctly different faces of the deceased couple seated vis-à-vis at an offering table on stela [6] have already been noted above. While bearing in mind that it is impossible to produce a perfectly flipped copy image (if this were ever the intention of the maker), the differences of the features of the faces may betray two different hands involved in the carving.

The workmanship of the largest preserved scene, [9], also suggests the involvement of at least two hands. The layered internal modelling of the figures in sunk relief and the fine carving of the faces, especially those of Ry and Maia, display a high level of workmanship. The faces of the offering bearers have also been carved with attention to detail, most notably the wig of the female figure. Certain details such as the curly fingers of Maia on the chest of Ry, the rendering of the left hand of the officiant Maia, holding a censer, and the fine details in the faces of the leopard (as part of the priests’ garment of the officiant Ahanefer) and the monkey under Maia’s chair further point to the work of a highly skilled sculptor. These examples for attention to detail and fine carving contrast sharply with the rather sloppy carving of the wavy lines of water, most notably where it cuts through the columns of text above the lady Maia. The carving of the garments worn by the offering bearers similarly display less care for fine execution. This

is perhaps best visible in the figure of Ahanefer, where the sculptor carved the waistline of the kilt through the leopard skin, and carved the vertical lateral contour of the ‘apron’ of the front through the leopard’s hind leg area. Moreover, the lines indicating the kilt’s pleating are rather roughly carved (sometimes re-carved) and the pleats do not follow the shape of the body of the individual wearing the kilt. The lowermost diagonal line of Ahanefer’s kilt is distinctly differently carved from the others, which may be indicative of the fact that it was initially forgotten and carved at a later moment. Finally, we may note that the relief-decoration lacks the refined execution of certain details in the representations of objects and animals. See, for example, the ducks held by the female offering bearer in scene [9]. Only the outlines are indicated in a rather sketchy manner.¹⁹⁰ This execution contrasts sharply with the ducks held by the offering bearer labeled Pehefnefer in the tomb of Horemheb.¹⁹¹ Those in the tomb of Horemheb are executed with a keen eye for detail, indicating the ducks’ beaks, eyes, and feather patterns.¹⁹² The same goes for the rope that binds the ducks together: the example from the tomb of Horemheb renders the fabric in carving, while that in the tomb of Ry merely renders the rope in outline. The figure of Pehefnefer additionally holds a bouquet of flowers, which includes three finely carved flowering papyrus stalks. The rendering of the flowering papyrus stalks held by the female offering bearer in scene [9] of Ry lacks the internal details. Such differences may not necessarily betray differences in skill of the sculptors, however.

3.5. Date

The foregoing treatment of iconography, style and workmanship firmly establishes a date of the tomb in the reign of Tutankhamun. A number of tombs in this part of the cemetery would have been under construction during the king’s 9-year reign. Construction of some of these tombs was started when the king and his entourage left Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna) for Memphis. An unknown number of the artists and craftsmen travelled north along with the king and his courtiers, while others may have been employed at Memphis throughout the

189 Assuming that the ceiling blocks were laid down before the sculptors started work on the reliefs.

190 Note that the feather pattern was indicated in (red) paint. The traces of paint have largely faded by now.

191 South wall of the doorway between Horemheb’s first peristyle courtyard and the statue room: Martin 1989, scene [56], pls. 50, 52 [top], 55; Staring 2020, figs. 25–26.

192 Not all ducks were executed with the same attention to detail, however. Note, for example, the ducks carried along by an offering bearer depicted on the north wall of the inner courtyard, east end, resembling the specimens in scene [9] of Ry: Martin 1989, pl. 124, scene [85] (line drawing; no photograph published).

Amarna period.¹⁹³ These individuals would have been commissioned to work on various royal projects such as the Memphite palace and temples. A selection of the same workforce was commissioned to work on the private tombs of the elite, foremost amongst whom was Horemheb, the king's regent. If Horemheb's tomb was started at the very beginning of Tutankhamun's reign,¹⁹⁴ the tomb of Ry probably followed soon (a few years?) thereafter. The precise date of the latter is difficult to establish, not the least because a detailed stylistic study of the tomb of Horemheb (and that of Maya, another major project of artistic production) is still pending. The date proposed for the pottery of Ry (Chapter IX, Sections 6–9, *infra*) suggests that the burial (of the tomb owner?) took place during the reign of Tutankhamun, which means the carving of the relief-decoration should date to a point in time before the end of that reign. Contemporaries of Ry such as Pay and Iniua can shed some more light on the matter. The available evidence suggests that construction of their tombs started prior to Ry's, although work on all three certainly overlapped at one point. The earliest reliefs in the tomb of Iniua are still very much reminiscent of the Amarna style,¹⁹⁵ while the human figures in the tomb of Ry are more conventional with only details such as the Amarnesque fingers forging a link to the earlier period. As for Pay, the Aten is worshipped in a hymn to the sun carved on his stela, and the hieroglyphic sign of the radiant sun disk (N8) used as a determinative of the word for 'rays' (*stwt*) displays the sun's individual rays terminating in hands.¹⁹⁶ One possible explanation of the sign's use is

that the artist (or rather the scribe) had been trained in the reign of Akhenaten and kept this specific sign in his hieroglyphic repertoire.¹⁹⁷ If this suggestion proves correct, the making of this particular stela of Pay dates to very early in the reign of Tutankhamun. By extension, the fact that in Ry's stela [1] the sign of this classifier was written with several rays *not* ending with hands may be suggestive of a later date – although not much later, as the general style of the relief decoration of the two tombs is otherwise comparable.

As a closing note, we may briefly consider the subject of tomb commissioning by non-royal individuals. The study of private patronage of Memphite New Kingdom tomb construction is still at its infancy, and much of what we know about the subject more generally derives from contemporary Theban written sources.¹⁹⁸ Importantly, the old suggestion that the highly specialised community of workmen resident at Deir el-Medina was responsible for the majority of private tombs at Thebes has been rejected by recent scholarship.¹⁹⁹ There is stronger evidence for the involvement of artists who were professionally associated with the temple of Amun, and who also worked on the private funerary monuments of temple staff who were their superiors in rank. It suggests that the commissioning patrons of private tombs were able to leverage their institutional power and responsibilities to employ artists (such as the 'scribe' or 'painter', *sš*, of Amun) who were professionally under their charge. It is equally very unlikely that a Deir el-Medina-like community serviced the Memphite private necropolis.²⁰⁰ There is no evidence, written or archaeological, that points to the existence of such a specialised community dedicated to private tomb making. Prosopographical evidence for craftsmen in the Memphite New Kingdom necropolis rather points at their professional affiliation with the crown ('Lord of the Two Lands') or the temple of Ptah. Such institutional monopolisation of artistic resources made the king the ultimate patron of the arts.²⁰¹ High-ranking individuals within e.g. temple or palace administration were able

193 For the Saqqara necropolis through the Amarna period and the artists commissioned to work on the private tombs, see Staring 2021. Tombs such as those built for Meryneith and Ptahemwia which were started during the reign of Akhenaten continued in the post-Amarna period. The artists' identities are not known; however, it is not impossible that the same individuals were responsible for the making of the reliefs in the two distinct styles exhibited in the two tombs.

194 The relief-decoration of Horemheb's tomb was not finished. Some of the scenes on the south wall of the easternmost part of the middle (peristyle) courtyard were in the process of being carved, including a representation of the Memphite palace of the king, Tutankhamun (see Johnson/Hawass 2016; Martin 2016, 24–29, scene [2], fig. 13, pls. 11, 94). I would argue that the chisels were laid down when Tutankhamun's reign ended. The death of the king had consequences for the status of Horemheb, as he served no longer as the king's regent. This may have had consequences for the workforce assigned to his funerary monument. Perhaps the sculptors employed at the tomb were (temporarily) required elsewhere, for example in the Memphite temples, where new works may have been commissioned, or the palace of the new king, Ay (see e.g. stela BM EA 211 of Tutu, the 'steward of the house of Kheper-kheperure Iry-maat', i.e. Ay: Hall 1925, 12, pl. 35).

195 Those in the inner chapel, see Schneider 2012, scenes [21a–d]. Unfortunately Schneider does not treat the subject of style and date.

196 Raven 2005, 44, stela [70], pls. 73–74; for further discussion of this sign, see Gessler-Löhr 2012, 159–167.

197 Gessler-Löhr 2012, 165.

198 See e.g. Cooney 2008; Laboury 2023.

199 See Laboury 2023.

200 See Navrátilová 2018 for a tentative survey of the evidence. In fact, recent research rejects the suggestion that the Deir el-Medina crew were involved in private tomb production in the Theban necropolis outside the community's cemetery; see Laboury 2023. This does not entirely exclude the possibility that some artists from this community were commissioned to work on private tombs outside their village cemetery, or produce funerary furniture and other items. There is evidence from the Ramesside period that certain members of the Deir el-Medina community worked on private tombs elsewhere in the Theban necropolis, and that they made and sold funerary items. For an analysis of the textual evidence, see Cooney 2008.

201 Laboury 2023.

to employ the artistic workforces of these institutions for their personal benefit. The best artists were in short supply and high demand, which means that there would have been considerable competition amongst the peer group of elites to gain access to them. Ry clearly had access to the material and human resources necessary to secure a monumental place of burial for himself and his family. Yet the question of who were the makers of his tomb – the builders, conceptual artists, sculptors, painters, and other craftsmen – and how Ry, like other members of the elite, gained such access to them is the subject of current scholarly discussions.²⁰² This may have partly been a matter of fringe benefits to the office held by the tomb owner. As outlined above, the commissioning patrons of private tombs that held senior offices in institutions that also employed artists, may have been in a position to ‘use’ the personnel as an integral part of their office. Another option might be that such access was a matter of royal favour.²⁰³ The two options need not be mutually exclusive, certainly in a society that invested so ubiquitously in the provisioning for the afterlife, and where tombs played such a central part in daily life.

The treatment of iconography, style and workmanship of the reliefs from the tomb of Ry revealed close parallels in the neighbouring tombs that were made at around the same time. These were all made for the highest ranking officials of Memphis at a time when the king (Tutankhamun) had just moved north from Amarna. A large number of new tombs were under construction for the elite, the circle of courtiers closest to the king. They included Horemheb, the king’s regent, and Maya, the overseer of the treasury and overseer of all the king’s works. The two practically ruled the kingdom in tandem. They would have had unparalleled access to the best artists of their time. Horemheb was the commander-in-chief of the military, and Ry would have been one of the highest-ranking officials in that army. It is probably due to his professional affiliation and his closeness to the king (and his regent) that Ry gained access to the highly skilled artists. It is not unthinkable that the same individuals (or at least some of them) were also responsible for the

reliefs in the tomb of Horemheb and the tombs of other contemporaries in this part of the cemetery.

4. Family and career (N. Staring)

4.1. Family

The name of the tomb-owner, Ry, is a common hypocoristicon during the New Kingdom, both for males and females.²⁰⁴ Presumably, it may be regarded as an abbreviation of a more extensive, perhaps theophoric name which, however, is not immediately evident. The name’s spelling is consistent in its combination of initial -r- with the two successive writings of the phoneme -y- (i.e. both *y* and *ī* of the Leiden Unified Transliteration). Although the variant with two oblique or vertical strokes (Sign-list Z 4) usually marks the end of a word,²⁰⁵ in the name Ry it seems to precede the alternative with the double reed. In the Egyptological literature, the name is often rendered as Roy,²⁰⁶ a vocalisation for which there is no convincing evidence.

The relief-decorated blocks from the tomb offer limited information about Ry’s family (see Table IV.2). What we can glean from the reliefs is that he was married to a lady named Maia.²⁰⁷ She is depicted alongside her husband in scene [6], [7], [8], and [13]. She held the titles of *nb.t pr*, ‘lady of the house’, and *šmꜥ.yt n.t ꜥmn-Rꜥ*, ‘songstress of Amun/var. Amun-Re’. Both titles are commonly held by the spouses of high-ranking New Kingdom officials buried at Saqqara.²⁰⁸ Scene [2] carved on the south reveal of the entrance doorway of the tomb chapel depicts a female figure seated on a stool with seat cushion underneath (or rather, besides) the chair of a larger-scale male individual. The latter likely represents Ry; the identity of the female figure is not known. Her scale and position would perhaps be suggestive of a daughter; however, given that she wears a full-length dress, she may also represent his wife, Maia. This suggestion is further corroborated by the fact that the deceased couple is nowhere else in the relief decoration accompanied by a daughter.

202 It is the subject of my postdoctoral research project (2021–2024) funded by the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique – FNRS and hosted at the University of Liège, Belgium, titled: *Private patronage in Ancient Egyptian tomb production: assessing the relationship between commissioning patron and artists in the New Kingdom necropolis at Saqqara, c. 1539–1078 BCE*.

203 The results of an analysis of the production of high-status goods (such as stone sculpture) in Late Bronze Age settlements in Egypt (such as Amarna) is highly relevant to this question: see Hodgkinson 2020, esp. 148–167 (sculpture and sculpture production at Amarna), 293 (model describing the organisation of sculpture production in urban contexts), 295 (generic model describing the general organisation of urban workshops in the New Kingdom).

204 Ranke 1935, I, 216.29. The *Prosopographia Memphitica* has nine entries dated to the New Kingdom (six males, three females); see <https://anneherz.github.io/ProM/#>, last accessed on 05.04.2022.

205 Gardiner 1957, 29 § 20; 59 § 73.4.

206 Cf. the early 19th Dynasty owner of TT 255 (Baud/Drioton 1928). However, it should be noted that in this case the owner’s name is consistently spelled with a single stroke between the -r- and the double reed. Cf. Ranke 1935, I, 216.28, 217.1, 425.3–4 for other variants which are rendered Le-e-ia (Ri-ya) in Akkadian.

207 Ranke 1935, I, 146.1.

208 Cf. Raven 2020a, 29; Herzberg-Beiersdorf 2023, 203–207, table 33.

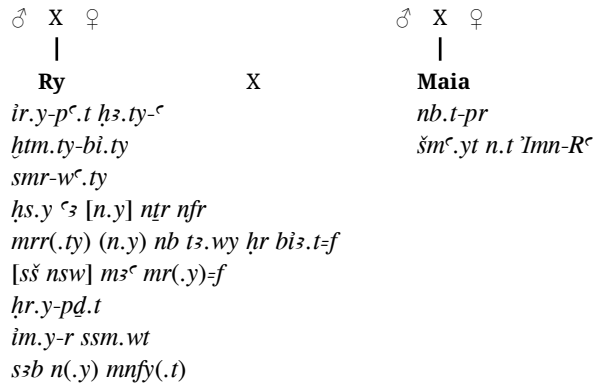


Table IV.2. Family tree of Ry and Maia.

Three other persons are mentioned by name in the reliefs depicting the funerary rituals. The priests officiating in scene [9] are identified as the stable-master Maia and the servant Ahanefer, whereas another servant called Ka occurs in scene [7].²⁰⁹ Together with an unnamed lector-priest in scene [11] these probably represent retainers of Ry's household and office, rather than members of the family.²¹⁰

4.2. Career

The tomb owner, Ry, is so far exclusively known from (the elements deriving from) his Memphite tomb.²¹¹ No historical texts were inscribed on the tomb's walls, potentially informing us about the course of his career or

209 For the names, see Ranke 1935, I.146.1, I.71.1 and I.338.15, respectively.

210 As suggested by M.J. Raven, another priest officiating in the funerary cult of Ry may have been the physician Akhpet, whose own memorial chapel may have stood to the south of Ry's offering chapel (Fig. IV.9; cf. *infra*, Chapter VII, stela [18]). If the owner of this chapel is indeed to be identified as a member of Ry's household, it is perhaps rather unexpected that he built his chapel against the north wall of Ry's neighbour, and not against the tomb of Ry. M.J. Raven also remarks that it is remarkable for a high-ranking official like Ry that he never mentions the names of his parents, though this is certainly not unique (cf. Raven 2020a, 29), and various reasons for this apparent reticence may be suggested. For example, Ry may have been a *homo novus* originally of low social status, or perhaps he may have wanted to be silent about his family because they had been active in the Atenist revolution (as suggested by Raven).

211 The only occurrence of the name Ry at Saqqara before the time of the current tomb owner, to my knowledge, is on the stela of the scribe, reckoner of cattle, and child of the nursery Ahmose, dated to the reign of Amenhotep III (Cairo JE 18181 = CG 34049). Ry is depicted twice, and in both cases he bears the title of child of the nursery (*ḥrd n.y k3p*). Once, he is depicted seated at an offering table alongside his mother, the lady of the house Puhu, who, on the opposite side of the same table, sits alongside Ahmose and is designated as his (i.e., Ahmose's) spouse (*sn.t=f*). This makes Ry a son of Ahmose. The fact that the words *whm ʿnh*, 'may he repeat life', are once added to Ry's name, might suggest that he had already

Related to the king, royal court, and government (incl. honorific)	
<i>ir.y-p^c.t ḥz.ty-^c ḥtm.ty-bi.ty smr-w^c.ty</i>	[1]
<i>ḥs.y ʿz [n.y] nṯr nfr</i>	[6]
<i>mrr(.ty) (n.y) nb t3.wy ḥr bi3.t=f</i>	[6]
Scribal	
<i>[sš nsw] m3^c mr(.y)=f</i>	[6]
Military	
<i>ḥr.y-pd.t</i>	[1], [6], [9], [12], [13]
<i>im.y-r ssm.(w)t</i>	[6], [9]
<i>z3b n(.y) mnfy(.t)</i>	[1]

Table IV.3. Overview of titles held by Ry.

his origins. Thus, in reconstructing his life, we depend on the sequence of titles he held, and the historical setting of this individual, which is the late 18th-Dynasty reign of Tutankhamun.

The inscribed relief-decorated blocks from the tomb of Ry allow us to put together a brief outline of the offices he held. His titles can be divided in two categories: honorific titles and office titles (see Table IV.3).

Honorific titles are a means to establish an official's social position, in particular his proximity to the reigning king. Such titles are considered to be the most important markers of rank at the court.²¹² Only the highest court officials and administrators displayed the complete sequence of epithets *ir.y-p^c.t ḥz.ty-^c ḥtm.ty-bi.ty smr w^c.ty*, 'noble and count,²¹³ seal-bearer of the king of Lower Egypt and sole companion'. In the 18th Dynasty the epithet 'sole companion' signified a special relationship to the king.²¹⁴ Ry's relationship to his king, Tutankhamun, is also exemplified by the honorific epithets that describe him as 'one greatly praised by the Perfect God (i.e. the king)', and 'one beloved of the Lord of the Two Lands on account of his character'.²¹⁵ These epithets strongly indicate that Ry held a position within the king's inner circle, and held a personal relation with him – or perhaps rather

passed away at the time when the stela was made (though such qualifications are also attested in inscriptions on doorjambs and lintels naming the owners of houses at Amarna). Even though the date of the stela would render it possible, this man cannot be identified as the present tomb owner with absolute certainty. For the stela of Ahmose, see PM III/2, 736; Lacau 1909–1916, 84–86, pl. 29; Mariette 1872–1889, 18, pl. 56. The tomb chapel from which the stela derived probably stood in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery.

212 See e.g. Raedler 2012, 129.

213 Or rather, 'member of the elite'.

214 Raedler 2009, 147.

215 For parallels and variants held by other tomb owners in the Memphite necropolis at Saqqara, see Staring 2020, n. 89.

with his regent, the commander of the army, Horemheb. This relation is perpetuated in the layout of the Saqqara necropolis, because Ry built his tomb a few metres south-east of Horemheb's tomb. The depictions in scenes [6] (cult stela) and [7] inform us that Ry received, at one point in his career, the so-called Gold of Honour,²¹⁶ which must have been bestowed on him by the king or his regent.²¹⁷ This may have happened on the same occasion when he was awarded his epithets.

The title *z3b n.y mnfy.t* may represent an office title (indicating his profession), although it is not clear how it should be understood. The title has been variably translated as 'judge or senior of the army'²¹⁸ and 'scribe of the army' ('soldiers', 'infantry').²¹⁹ Either way, the use of the *z3b*-element in this manner appears to be without parallel. The well-known title 'scribe of the army' was usually written as *sš mšꜥ*, sometimes with the addition of *n.y nb t3.wy*, 'of the Lord of the Two Lands'. In the Memphite necropolis, tomb owners bearing exclusively this title-of-office built their tombs in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery, further north at Saqqara.²²⁰ The title spelled with the standing jackal (Gardiner sign-list E17) refers to the same office and can be regarded as an archaic form of it.²²¹ It is not common for a military officer to bear scribal titles related to the army; instead, such high-ranking officials normally bear the very common title of *sš nsw*, 'royal scribe'.²²²

Ry's title 'chief of bowmen', *hr.y pd.t*, casually translated as 'troop-commander', refers to a military

official with field experience in the infantry.²²³ The title's position in the lists of rank indicates that its bearer held one of the highest-ranking positions in the military. The chief of bowmen was subordinate only to the *im.y-r mšꜥ wr*, the 'general of the army'.²²⁴

As bearer of the title *im.y-r ssm.wt*, 'overseer of horses', Ry must have held command over the chariotry.²²⁵ This branch of the army was established in the late-18th Dynasty reign of Amenhotep III. Yuya, the father-in-law of that king, was the first to bear the title in combination with military offices.²²⁶ Overseers of horses, or rather commanders of the chariotry, were drawn from the ranks of chiefs of bowmen.²²⁷ It usually is the highest-ranking title held by such officials.²²⁸

The combination of the titles 'chief of bowmen' and 'overseer of horses' held by a single official is not very common. Yet there are a number of rather prominent bearers of the combination of titles, namely Ay, Paramessu (Ramesses I), and Seti (Seti I). They were all military officials who became king in the post-Amarna period.²²⁹ One of the urban villas at Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna) belonged to a man named Nekhuempaaten, who, in addition to *hr.y-pd.t im.y-r ssm.wt*, also held the title *wbꜥ nsw* 'royal butler'.²³⁰ In the Memphite necropolis at Saqqara, two individuals are attested with exclusively these two titles. The first, Parennefer is depicted in the tomb of his famous brother, Maya.²³¹ The second, Suty, is attested on a relief-decorated block found reused in the Coptic-period staircase built in the south-east corner of the outer courtyard of Ry's neighbour to the west, Raia.²³² It suggests that Suty's tomb chapel stood nearby. Both Parennefer and Suty were near-contemporaries of Ry, and the three may have been acquaintances in the army.

Another three officials at Saqqara bore the titles in combination with additional ones. The first was Ramose, the 'deputy of the army', who built his monumental

216 Binder 2008. Ry is listed as cat. no. 148.

217 Cf. the scene of Horemheb (as general) bestowing the Gold of Honour on another private individual, as depicted on the north wall of the first peristyle courtyard of his Memphite tomb: Martin 2017.

218 James 1974, 175–176 [431].

219 Gnirs 1996, 660; cf. Faulkner 1953, 43–44, *mnfy(t)*: 'infantry' or 'trained soldiers' (as opposed to recruits).

220 They are the late-18th/early-19th Dynasty official Ahmose, tomb Loret no. 1 (Loret 1899, 11; Málek 1989, 69; Youssef 2017, 269–275, pls. 150–154); and the late-18th Dynasty (*temp.* Ay–Horemheb) official Huy, tomb Lepsius LS 12 = Quibell S 2735 (PM III/2, 556; Wenig 1974, 239–245; Ockinga 2012, 374–377; Youssef 2017, 202–210, pls. 100–109).

221 Gnirs 1996, 66. In the same manner, the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom title *im.y-r mnfy.t* can be considered synonymous to the New Kingdom *im.y-r mšꜥ*, 'military official': Gnirs 1996, 12–17.

222 Gnirs 1996, 66. Two more or less contemporary high-ranking military officials buried at Saqqara, who also held scribal titles, are the Amarna/immediate post-Amarna official Huy (son of the vizier of the north, Aper-El, tomb Bub. I.1), whose title sequence includes *sš nfr.w n.y nb t3.wy*, 'scribe of recruits of the Lord of the Two Lands'; and Amenemone (tomb now lost; see PM III/2, 701; Djuževa 2000, 77–98), whose list of titles includes *sš nfr.wt*, 'scribe of recruits'. Both Huy and Amenemone held office as 'general of the army' (*im.y-r mšꜥ wr*).

223 Note that Ry's neighbour to the west, Raia, son of Pay, held the related title *ir.y-pd.t n.y nb t3.wy*, 'keeper of the bow of the Lord of the Two Lands'. It is a honorific title and implies a relationship between its bearer and the king, see Gnirs 1996, 188, ns. 1269–1270. See also Raven 2005, 7.

224 Schulman 1964, 51–53.

225 Gnirs 1996, 29–31, 66–70. See earlier Schulman 1964, 47, suggesting that the bearer of this title merely held a command over the chariotry.

226 Gnirs 1996, 21; *Urk.* IV, 1895, 15. The first to bear the title *im.y-r ssm.wt n.y nb t3.wy* was a man named Nakhtmin (*Urk.* IV, 1179, 8), who officiated in the mid-18th Dynasty reign of Thutmose III. At the time it was not a military office, but one related to the 'state' administration.

227 Gnirs 1996, 21.

228 Schulman 1964, 46–47.

229 Gnirs 1996, 67, 70.

230 Borchardt/Ricke 1980, 346–357, *Inschrift* 10, pl. 27A.

231 LD, III, 241b; Martin 2012, 33 [36–37], 64, pls. 28–29.

232 Excavation no. R94–83; Raven, 2005, 47 [75], pl. 79.

tomb alongside Horemheb's to the north.²³³ The second was the son of the vizier Aper-El/Aperia, Huy, already mentioned above (n. 222), who shared in the rock-cut tomb of his father (Bub. I.1), located in the so-called *dhn.t* of Ankhtawy, the southern cliff of the later Bubasteion.²³⁴ The third official, Nakhtmin, also had a rock-cut tomb, situated further to the north, opposite the modern village of Abusir.²³⁵ This official also bore the titles of 'royal envoy to all foreign lands' and 'overseer of the king's charioteers', amongst other titles. Nakhtmin officiated in the Ramesside period, Ramose and Huy were contemporaries of Ry.

Amenemone, a contemporary of Ry who held office as overseer of bowmen, became a general of the army (var. 'of the Lord of the Two Lands'). He made this unusual step in his career when Horemheb became king. The administrative reformations implemented by Horemheb early in his reign also affected the organisation of the military, resulting in the sudden rise to prominence of a number of army officials.²³⁶ The tomb of Amenemone is now lost; however, the high-ranking military offices he held point to a location nearby in the Unas South Cemetery.²³⁷ The tomb of another overseer of bowmen who became general of the army in the early 19th Dynasty,

Urkhiya, has been rediscovered c. 120 m to the north of Ry in 2017–2018 by the archaeological expedition of Cairo University.²³⁸ Urkhiya additionally held office as steward in the temple of Usermaatre-Setepenre (Ramesses II) in the house of Amun (i.e. the Theban Ramesseum), while Amenemone had been a steward in the temple of Menkheperre (Thutmosis III), probably at Memphis.²³⁹

The above overview demonstrates that tombs built for bearers of the titles also held by Ry are, in the post-Amarna period, noticeably clustered in the section of the Saqqara necropolis south of the Unas causeway. Some of the highest-ranking officials of Tutankhamun's tenure selected this part of the North Saqqara plateau to build their tombs. The funerary monuments of a number of high-ranking military officials were built close to the temple-shaped tomb of Horemheb, their commander-in-chief. While we cannot say anything specific about the course of Ry's career, it is very likely that it played out in close connection with Horemheb's military endeavours. Given the fact that Ry was in a position to have a richly relief-decorated tomb built early in the reign of Tutankhamun, we may assume that he started his career in the preceding Amarna period.

233 Martin 2001, 1–9.

234 E.g. Zivie 2012, 438–439; 2018, 29 with fig. 24 (north-east pillar of the tomb listing the official's titles). The final publication of this tomb is forthcoming.

235 Daoud 2011; Youssef 2011.

236 Gnirs 1996, 54, 100–101; Gnirs 1989, 83–110.

237 The remarkable parallels in the tomb decoration of Ry and Amenemone may even suggest that the two tombs stood very close to one another. As suggested in Staring 2020, 46–47, Amenemone may in fact be Ry's neighbour to the south. However, at the present moment, there is no further proof (neither archaeological nor epigraphic) to substantiate this suggestion, and it is up to future excavations to identify this neighbour.

238 Tomb LS 25, seen by the Prussian expedition led by Lepsius in 1843. For the rediscovery, see El-Aguizy 2020.

239 For a further discussion, see Staring 2014–2015.

