

Preliminary Report on the Work carried out during the season 2013

Director Prof. Dr. Susanne Bickel
Field-Director lic. phil. Elina Paulin-Grothe

The project is dedicated to the study of the undecorated non-royal tombs in the side valley leading to KV 34 of Thutmosis III.

The general aims of the project are the following:

- clearing of the tombs for documentation
- study of the architecture of the non-royal tombs
- dating and, if possible, identification of the burials
- documentation of finds and study material
- site management, protection of the tombs
- topographical survey of the area of the side valley
- publication of all the tombs and finds

This year's season of the University of Basel in the Valley of the Kings started on January 13, 2013 and lasted until March 1st, 2013.[1]

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Minister of State for Antiquities Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim and the Secretary General Adel Abd el-Satar, to the Director of Foreign Missions Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled, to the General Director of the Antiquities of Egypt Dr. Mohamed el-Bialy, to the Director of Luxor Mr. Mansour Boreik and to the Inspectorate of Western Thebes and its General Director Dr. Mohamed Abd El-Aziz, to the Director of the Westbank Mr. Nour Abd El-Ghaffar, to the Director of the Valley of the Kings Mr. Aiman Mohamed Ibrahim and Inspector Mr. Mahmud Hosni, to the Director of the Carter museum magazine Yahya Abdel Aal and Inspector Said Mamduh for their helpful cooperation, assistance and advice during our working season.

This year's work concentrated on the following tasks:

1. documentation of the finds and of the study material of KV 64 and KV 31
2. photographic documentation
3. mapping of KV 64 and topographical survey of the concession area
4. clearing of KV 33 room J and side-rooms
5. Surface clearing between KV 29 and KV 61
6. partial clearing of KV 40 room D
7. study and restoration of finds from KV 40
8. study and restoration of textiles from KV 64, KV 40, and KV 31
9. study of the pottery from KV 64, KV 26 and KV 31
10. work in the MSA Carter Museum Magazine
11. study of the human remains from KV 64 and KV 31

1. Documentation of the study material of KV 64 and KV 31

The main effort this year was concentrated on the documentation of all the study material from KV 31 (found in 2010) and KV 64 (found in 2012). No water had ever penetrated these tombs so that remains of organic material are still preserved. Both tombs were severely looted in Antiquity and the remains are extremely fragmentary. However, a great variety of materials and categories of objects attests to rich burial equipments from the mid 18th dynasty.

KV 31 – which contained a probable total of five burials – reveals small fragments of several wooden coffins, probably four cartonnage masks, pieces of canopic jars, furniture, wigs, ropes, plant and animal offerings, seal impressions in mud-plaster, as well as small elements of faience and splinters of several semi-precious stones (Fig. 1). The study of the large quantity of textile and of the pottery was started. The Ramesside ostraca that had come into the tomb with the limestone fill of the shaft and of room B had been documented during the previous seasons.

KV 64 contained two burials: the original one from the 18th dynasty and a secondary burial from the 22nd dynasty, which was brought into the tomb some time after the pillaging of the original burial. The wooden coffin of the "chantress of Amun" Nehemesbastet and her stela were documented last year. This season the remains of the first burial were recorded. No single object is intact; the number of fragments indicates that the removal of the objects was done very carelessly. The fragments comprise pieces of the wooden coffin(s) and furniture, canopic jars, cartonnage, leather stripes, ropes, glas, fayence as well as plant remains. Some elements (wooden fragments of Amenhotep III and a Ramesside ostracon) entered the tomb with the fill of debris.

All together over 500 fragmentary object remains were documented, drawn and photographed.

2. Photographic documentation

The tombs KV 59 and KV 64 (chamber and shaft) were photographed in order to document the architecture and current state of preservation in preparation for the publications (Fig. 2).

Pre-excitation photographs were taken in KV 33 and KV 40 (rooms D, E and F) as well as in the area around KV 61 and KV 29.

3. Mapping of KV 64 and surveying of the concession area

After check-up and confirmation of the survey point coordinates in the concession area (mostly located on the protective lids covering the tomb entrances) a full survey of KV 64 was carried out. The surrounding coordinate system, based on the Theban Mapping Project was successfully transferred into the tomb. A full architectural survey of the tomb was carried out, this included details such as the slightly vaulted ceiling and steps in the shaft entrance into the chamber. The shaft and tomb entrance had been partially surveyed during season 2012 and were now completed. Three



Fig. 1: Documentation



Fig. 2: Burial chamber of KV 64.

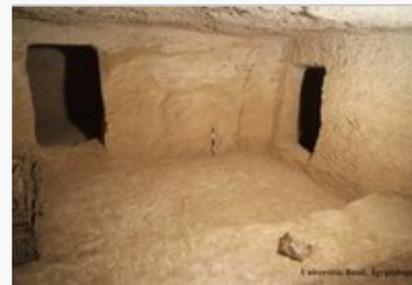


Fig. 3: KV 33



Fig. 4: The area between KV 29 and KV 61



Fig. 5: A sundial of the Ramesside period.

Kontakt:

Prof. Dr. Susanne Bickel
Ägyptologisches Seminar der
Universität Basel
Petersgraben 51
CH-4051 Basel, Switzerland

E-Mail: s.bickel-at-unibas.ch
Tel. +41 (0)61 207 30 60

cross-sections of the tomb were also measured. The original blocking stones had partially been mapped during season 2012 and this work was now completed. During post-excavation work the combination of these data will be processed into a complete plan of KV 64.

The location of KV 61 and its immediate surrounding topography pre-clearing was mapped. A survey point was put in place in the vicinity of the tomb to enable accurate leveling of the immediate surrounding area during clearing works.

The mapping of KV 33 had started during season 2012. This year the coordinate system was imported into the cleared main chamber of tomb and secured for further architectural mapping. Work on mapping the tomb outline and steps leading into the tomb continued.

The topographical survey started during previous seasons was completed this year. This survey includes the main features in the concession area; such as the location of the tombs and their protective lids, the main modern features such as the protective walls surrounding the road to Tutmosis III and the geographical features of the landscape.

(Tanja Alsheimer)

4. Clearing of KV 33

Tomb KV 33 was accessed during the last season 2012 after the removal of the concrete bench and the clearance of the stairs and entrance. An iron door was built in the entrance and a wooden protection installed around the stairs.

This year, the central room J was cleared. Large limestone boulders lay above a layer of limestone chips and flood debris of 1,0–1,2m. The majority of these boulders were left in the room at its West wall. In the entire East half of the room the floor is lowered by about 25 cm. This area was presumably reserved for a sarcophagus.

The two side rooms opening to the East and South were also touched by floodwater.

The debris revealed large quantities of mid-18th dynasty pottery and some fragments of human and animal bones as well as small fragments of calcite/alabaster vessels. The tomb appears to have been investigated in the time of Victor Loret already and revealed no indication as to its original owner (Fig. 3).

5. Surface clearing between KV 29 and KV 61

In preparation for the reopening and investigation of KV 61, part of the area above this tomb and in between KV 61 and KV 29 was cleared (Fig. 4). On the east side of KV 61 the slope of the hill consists of a high heap of limestone debris, probably coming from the excavations of H. Carter and Th. Davis. This area must have been originally occupied by workmen's huts in the Ramesside Period. The back wall of a hut, which was partly discovered already in 2012, was found in this season. On the hill slope behind the hut were a few remains of wooden fragments with hieroglyphic inscriptions mentioning the name of king Amenhotep III.

Some pottery originating from the huts as well as sherds belonging to some funerary equipment were found in the area East of the hut and to the North of KV 29. Several limestone fragments of ostraca were found under a clean layer of sand and limestone chips inside the hut but also behind its wall in the East. A particularly interesting piece is an ancient sundial, which appears to be one of the oldest of its kind (fig. 5).

The remains of the huts will be included to the topographical map in the coming season. Further huts have probably been removed during the discovery of KV 61 in 1910 by E. H. Jones, who was working for Th. Davis. Today some big stones, similar to the discovered walls, are visible in the modern debris above KV 61. Our clearing of the area between KV 29 and KV 61 is done in order to secure the tombs and to prepare the entrance of KV 61 for an iron door in the coming season.

6. Work in KV 40

KV 40 consists of a shaft of some 5m depth, a corridor and four rooms. It contains remains of a great number of burials both from the 18th dynasty and the Third Intermediate Period. All the remains are extremely scattered and fragmented; they are blackened by a heavy fire set presumably by robbers of the late 19th century. The tomb must have seen several phases of looting both in Antiquity and modern times.

Pre-excavation photography was undertaken in rooms D, E and F. A mobile framework for referenced pre-excavation photography was installed (Fig. 6).

The passage between room C and room D was cleared and revealed a difference of level between the two rooms, room D laying ca. 20cm deeper than room C.

Eight sectors of room D were cleared. The scattered remains consist of fragments of wood, cartonnage and textile (mummy bandages and linen cloths) as well as calcinated bones.

7. Study and restoration of remains from KV 40

Work concentrated mainly on the analysis and restoration of the numerous fragments of cartonnage found last year in room C of KV 40. A thick layer of soot had to be removed from the cartonnage fragments, certain pieces had to be consolidated (Fig. 7).

The cartonnage fragments from the Third Intermediate Period show a great variety of designs. It is only after the removal of the soot layer and the cleaning of the several hundreds of fragments that the reassemblage and reconstruction of entire cartonnage covers can be attempted. Among the fragments are pieces of smaller size which must have belonged to cartonnages made for children.

8. Analyses and restoration of textiles

In KV 64 and KV 31 – which had both been preserved from water damage but severely looted in Antiquity – large quantities of textiles subsisted. They were found all over the floors of the tombs, probably stripped from the mummies by robbers looking for precious amulets. This material is being analysed by Agnieszka Wos-Jucker, textile restorer from the Abegg Stiftung (Riggisberg, Switzerland). The examination of most of the textiles from KV 64 revealed that at least 10 different qualities of linen fabric were used (Fig. 8). Two small pieces belonged to an inscribed shroud, the rest of which must have been taken away during the time of the robbery of the original burial or the reuse of the tomb.

9. Study of the pottery from KV 64, KV 26 and KV 31

Work concentrated on the pottery from KV 64, KV 26 and KV 31 with that from KV 64 and KV 26 being completed during three weeks between the 7th and 28th February 2013.

KV 64: Very little pottery remained in KV 64. With one possible exception all of it belonged to the original Eighteenth Dynasty burial. Diagnostic sherds attest to only 28 different vessels, most of which were medium-sized dishes, with a diameter of around 20 cms. made from a local Nile clay. Two larger dishes, both with red bands at the rim, and a flower pot were also found. Closed shapes comprised a



Fig. 6: KV 40, room D, a sector before excavation.



Fig. 7: Cartonnage of KV 40 during restoration.



Fig. 8: Textiles from KV 64 sorted according to linen quality.



Fig. 9: Small jar from KV 64



Fig. 10: One of the canopic heads from KV 64, 18th dynasty.

small beer jar, a small storage jar (Fig. 9), and less complete, a bottle, a second beer jar and the bases of two very large storage jars. One early style blue-painted sherd from J before entrance A would date the assemblage to the time of Amenophis II – Tuthmosis IV, though as this is a single sherd, it cannot be excluded that this sherd is intrusive.

The only possible pot which might be associated with the secondary 22nd Dynasty burial is a small bowl made from an uncoated Nile clay and decorated with a red band at the rim.

KV 26: Much more pottery was preserved in KV 26 with diagnostic pieces attesting a minimum 104 vessels. Four of these date from the eighth-seventh centuries BC and clearly refer to a later reuse of the tomb. The remaining 100 vessels date to the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, more specifically the reign of Tuthmosis III, although a dating into the reign of Amenophis II cannot be entirely discounted. The Eighteenth Dynasty open shapes comprised numerous miniature dishes, medium sized dishes, deep bowls and four flower pots. Many of the medium-sized dishes were decorated in red-splash style, most usual during the reign of Tuthmosis III. Closed shapes comprised a funnel-necked jar, a *nemset* jar, twenty white washed storage jars, which usually contain mummification materials. Marl clay vessels were rare but fragments of a tall stand, four different jugs and two flasks were also found.

KV 31: The pottery from KV 31 is similar to that from KV 26 but is more numerous. An exact count is not possible at this stage as this must await next season. However, as with KV 26, the corpus consists of miniature dishes, medium-sized dishes, bowls, flower pots, *nemset* vases, large storage jars, and, in addition, several *hes* vases. Three marl clay jugs are also present in the assemblage. At least two vessels attest to a reuse of this tomb in the Third Intermediate Period. It is hoped that the study of this material will be finished next season.

(David Aston)

10. Work in the MSA Carter Museum Magazine

A check of the state of preservation of the mummy of Nehemesbastet, discovered in 2012 in KV 64, revealed that the layer of raisin which covers her body also makes her adhere very firmly to the inner surface of the coffin base. The mummy itself is too fragile to be removed without risk of damage. It will therefore stay in the coffin for the further medical analyses planned later this year.

The two anthropomorphic canopic heads of the 18th dynasty found last year in KV 64 received cleaning and conservation to prevent further decay of the stone surface. They were subsequently drawn and photographed (Fig. 10).

11. Study of the human remains from KV 64, 31, 26 and 33

The main aim of this season was to analyse the mummy of the original tomb owner of KV 64 from the 18th dynasty. This mummy – which showed a mixed status of preservation with partially wrapped, exposed fully mummified as well as skeletonized body parts – was photographed and investigated anthropologically. The sex and age was estimated and the mummy was screened macroscopically for indications of any *intra vitam* pathologies and embalming-related (or other taphonomic) alterations. Finally, the mummy was laid to rest in an appropriate manner into a modern wooden container. For the coming season, local CT scanning – together with the mummy from the secondary burial in KV 64 from the 22nd dynasty - is planned.

Human remains originating from KV 26 (primarily fragmented pieces of human bone) as well as from KV 33 (highly fragmented pieces of human bone) were analysed in a similar way. Also, the mummies originating from KV 31 were re-assessed after their initial anthropological and conventional X-ray screening during the last season.

Hopefully, ancient DNA analyses of some of these mummies can be carried out in Egypt in one of the following seasons.

(Frank Rühli)

[1] Participants of this year's working season were: Susanne Bickel: Project Director, Egyptologist; Elina Paulin-Grothe: Field-Director, Egyptologist; Tanja Alsheimer: Archaeologist; Agnieszka Wos-Jucker: Textile Conservator; Erico Peintner: Conservator; Matjaz Kacicnik: Photographer; Frank Rühli: Anatomist; Faried Adrom, David Aston, Claudia Gamma, Charlotte Hunkeler, Nadine Meier, Yasmin Müller, Hans-Hubertus Münch, Daniel Reber, Frederik Rogner: Egyptologists.