



P R A G U E
E G Y P T O L O G I C A L
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XV/2015

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Mastaba of Queen
Khentkaus III
in Abusir

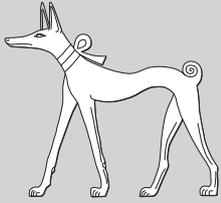


Tomb of the chief
physician
Shepseskafankh

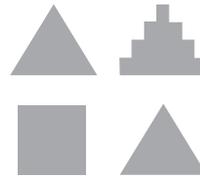
The miraculous
rise of the Fifth
Dynasty



Old Kingdom
canopic jars from
new perspective



P R A G U E EGYPTOLOGICAL S T U D I E S



XV / 2015
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Photograph on the front page

A reconstruction of the offering place in front of the false door of Nefer in tomb AS 68d (photo M. Frouz)

Dear readers,

It has been thirteen years since the first issue of *Prague Egyptological Studies* was published in 2002. Since then it has become an important and wide-selling journal, providing both the scientific and laymen audience with the latest results of our fieldwork and various studies in the field of Czech Egyptology dealing with the civilisations of ancient Egypt and Sudan.

After more than a decade of its existence, we are pleased to launch the first issue of the English edition of *Prague Egyptological Studies*. The English edition is dedicated exclusively to the history, archaeology and language of third millennium BC Egypt. Yet it also aims to include studies dealing with foreign relations during the period. At the same time, we also welcome publications on the latest advances in the study of the environment and studies evaluating the significance of applied sciences. Our principal aim is to accommodate studies concerning either primary research in the field or those that bring up theoretical inquiries of essential importance to the indicated scope and time frame of the journal.

The present issue is devoted to the excavations at Abusir, the principal field of research of the Czech Institute of Egyptology. The individual reports are dedicated to the excavation projects carried out in the pyramid field (Khentkaus III), as well as in the Abusir South area (tomb complex AS 68, the tomb of Shepseskafankh). In addition to these, you will also find more theoretical studies focusing on the "Khentkaus problem", which analyses the significance and importance of three women bearing the same name during the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties, a study dealing with model beer jars and their typological evolution, an interesting seal with a figure of Bes, and an interpretation of canopic jars bearing significant tokens of past treatment on their bodies.

We trust that the English edition of *Prague Egyptological Studies*, which will be produced once a year, will find a firm place among other Egyptological scholarly journals. We are convinced that a clearly defined profile of this scientific journal will attract not only the attention of many readers but also submissions of significant contributions from the scientific community and thus streamline major advances in the fields of third millennium BC Egypt history, archaeology and the like.

Miroslav Bárta and Lucie Jirásková

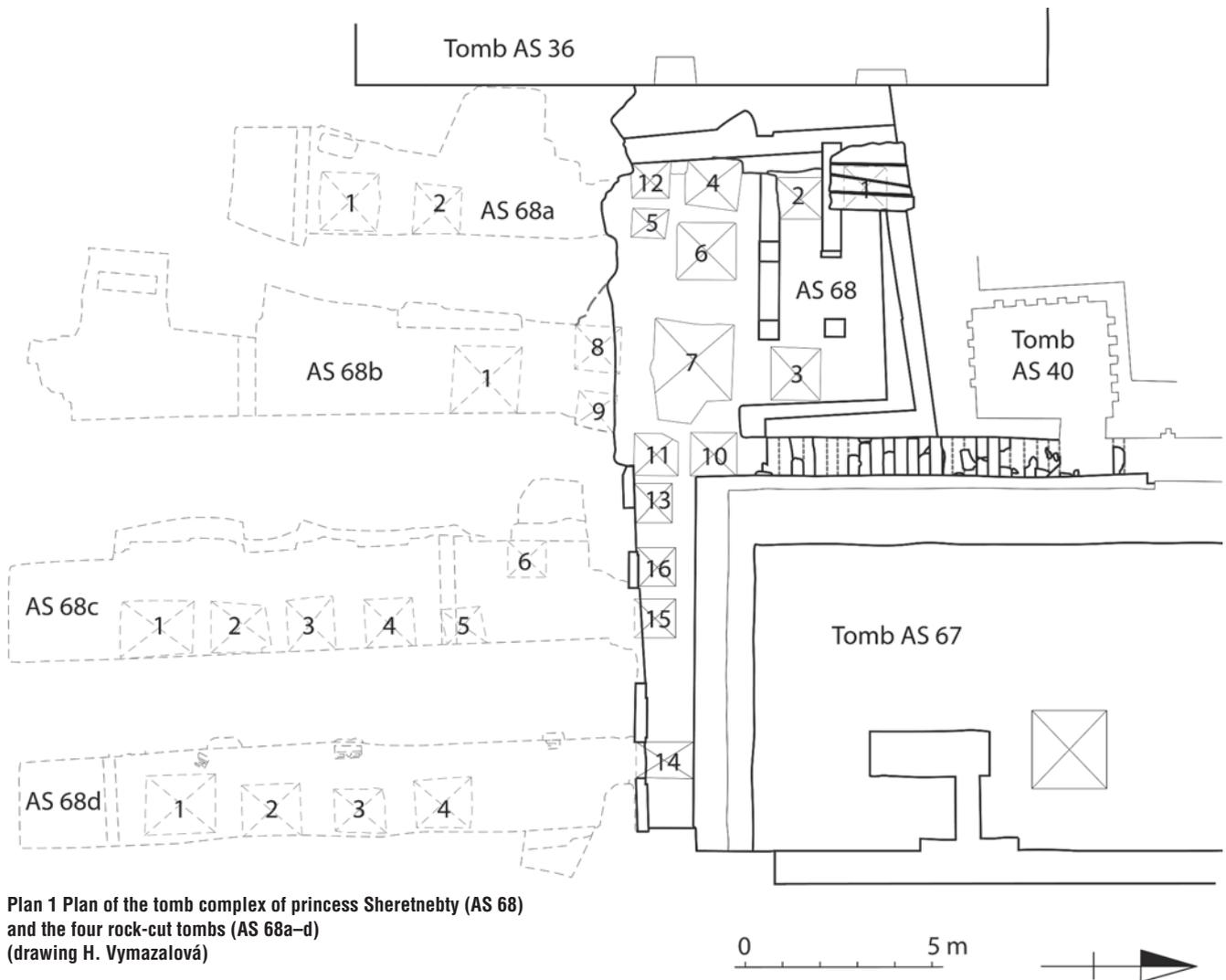
Contents

REPORTS

- Burial shafts and chambers of Nefer and Neferhathor in tomb AS 68d.
A comparative evaluation of the ceramic finds (Katarína Arias Kytarová) 3
- Tomb of the chief physician Shepseskafankh (Miroslav Bárta) 15
- Archaeological excavation of the mastaba of Queen Khentkaus III (tomb AC 30)
in Abusir (Jaromír Krejčí – Katarína Arias Kytarová – Martin Odler) 28
- Exploration of the burial apartments in tomb complex AS 68. Preliminary report
of the 2013 fall season (Hana Vymazalová) 43

STUDIES

- Ritual tradition and transfer between shape and meaning – model beer jars in stone
and pottery (Katarína Arias Kytarová – Lucie Jirásková) 59
- A burial with a stamp seal depicting a Bes-like figure from Abusir
(Veronika Dulíková – Martin Odler – Helena Březinová – Petra Havelková) 69
- Damage and repair of the Old Kingdom canopic jars – the case at Abusir
(Lucie Jirásková) 76
- The miraculous rise of the Fifth Dynasty – the story of Papyrus Westcar
and historical evidence (Miroslav Verner) 86



Plan 1 Plan of the tomb complex of princess Sheretnebt (AS 68) and the four rock-cut tombs (AS 68a–d) (drawing H. Vymazalová)

Exploration of the burial apartments in tomb complex AS 68. Preliminary report of the 2013 fall season¹

Hana Vymazalová

Tomb complex AS 68 consists of four rock-cut tombs of high officials (AS 68a–d), a corridor and an open courtyard that bears the name and titles of a king's daughter of his body, Sheretnebt. The tomb complex has been explored since 2012 (see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20–33) and several studies have been published on the work, especially on the identity and social status of the tomb owners and the princess herself, who was a daughter of King Nyuserre (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012, 2013, 2014).

Introduction

In previous seasons the courtyard and the corridor were uncovered, several shafts and burials in the courtyard were cleared, and the rock-cut chapels of the four associated tombs of Duaptah (AS 68a), Shepesuptah (AS 68b), Sheretnebt (AS 68c) and Nefer (AS 68d) were explored (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20–30; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 26–27). The work continued in the 2013 season between September 28 and November 28, concentrating on the remaining burial apartments

within the tomb complex. These included shafts in the courtyard, in the corridor and inside the four rock-cut tombs (for a briefer and less detailed report in Czech, see Vymazalová 2014).

The courtyard and the corridor of tomb complex AS 68

The courtyard of tomb complex AS 68 was first discovered in the 2012 spring season. It is an almost square space sunken 4 m deep into the surrounding bedrock, with

a corridor running to the east from the southeastern corner. It is accessible from the northeastern corner by means of a staircase made of limestone slabs, which descended along the eastern wall of the courtyard. The staircase was situated at the end of a north-south running passageway leading along the western wall of tomb AS 67. This at first, seemed to indicate that AS 67 was earlier in date than AS 68, blocking its way from the east (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 15; Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*). Recent excavations, however, showed that the access to the whole site lead not from the east but from the north through a passageway coming from one of the side valleys from the Lake of Abusir. Even though the northern end of this passageway has not been uncovered yet, it was perhaps located by the tomb of Shepsekafankh (AS 39) (see Bárta in this issue). The passageway itself gave access on the east to the tomb of Nefershepes (Memi?) (AS 67, Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 17–20), and on the west to the tombs of Neferinpu (AS 37, Bárta *et al.* 2014), Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38, Vymazalová *et al.* 2011), Ptahhotep (AS 36, yet unpublished), the large anonymous tomb AS 31 (Bárta 2011), and the anonymous structure AS 40. The tomb complex of Princess Sheretnebt (AS 68) is situated at the end of this passageway, directly opposite to its presumed entrance (see fig. 1 in Bárta in this issue).

The walls of the courtyard and the corridor of tomb complex AS 68 were cut in the bedrock of alternating harder and softer layers. Due to its softer parts, the bedrock was friable, and thus the walls were neither straight nor smooth. The western, northern and eastern walls of the courtyard and the corridor were cased with large limestone blocks; some of the casing blocks were noticeably larger (up to 0.60 m in width and 1.50 m in length) than blocks that were used for construction of the surrounding tombs on the site. This might correspond to the special status of the owner of this courtyard, who was a member of the royal family. No traces of casing were found by the southern wall of the courtyard and the corridor, but four limestone naoi with statues were discovered by the southern wall of the corridor *in situ* (see Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*;

Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 22, Figs. 5–6; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 345; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3–4, Fig. 2). These naoi might indicate that casing, which incorporated the naoi, might have once existed, covering at least part of the southern wall.

The courtyard was originally partly roofed; one architrave and several broken roofing slabs were found *in situ*. The latter had to be removed for safety reasons. Two other architraves and remains of several more roofing slabs were found fallen inside the corridor. The roofing was supported by four limestone pillars, which bear a vertical hieroglyphic inscription in sunken relief with the name, title and epithet of Princess Sheretnebt (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 339–342). These were the only inscriptions in the courtyard, indicating that Sheretnebt was, thanks to her status, the main figure of the tomb complex, through whom the other tomb owners gained importance (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 2).

The courtyard served as a place shared by the four rock-cut tombs and might have been a place where the family members gathered on festivals and funerals. Pottery, as well as the fragments of animal bones, which were found in large quantity above the floor of the courtyard, confirm the occurrence of cultic activities in the courtyard that continued over a long period of time in the second half of the Old Kingdom (Sůvová – Vymazalová 2013: 56–58, 60; Arias Kytarová 2013, 2014). At the same time, the courtyard and the corridor became the place of burial for a number of people who were most likely closely related to the owners of the four rock-cut tombs. These were presumably, above all, family relatives of later generations. A professional relationship to the tomb owners might have also been the reason for having a burial in this tomb complex. Some of the later burials were placed in the fill of the courtyard, on the floor or near to the floor (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20), but the majority of the burials was placed in burial shafts that were hewn in the floor. In total, 12 shafts were found in the courtyard itself and 4 more shafts were uncovered in the corridor. Some of these shafts were explored in the 2012 fall season

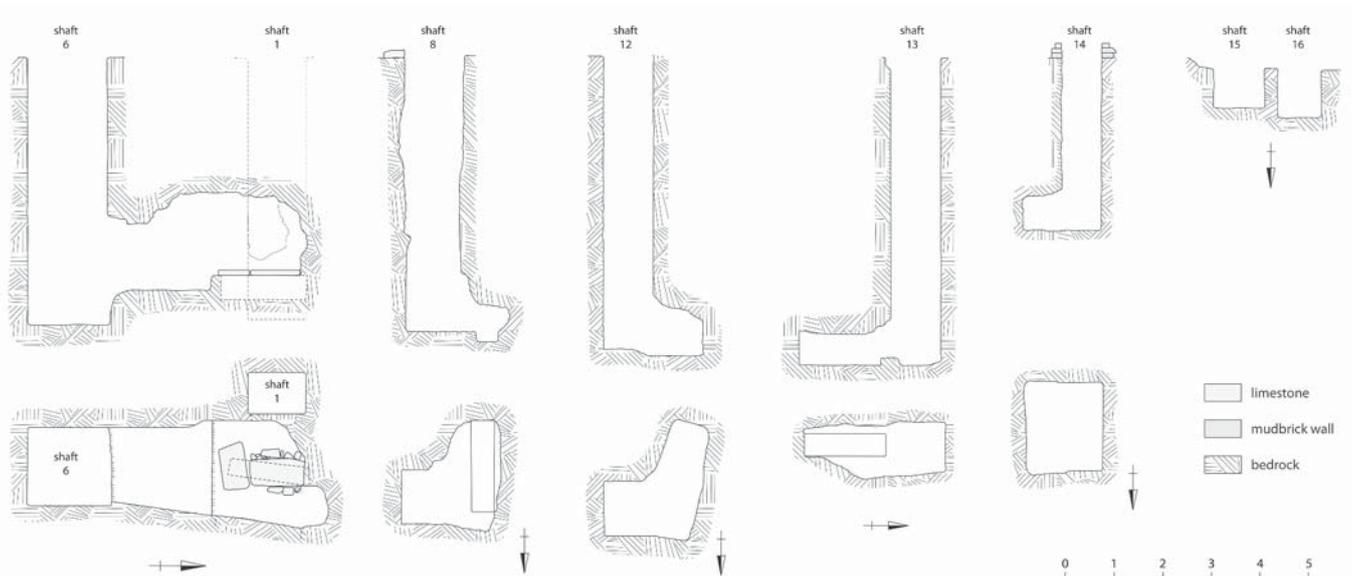


Fig. 1 Shafts 6, 8, 12–16 in the courtyard and the corridor of AS 68, sections and plans of the burial chambers (drawing H. Vymazalová)

(Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20–21; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 26–27), and the work continued in the remaining shafts during the 2013 fall season (see plan 1, fig. 1).

Shaft 6 in the courtyard of tomb complex AS 68

This shaft is situated in the courtyard to the south of the pillars (see fig. 1). It is 1.60 × 1.60 m large and reached 5.40 m deep. Its fill consisted of grey sand with cut *tafl* mixed with *tafl* pieces and included fragments of pottery, animal bones, charcoal fragments and a hammer stone with traces of copper metal.

The burial chamber was hewn 3.20 m deep to the north of the shaft, and its entrance was 0.70 m higher than the floor of the shaft. The chamber was in total 3.84 m long and maximally 2.20 m wide. The ceiling today reaches almost 2.00 m high, but its original height cannot be determined due to the intensive crumbling of the entire ceiling surface. The lowest point of the ceiling, which survived in the entrance, reached 1.20 m above the floor.

The chamber was filled with brown sand with limestone fragments and several larger limestone blocks. The fill contained fragments of pottery, fragments of animal bones and five hammer stones with traces of copper. The walls of the chamber were hewn in the hard bedrock in the lower part, while the upper part of the walls and the ceiling were cut into soft *tafl*. Due to this, the eastern and western walls of the chamber had partly collapsed. The upper part of the western wall had an opening broken into the burial chamber of Shaft 3, which was explored in 2012 (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). It was thanks to this broken wall that the existence of this burial chamber was known in fall 2012, but it could not be cleaned at that time due to safety reasons. The northern part of the western wall of the burial chamber opened into Shaft 1, and therefore it was presumed in 2012 that this burial chamber belonged to Shaft 1 (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). Shaft 1, however, appears to have no chamber

of its own due to an apparent mistake of the builders, who must have been unaware of the existence of the chamber of Shaft 6.

The northern part of the burial chamber had a floor 0.30 m higher than the southern part, and it contained a burial pit. This was situated in the north-south axis of the chamber and was discovered intact, covered with two limestone slabs joined with pinkish gypsum plaster (fig. 2).

The burial pit was 1.70 m long, 0.37–0.43 m wide and 0.46–0.50 m deep. It contained an intact burial of a man 20–30 years old, who was placed in an outstretched position slightly on his left side, with head to the north, face to the east and arms over his body with hands on his crotch. By the right side of the deceased, in the area next to his pelvis and his right hand, a 9.70 cm long copper tool was discovered, which formed a part of his funerary equipment (for the tool see Odler, *in preparation*).

Shaft 8 in the courtyard of tomb complex AS 68

Shaft 8 is located in the southeastern corner of the courtyard, in the entrance of tomb AS 68b. The shaft is 1.20 × 1.20 m wide at its opening, while only 1.10 × 1.10 m at its bottom; and reached 5.70 m in depth. The fill of the shaft consisted of brown sand mixed with *tafl* fragments and low number of limestone chips.

The finds from the fill of this shaft included fragments of pottery (see Dulíková – Arias Kytarová – Čilek 2014: 44–47), animal bones, a faience bead, charcoal fragments and a stone hammer with copper traces. In addition to that, a limestone false door of Hetepuni, broken into several pieces, was found at 4.35 m depth in the shaft. The false door measures 0.50 × 0.75 × 0.11 m and contains hieroglyphic inscriptions written in black paint, mentioning the usual offering formula, the owner's name and his titles. These include *jmj-r3 š t hntj(w)-š pr-š w^cb 200 Mn-nfr-Mrj-R^c w^cb š hm-ntr Hntj-tnnt* “overseer of the department of *khentyu-she* of the Great House, the *wab*-priest of the two hundred of the (pyramid complex) Enduring-is-the-Splendor-of-Meryre (Pepy I), the great *wab*-priest and the *hem-netjer*-priest of Khentytjenenet” (for the titles see



Fig. 2 The intact burial pit in the burial chamber in Shaft 6 of the courtyard of AS 68 (photo H. Vymazalová)

Jones 2000: 241 no. 882, 369 no. 1362, 378 no. 1401, 569 no. 2095; for more information on Hetepuni see Dulíková – Arias Kytarová – Cílek 2014: 40–41). The false door was most likely thrown into the shaft by the ancient tomb robbers. No niche exists above the shaft and thus it is not possible to confirm the original place of this false door and conclude that Hetepuni is the deceased from Shaft 8.

The burial niche was hewn 5.00 m deep to the west and southwest of the shaft, in a layer of soft *tafl*. Its walls were crumbling and therefore the original shape and size of the niche was no longer apparent. Today the niche is ca 2.20 m long, max. 0.90 m wide and 0.60 m high.

The floor of the niche contained a burial pit that was hewn in a north-south direction and was 1.86 m long, 0.46 m wide and at least 0.20 m deep. The burial pit accommodated the burial of a man 40–60 years old, who was placed in an outstretched position with head to the north, face to the east and arms along the body. His legs were slightly bent due to the lack of space in the southern part of the pit. The deceased was once placed in a wooden coffin made of *Acacia nilotica* wood, which was entirely disintegrated with only a very small fragment surviving. Imprints of the coffin were, however, visible on the western and northern sides of the burial pit.

Shaft 12 in the courtyard of tomb complex AS 68

This shaft is situated in the southwestern corner of the courtyard. It is located right underneath a secondary niche that was cut into the courtyard's western wall. This was the southern of two secondary niches, each associated with a shaft. Shaft 4 underneath the northern niche was explored in 2012 (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 20–21; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27). Both niches were originally covered with dark mud plaster, of which a few remains were still visible on the southern niche. In front of the niches remains of a mud floor were traced. This was ca 0.50 m above the courtyard's original floor, and seems to have been a later cultic place made in the courtyard at a time when some of its roofing blocks and architraves had fallen from their original positions onto the floor.

The shaft was 1.10 × 1.00 m wide and 5.80 m deep. The fill of the shaft in its upper part consisted of brown sand mixed with limestone chips and numerous limestone fragments; in the central part of brown sand and rubble; while in the bottom part of cut *tafl* mixed with a small quantity of brown sand and some limestone fragments. The fill also contained fragments of pottery, scattered fragments of bones, wooden and charcoal fragments, and a stone hammer with traces of copper.

The burial chamber was hewn 4.80 m deep to the west and southwest of the shaft, in a layer of soft *tafl* bedrock. The chamber had slightly an irregular shape and was 2.23 m long and 0.70 meters wide and 0.64–0.96 m high. The fill contained some pottery fragments. The southern part of the chamber contained the burial of a man 40–60 years old. The burial was found on the floor in the southern part of the chamber on the left side, with head to the north, arms along the pelvis and the legs contracted. The deceased was originally placed in a wooden coffin made of *Acacia* wood, which had disintegrated, but its numerous fragments were found in the chamber.



Fig. 3 Imprints of a wooden coffin on the burial pit in the burial niche in Shaft 13 in the corridor of AS 68 (photo H. Vymazalová)

Shaft 13 in the corridor of tomb complex AS 68

The shaft was located in the western end of the corridor, which runs to the east from the southeastern corner of the courtyard. It was 1.00 × 1.00 m wide and 6.00 m deep. The fill consisted of cut *tafl* and contained fragments of pottery, scattered bones, charcoal fragments, two hammer stones and a few small fragments of sunken relief.

The burial chamber was hewn to the south of the shaft in a layer of soft *tafl* bedrock. The chamber was 1.80 m long, max. 1.60 m wide and 0.62–0.80 m high, and its side walls and ceiling had crumbled. The floor of the chamber, which was 16 cm higher than the floor of the shaft, contained a rectangular burial pit, 1.60 m long, 0.44 m wide and 0.20–0.50 m deep.

The pit contained the burial of a man over 50 years old, with the body placed on its back, with head to the north, face perhaps to the east. His left arm was along his body while his right arm was bent across his abdomen, and the legs were contracted. The burial was originally placed inside a coffin made of wood of *Ficus sycomorus*, of which only several small fragments survived; but its imprints were clearly visible on the southern part of the pit (fig. 3), and traces of the coffin were also apparent on the pit's floor. The deceased was covered with a layer of very fine mud, most likely the remains of a funerary practice relating to renewal (see also below).

Shaft 14 in the courtyard of tomb complex AS 68

The shaft was hewn in the floor in the eastern part of the corridor, right in front of the entrance to the tomb of Nefer

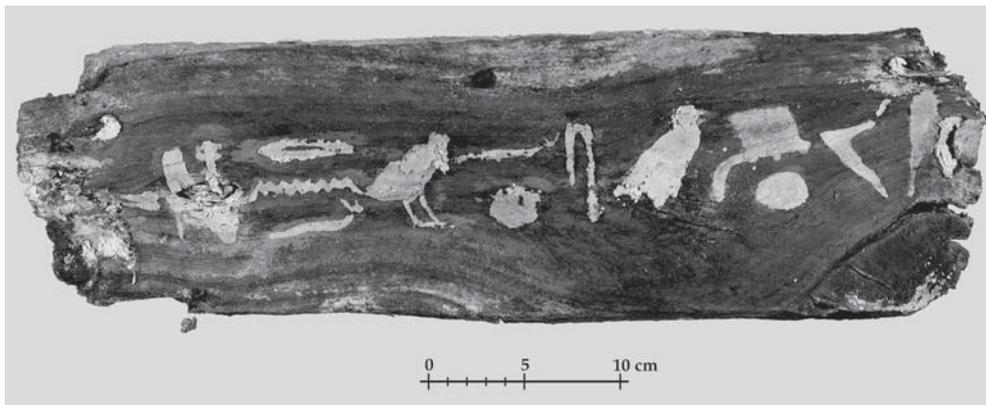


Fig. 4 The foot plank of the coffin of Sefekhu from his burial niche in Shaft 14 in the corridor of AS 68 (photo M. Frouz)

(AS 68d) (for the tomb of Nefer see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková – *et al.* 2014: 26–30; Bárta 2014; Bárta, *in preparation*).

The shaft measured 2.00 × 0.80 m, and it reached 3.80 m in depth. It was filled with very compact brown sand mixed with a small amount of rubble, limestone fragments, and some fragments of mud brick. The fill of the shaft contained fragments of pottery, a small fragment of sunken relief, scattered bones, wood, charcoal and a faience bead.

The burial chamber was hewn at 3.00 m depth to the east of the shaft, in a *tafl* bedrock layer. It was 2.00 m long, 0.80 m wide and 0.70–0.80 m high. Its walls had partly crumbled but the niche still kept its rectangular shape. It was filled with the same type of fill as the shaft and included some pottery fragments. The niche contained the burial of a man over 50 years old, which was placed inside a coffin made of *Acacia nilotica*. The deceased was placed in an almost outstretched position, on his left side with head to the north, perhaps face to the east, arms contracted to the chest and legs slightly bent. Some parts of the coffin were entirely disintegrated while other parts survived, including some planks of the head and feet sides of the coffin and the lid. Some of the planks were inscribed, bearing slightly sunken hieroglyphic inscriptions filled with white paste (265b/AS68/2013 fragments A–D). The

inscriptions on the head and feet planks of the coffin both faced east and identified the deceased from Shaft 14 as *jm3ḥw Šfḥw rn.f nfr Jt[j]* “revered Sefekhu, his good name I[t]j” (fig. 4). The remains of the inscription from (perhaps) the lid of the coffin also mention part of Sefekhu’s title, reading *...[ḫn]tj [t]nnt Šfḥw rn.f nfr Jt[j]* “[...Khen]tytjeneret, Sefekhu, his good name I[t]j”. Sefekhu might have been priest of Khentytjeneret, which is a rarely attested title also held by Hetepuni (see above, for other title holders see for instance Dulíková – Arias Kytarová – Cílek 2014: 40–41). It is worth mentioning that Sefekhu was the name of one of the sons of judge Inti, who was buried in a nearby mastaba in the Sixth Dynasty, where remains of inscribed wooden coffins of a very similar type were found as well (Bárta – Vachala *et al.*, *in preparation*). The name Sefekhu was not common in the Old Kingdom and we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that Sefekhu of Shaft 14 was Inti’s son (Miroslav Bárta, personal communication).

Shaft 15 in the corridor of tomb complex AS 68

The shaft was situated in the central part of the corridor, in front of and within the entrance of the tomb of Sheretnebtj and her family (AS 68c). The shaft was very rough and largely unfinished and had an irregular shape. Its upper part reached the maximum dimensions of 2.33 × 1.24 m.



Fig. 5 The inscribed block of Ankhiamptah and Neferhekenhathor found fallen into Shaft 16 in the corridor of AS 68 (photo M. Frouz)

Both the southern and northern sides show very roughly hewn steps going down to the central part (1.08 × 0.60 m), which reached a depth of 0.96 m. The shaft was filled with brown sand with limestone chips that contained no finds.

Shaft 16 in the corridor of tomb complex AS 68

The shaft was situated in the corridor very near to Shaft 15. Shaft 16 was 0.85 × 0.88 m wide at the opening. It was never finished and reached only 1.00 m deep. Its fill consisted of brown sand mixed with a small amount of rubble. A limestone block with sunken relief was found fallen in the shaft (372/AS68/2013, fig. 5), partly covered with another, uninscribed block of limestone. The inscribed block (98.00 × 42.00 × 29.00 cm) bears offering formulas and the names of Ankhiamptah and his wife Neferhekenhathor (or Hekenineferhathor; for parallels see Gourdon 2007: 377.3 and 497.3; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 567–568). This block is likely to have been part of a false door. We can presume that this false door might have been originally placed in tomb AS 68c, where an offering table in the shape of a basin with the name of Ankhiamptah was found (see below, for a detailed discussion see Vymazalová, *in preparation*). The style of the relief on this block indicates that the false door of Ankhiamptah was later in date than the false doors of Sheretnebty and Nefer, which belonged to two of the main tomb owners in tomb complex AS 68 (Vymazalová, *in preparation*). This corresponds to the suggested development of the tomb of Sheretnebty and later date of some of its shafts (see below).

The tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a)

The entrance to tomb AS 68a is located in the southern wall of the courtyard, by its southwestern corner. It was first discovered in the 2012 spring season, when its rock-cut chapel was explored (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 22–24; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343). During the 2013 fall season the two burial shafts hewn along the eastern wall of the tomb chapel were explored (Vymazalová 2014: 16–18; for the plan of the tomb see fig. 6).

Shaft 1

The southern shaft in a tomb was usually prepared for the main tomb owner. The southern shaft in the tomb of Duaptah was 1.50 × 1.60 m wide at the opening and reached 4.70 m in depth. The fill of the upper part of the shaft consisted of compact cut *tafl*. At a depth of 2.60 m, the fill started to include larger limestone pieces. At a depth of ca. 3.80 m, the fill consisted of cut *tafl*, brown-grey sand and very few *tafl* pieces.

The fill of the shaft contained fragments of pottery, a complete mud-stopper with impressions of threads, fragments of animal bones and charcoal fragments. In the bottom part of the shaft, in front of the burial chamber, the finds included fragments of wood and a few small fragments of low relief showing remains of offering bearers.

The burial chamber was hewn to the south of the shaft. This unusual orientation is perhaps related to the close proximity of the northern shaft, in order to avoid stability problems of the substructure. The entrance into the burial

chamber was partly closed by a wall built of irregular limestone pieces and sand. It was 1.24 m wide, 1.00 m long and 1.35 m high, and its upper part had been removed by the ancient tomb robbers. In the blocking wall human bones of a woman over 50 year of age were found, disturbed by the robbers. It is not clear, however, whether these bones were thrown into the shaft, or whether they were originally placed at its bottom or even inside the burial chamber.

The chamber itself was cut in hard bedrock and had an almost regular shape, 2.80 m wide and 3.20–3.30 m long in a north-south direction, and 1.55 m high. The chamber was partly filled with brown sand mixed with limestone and *tafl* pieces and chips, and the fill contained fragments of pottery. Parts of two pottery jars were found, perhaps *in situ*, on the floor of the chamber in its southeastern corner, and these seem to be the remains of the tomb equipment (Arias Kytnarová, *forthcoming a*). In addition, animal bones, mostly of cattle, were found on the floor of the chamber near the southwestern corner and by the southern wall of the chamber, constituting the remains of meat offerings. By the southern wall of the chamber, a small cone of mud with traces of threads on the flat bottom side was found, with a hole going through the cone and seal impressions on the

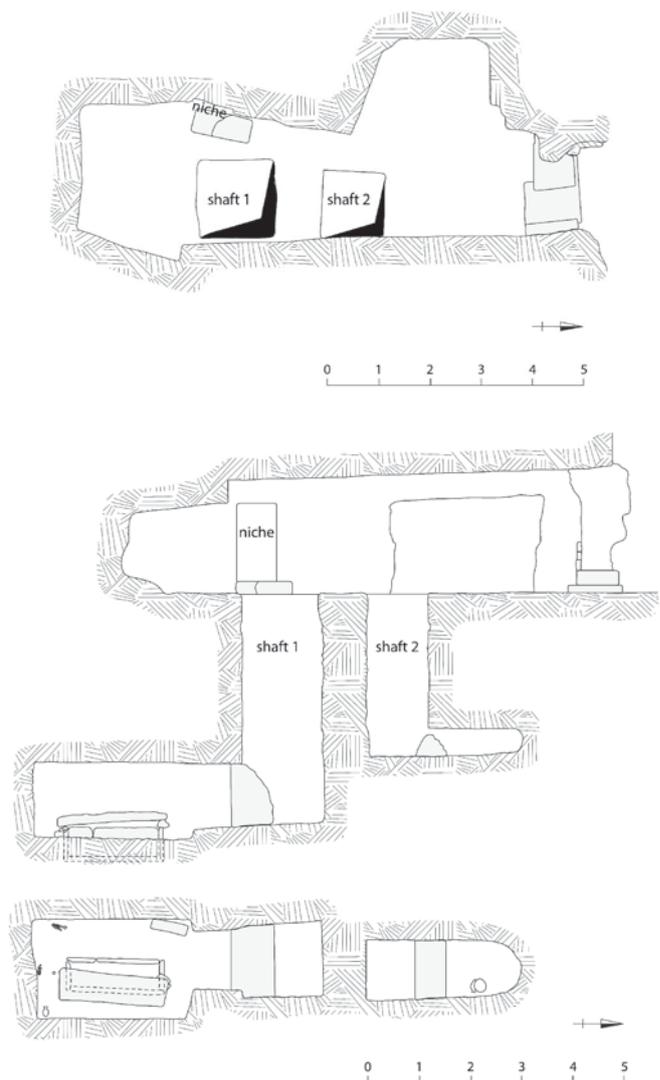


Fig. 6 Plan and section of the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a) (drawing H. Vymazalová)

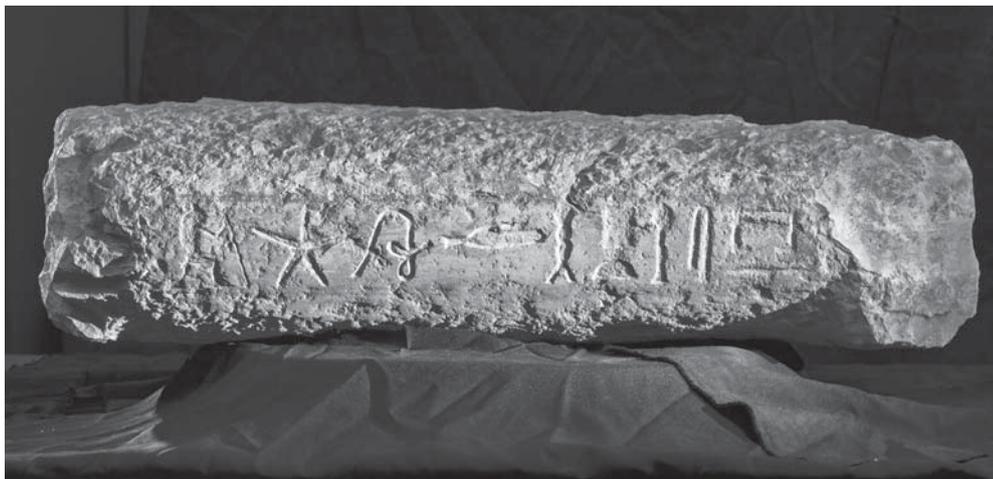


Fig. 7 The drum of Duaptah, coming perhaps from the entrance of his tomb chapel AS 68a (photo M. Frouz)

upper side (275/AS68a/2013). The seal impressions include the *serekh* of *Dd-hꜣw*, the Horus name of King Djedkare, which help us to date the burial of Duaptah to this king's reign. Wooden objects were also once placed by the southern wall of the chamber but they had disintegrated entirely and were attested only by brown dust on the floor of the chamber. Their original form or shape could not be recognised. It is possible that the mud seal once closed a wooden chest, as attested in two burial chambers in the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37, Bárta *et al.* 2014: 98, Figs. 6.37–6.40), or another type of object.

In the northwestern corner of the chamber just behind the entrance, an inscribed block of white limestone was found leaning against the western wall of the chamber (170/AS68a/2013) (fig. 7). This block is a drum (84.00 × 20.00 × 25.00 cm), and it bore a hieroglyphic inscription in sunken relief, giving the name of the tomb owner Duaptah and his title *shꜣ pr-ꜣ* "inspector of the Great House". This drum most likely originally belonged at the entrance of the tomb and was originally placed under the lintel that was discovered in 2012 and bore the same

title and name (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 27; Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 24). Entrances with lintels and drums placed in a similar manner are known from a number of tombs from the Old Kingdom (for the decoration of the tomb entrances with lintels and drums see Harpur 1987: 43–49; see also Vymazalová 2014: 17, Fig. 8).

The floor of the burial chamber contained a north-south oriented pit, which contained a sarcophagus built of several limestone slabs joined with pinkish mortar. Only 20–24 cm of its sidewalls reached above the floor while the major part of the sarcophagus was sunken into the floor. A similar way of making a sarcophagus is also attested in the burial chamber of Shepesuptah (AS 68b), but it is quite unusual.

The inside of the sarcophagus was 1.82 m long, 0.51–0.55 m wide, and 0.60 m deep. The lid of the sarcophagus was made of a single limestone slab with a rough outer surface. The sarcophagus was opened by the ancient tomb robbers, who had moved the lid to the east to get access to the burial and had used stones to support the lid in its northern part (fig. 8).



Fig. 8 The burial chamber of Duaptah in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68a (photo M. Frouz)

The inside of the sarcophagus was filled with brown sand mixed with limestone and *tafl* chips. The fill contained fragments of pottery and remains of the burial of the tomb owner, a man over 50 years old. The burial was disturbed, and its remains were found completely disarticulated. In addition, faience beads, small fragments of golden foil, and tiny fragments of copper were found inside the sarcophagus, constituting the remains of the tomb owner's burial adornments.

Shaft 2

The northern shaft measured 1.25–1.30 × 1.20–1.25 m at the opening and reached 3.50 m in depth. The fill of the shaft consisted of brown sand mixed with limestone chips and some slightly larger limestone pieces. This fill contained several finds, including a stone hammer, a few animal bones, charcoal fragments and a small fragment of a vessel made of Egyptian alabaster. All parts of the fill also contained fragments of pottery, which included small fragments of a fine jar bearing a hieroglyphic inscription scratched on its outside surface. This inscription reads *Nfr-Mnw* “Nefermin” and it is possible that this was the name of the owner of this shaft (for this pottery jar see also Arias Kytarová 2014: 13; Arias Kytarová, *forthcoming a*).

The burial chamber was hewn to the north of the shaft. The entrance into the burial chamber was blocked up with a wall of irregular stones and rubble, which had been, however, partly removed by the ancient tomb robbers. The chamber was 2.00 m long in a north-south direction, 1.20–1.25 m wide and only 0.60 m high in the south and 0.50 m in the north. It seems that the burial chamber was unfinished and perhaps had been planned to reach deeper.

The chamber was completely filled with *tafl* fragments and chips, and the fill also contained fragments of pottery. Underneath the fill, 0.10 m above the floor of the chamber a layer of dried mud appeared which might have been the result of rain, or more likely an intentional funerary practice. Evidence of covering a burial with mud, which undoubtedly relates to the ancient Egyptian belief of renewal, is attested in some other tombs at Abusir South. For instance, in Shaft 13 in the corridor (see above), in the tomb of Neferherptah, where the burial was covered with a layer of mud (Dulíková – Odler – Havelková 2011: 12), and in the tomb of Neferinpu whose body was covered with mud mortar (Bárta *et al.* 2014: 36, Fig. 3.35). Such practice has also been attested in Old Kingdom tombs at Giza and Saqqara, as well as at other cemeteries from the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period (for further details see Dulíková – Odler – Havelková 2011: 12). The burial of a man over 50 years old was found on the floor of the chamber in its northern part, partly covered by the above-mentioned mud layer. The deceased was placed in an east-west direction, with his head to the east and his face to the north. To the south of his head, two complete pottery vessels were placed, including a jar and a bowl.

The tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b)

The entrance to tomb AS 68b is located in the southeastern corner of the courtyard. It was first discovered in the 2012

spring season, when the rock-cut chapel (antechamber) and the tomb owner's burial chamber were explored. The latter was situated to the south of the chapel and was accessible through an entrance corridor with a few steps (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 24; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 343–344). Several hieratic inscriptions were written on the walls of the chapel, listing the titles and name of the tomb owner. Another inscription, on one of the casing blocks, gives evidence of an inspection that was done in the tomb late in the reign of King Djedkare (see Vymazalová – Dulíková 2012: 344). During the 2013 fall season, the burial shaft in the chapel was explored (Vymazalová 2014: 16; see the plan of the tomb in fig. 9).

The burial chamber of Shepesuptah

The chamber was found robbed, and numerous fragments of limestone and rubble covered its floor. Some pottery fragments were found on the floor of the chamber, as well as scattered human and animal bones (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 24).

The chamber was quite spacious, measuring 5.00 × 4.30 × 2.60 m, and contained a 2.15 m wide and 2.00 m deep niche in the western wall, where a step was carved in the bedrock. This step formed the northern and western walls of a burial pit or rather a simple sarcophagus, which was partly cut in the bedrock on the northern and western sides and partly built of limestone slabs on the eastern and southern sides. The inside of the sarcophagus was 1.70 m long, 0.45 m wide and 0.40 m high. Another slab formed the sarcophagus lid, and the bedrock step to the west of the sarcophagus served for its placement before the burial. The lid had been, however, broken into two pieces by ancient tomb robbers and thrown on the floor of the chamber (fig. 10). The slightly disturbed burial of Shepesuptah was placed inside of the sarcophagus, together with a small bone tablet with two holes.

Shaft 1

The only shaft in tomb AS 68b is situated in the northern part of the rock-cut chapel, just behind the entrance of the tomb. It was 1.60 × 1.60 m wide at the opening and reached only 1.40 m in depth. At this depth, the shaft was left unfinished by the ancient builders, and it was never used to accommodate a burial.

The fill of the shaft consisted of limestone chips and fragments, with a rather small addition of brown sand. Some fragments of pottery and a hammer stone were found in the fill of this shaft.

The tomb of Sheretnebty (AS 68c)

The entrance to tomb AS 68c is located in the western part of the corridor. It was discovered in the 2012 fall season, when its rock-cut chapel was explored (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 25–26; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 2–7). During the 2013 fall season, the burial shafts were explored (Vymazalová 2014: 10–16). In total, six burial shafts were hewn in the floor of this tomb (fig. 11).

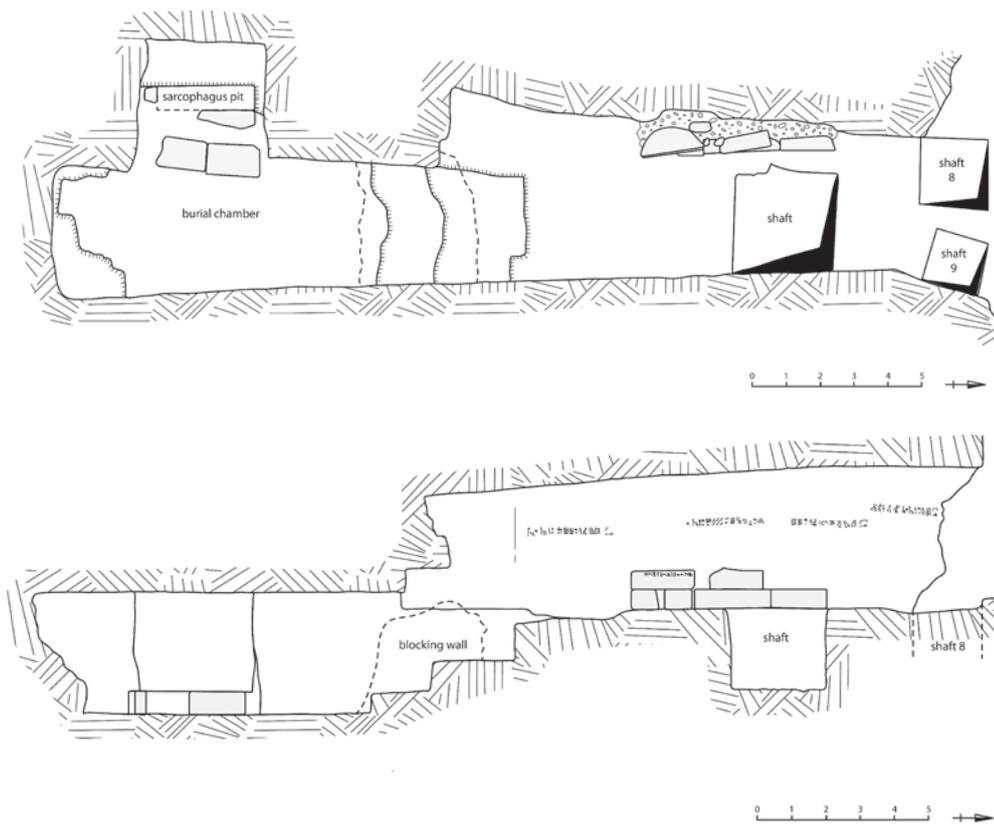


Fig. 9 Plan and section of the tomb of Shepesuptah (drawing H. Vymazalová)

Shaft 1

The southernmost shaft in tomb AS 68c had been prepared for the burial of the tomb owner. This shaft measured 1.50 × 1.60 m at the opening and reached 11.10 m in depth. The fill of the shaft consisted of a number of alternating layers of brown sand mixed with varying quantities of limestone chips. Some layers contained more limestone chips than sand, while other layers were mixed with brown sand. Occasionally, a larger limestone piece was found in the fill. The fill of the bottom 4.00 m of the shaft contained more sand than the fill in the upper part. The fill of the shaft

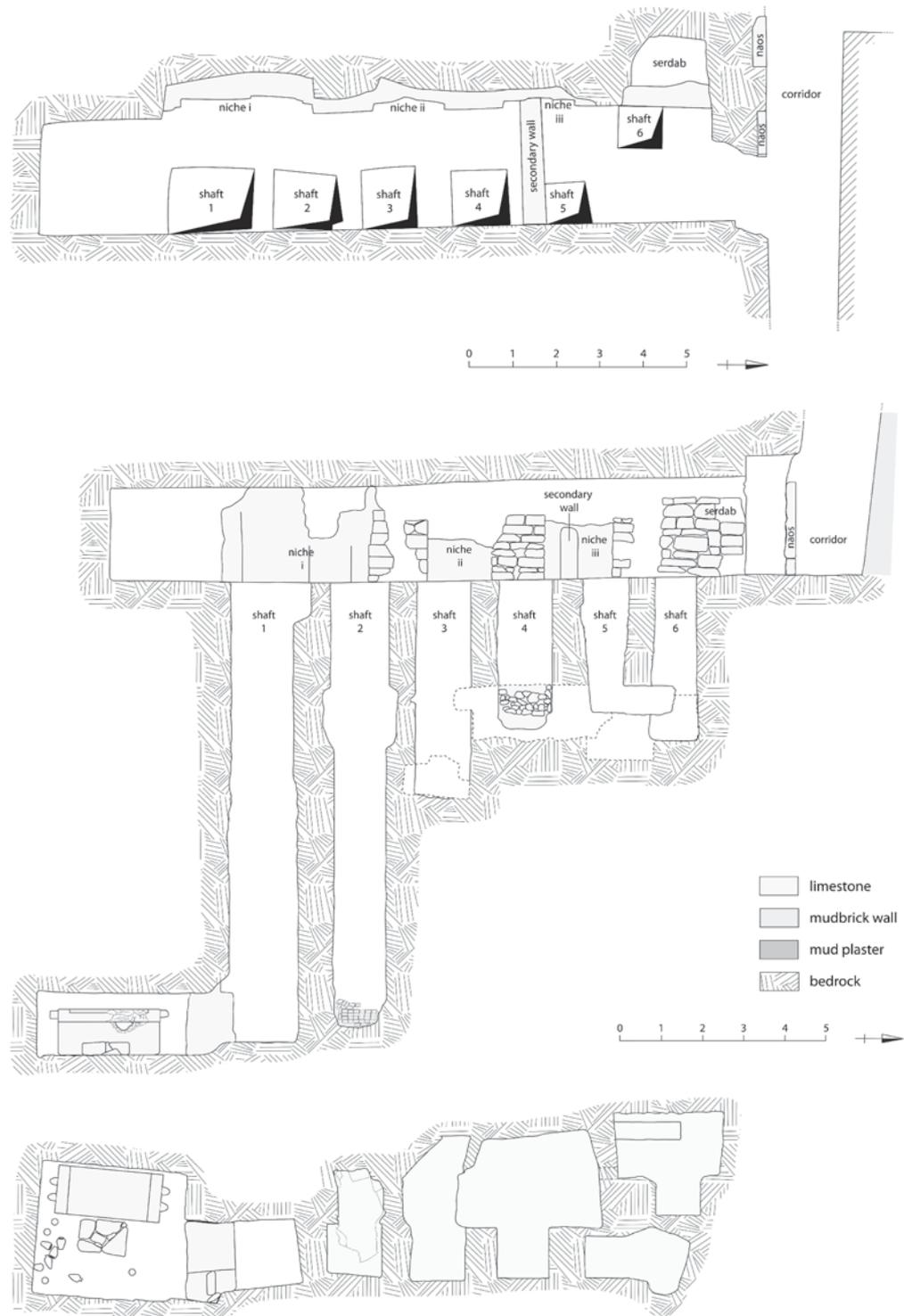
contained fragments of pottery, which were particularly numerous in the upper 3.00 m of the shaft, while the bottom part of the fill contained a smaller number. A larger group of pottery fragments was found at a depth of 4.50 m by the southern wall of the shaft, where its wall was crumbled. In addition, scattered animal bones, charcoal fragments, small fragments of a roughly carved limestone false door without inscriptions and a small fragment of a headrest made of limestone were found.

The burial chamber was hewn to the south and south-west of the shaft. This indicated that another burial



Fig. 10 The burial chamber of Shepesuptah in his tomb (AS 68b) (photo V. Dulíková)

Fig. 11 Plan and section of the tomb of Sheretnebty (drawing H. Vymazalová)



chamber had been planned to the west of the neighbouring Shaft 2 at the same depth. The chamber was closed by means of a 1.10 m thick wall built of limestone fragments joined with pinkish mortar, which also almost entirely covered the outside surface of the stones. The builders originally left a small entrance in the eastern part of the wall, 0.70 m wide and 0.80 m high, with its western wall carefully covered with plaster. This entrance was later also closed, after the burial. The ancient tomb robbers, however, removed most of its blocking in order to get access into the burial chamber.

The burial chamber was carved in hard bedrock and had a rectangular shape; it was 3.60 m long, 3.00 m wide and

max. 1.56 m high. The floor of the chamber was rough, while its walls were almost straight and well-carved.

In the western part of the chamber a large sarcophagus made of white limestone was placed (2.45 m long, 1.14 m wide and 1.11 m high). The lid was curved and had two handles on the northern side and two handles on the southern side. The sarcophagus was very well carved with very smooth sides and showed some damage perhaps due to its transportation. Damage on the edges of the sarcophagus under the lid most likely reflects the closing process. Before the burial, the northern part of the lid was moved to the east and placed on a pedestal built of stones and mortar. Such a pedestal is also known, for instance,



Fig. 12 The burial chamber of Sheretneby's husband in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68c at the moment of discovery (photo M. Frouz)

from the tomb of Akhetotep in Saqqara (Ziegler *et al.* 2007: 59, figs. 23–25). After the burial, the lid was moved to its intended place, and during this movement the southern end of the sarcophagus suffered too much pressure, which caused the damage. The pedestal was dismantled by the ancient tomb robbers, who scattered its stones in the chamber. Only its bottom layer of blocks remained *in situ* by the eastern side of the sarcophagus.

The ancient tomb robbers had made a hole in the eastern wall of the sarcophagus. They had chiselled away part of the wall and the lid in order to get access to the burial (fig. 12). Inside the sarcophagus, remains of the burial of a man over 50 years old were found, in a disarticulated position. Several faience beads and small fragments of golden leaf were found together with the burial. Some more fragments of the same as well as faience pendants imitating petals were found outside of the sarcophagus under the robbers' opening.

Under the opening, small fragments of copper, four limestone conical pendants perhaps imitating simplified lotuses (which were originally covered with golden foil on the outside and painted yellow on the inside) and a fragment of green textile with white flowers were found (fig. 13), together with some very small remains of other objects.

Parts of the tomb equipment were found on the floor of the burial chamber, especially in its southeastern part. These include four canopic jars with lids; two complete pottery jars and numerous fragments of very fine pottery (see Arias Kytarová 2014: 14–17; Arias Kytarová, *forthcoming b*); and animal bones mostly of cattle and birds (*Anseriformes*, Zdeňka Šůvová, personal communication) that constituted the remains of meat and poultry offerings. In addition, a hammer stone was found on the floor of the chamber, perhaps left there by the ancient robbers.

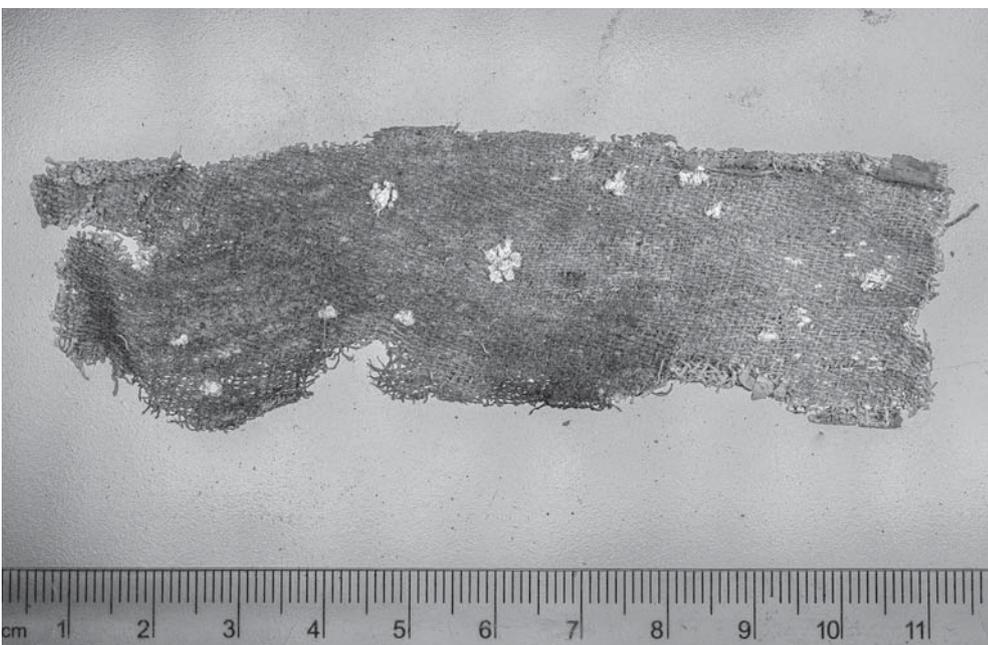


Fig. 13 Fragment of a green textile with little white flowers found in the burial chamber of Sheretneby's husband in Shaft 1 of tomb AS 68c (photo M. Frouz)

Shaft 2

Shaft 2 in tomb AS 68c was presumably prepared for the wife of the tomb owner. It measured 1.40 × 1.30 m at the opening, and it reached 10.70 m in depth. The bottom of the shaft was unfinished and its floor is higher near the eastern and northern walls than in the eastern part of the shaft. The builders perhaps intended to reach the same depth as Shaft 1 but did not have enough time.

The shaft was discovered partly emptied by the ancient tomb robbers. The fill reached only 7.00 m high from the shaft's bottom while the upper 3.70 m were empty, and its fill had been thrown into the southern part of the tomb chapel. The fill of the shaft consisted of limestone and *tafl* chips with a small addition of brown sand, and at a depth of 7.40 m it changed to very compact brown sand with some small chips of limestone but no *tafl*. The fill included fragments of pottery, charcoal fragments, scattered animal bones, small fragments of wood, fragments of limestone and Egyptian alabaster objects, and small fragments of sunken and low reliefs of high quality. It is worth mentioning that among the pottery finds from the fill of the shaft and the burial chamber, fragments of a Meidum bowl of exceptional quality were found, which has no comparison in the whole complex of AS 68. It is very likely that this bowl belonged to the tomb equipment of the king's daughter Sheretnebtj (for details see Arias Kytnarová 2014: 17–18). Some of the relief fragments feature the very fine carving of signs, and they most likely belonged to the decoration of the anonymous tomb AS 31 located nearby (for the tomb, see Bárta 2011).

The burial chamber was hewn to the west of the shaft and was largely unfinished, perhaps as a result of the early death of this shaft's owner. The 0.80 m high entrance to the chamber was closed by means of a mud brick wall. The upper part of this wall had been removed by the ancient tomb robbers, while its lower part was found *in situ*. The

burial chamber reached 1.26 m to the west and it was max. 1.10 m wide. It was largely unfinished, as its walls bore numerous marks of copper chisels, and the bedrock by the southern and western walls had been cut into several blocks almost prepared to be removed.

The chamber contained the burial of a woman 25–40 years old, placed on the floor of the chamber on a thick layer of very fine clean yellow sand (fig. 14). The deceased was placed in a contracted position on her left side, with the head to the north and face to the east. The burial was partly disturbed by the robbers who reached it easily through the opening in the blocking wall. Currently, it seems very likely that this was the burial of Princess Sheretnebtj. It is quite apparent that she died prematurely before the shaft and burial chamber had been finished. The burial seems very modest but it might have originally contained precious objects that were later taken away by the ancient tomb robbers.

Shaft 3

Shaft 3 measured 1.30 × 1.35 m at the top, 1.40 × 1.40 m at the bottom, and it reached 5.20 m in depth. The fill of this shaft consisted of brown sand mixed with limestone chips and small fragments and a few fragments of mud brick. The fill of the shaft contained pottery fragments, a few scattered human bones and small fragments of wood with attached textile. At the bottom of the shaft, fragments of wood, charcoal and of a seashell were found, as well as small fragments of a false door without inscriptions. At a depth of 2.50–3.00 m, the northwestern corner of the shaft had an opening that led into the burial chamber of the neighbouring Shaft 4; while an opening 2.90 m high in the southern wall of the shaft broke into Shaft 2. Both of these openings were most likely the results of friable bedrock and possibly also inexperienced builders, who did not leave enough space between the planned shafts and chambers.



Fig. 14 The burial of Princess Sheretnebtj in Shaft 2 of tomb AS 68c (photo H. Vymazalová)

The burial chamber was hewn to the west of the shaft but was largely unfinished. It had a rough trapezoid shape (max 2.26 m long) and was roughly carved. Also, the floor was very rough and had a layer of dried mud in the southern part of the niche. This niche seems to have never been used for a burial.

Shaft 4

Shaft 4 was 1.35 × 1.35 m wide at the top, and it reached 3.50 m in depth. The fill of the shaft consisted of cut *tafl* mixed with brown sand, and it seems to have been intact. The fill contained a few finds, including fragments of pottery, mud stoppers, scattered animal bones and charcoal and fragments of copper metal. The bottom of the shaft was not finished and is higher in the eastern part and stepping down in the western part.

The burial chamber was hewn to the west of the shaft. Its entrance was blocked with a 0.50 m thick wall built of stones without mortar, which seems to have been intact. The burial chamber was roughly rectangular, 3.70 m long, 2.50 m wide and max 1.40 m high. Its walls are roughly carved and the floor of the chamber was rough. Both the shaft and the chamber were apparently unfinished. The upper part of the southern wall had crumbled and continued further south. As a result, the southeastern corner of the burial chamber had an opening leading into Shaft 3, most likely accidental. The northern wall of the burial chamber contained another opening, leading into the burial chamber of Shaft 6. This might have collapsed unintentionally or could have been made by the ancient tomb robbers. It was perhaps through this opening that the robbers reached the burial chamber of Shaft 4.

The fill of the burial chamber consisted of limestone chips and fragments, which reached 0.40–0.60 m under the ceiling. This fill also included fragments of pottery, scattered animal bones, charcoal and wood fragments,

and several hammer stones with traces of copper metal (left either by the builders or by the tomb robbers). Remains of a burial of a woman over 50 years old were found on the floor of the burial chamber by the western wall. The burial was disarticulated and some parts of the body were completely missing. Fragments of wood of *Ficus sycomorus* were found together with the burial, which might have come from a coffin or a part of the tomb equipment.

Shaft 5

Shaft 5 was 1.10 × 1.00 m wide at the top but only 0.80 × 0.80 m at the bottom, and it reached 3.20 m deep. The fill of the shaft consisted of brown sand mixed with *tafl* chips and *tafl* fragments. The fill also included some fragments of pottery, numerous charcoal and wood fragments, two faience beads and scattered animal bones.

The burial niche was hewn to the north of the shaft. It has an irregular shape and rough walls cut in a soft layer of *tafl*. The niche was maximally 1.20 m long, 1.30 m wide and max. 0.66 m high. It contained the burial of a man over 50 years old. The body was placed on the floor of the niche in an east-west direction, on its right side with head to the east, face to the north, arms in front of the body and legs contracted. Fragments of wood of *Acacia nilotica* were found around and underneath the head of the deceased, which might have come from a coffin or a headrest.

Shaft 6

Shaft 6 of tomb AS 68c was located by the eastern wall of the tomb chapel, while shafts 1–5 were all along the western wall. The shaft was 1.00 × 1.00 m wide at the top and reached 3.50 m in depth. Its fill consisted of brown sand mixed with limestone chips and limestone fragments. The fill included fragments of pottery, one complete beer jar, charcoal and wood fragments, animal bones and tiny



Fig. 15 The offering table in the form of a basin of Ankhiamptah, found in Shaft 6 of the tomb of Sheretneby (AS 68c) (photo M. Frouz)

fragments of a statue that matched the statues from the serdab (see Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*). In addition to these finds, a limestone offering table (33.50 × 24.00 × 12.50 cm) was found at 2.00 m depth in the shaft (318/AS68c/2013, fig. 15). It has the shape of a basin with a rim, which bore a hieroglyphic inscription mentioning the offering formula, the title and name of the owner – *jmj-r3 gš(w) hmwt* “overseer of gang(s) of craftsmen” named Ankh[ema]ptah (for the title see Jones 2000: 268 no. 965). The same name is attested on the limestone architrave found in Shaft 16 (see above). Both of these limestone objects exhibit high quality and indicate the high position of their owner. Therefore, it seems likely that Ankh[ema]ptah was buried in tomb AS 68c (see also Vymazalová, *in preparation*).

The burial chamber was hewn to the west of the shaft. It was 2.60 m long, 1.60 m wide and 1.10 m high, and its southern wall had an opening broken into the burial chamber of Shaft 4. The burial chamber was partly filled with the fill from the shaft. On top of this fill, several fragments of a large slab were found. These originally belonged to the lid of the burial pit and had been broken and moved by the ancient tomb robbers. Fragments of pottery were found in the burial chamber as well as inside the burial pit.

The burial pit was hewn in the southwestern part of the burial chamber. It was 1.60 m long, 0.48 m wide and 0.54 m deep and contained the burials of two men, placed next to each other and disturbed. One man was over 50 years old, while the other man was only 25–35 years old. It is highly likely that these men were close relatives, perhaps father and son.

Summary

Of the six shafts that were hewn in tomb AS 68c, Shafts 1 and 2 seem to have belonged to the tomb owner and his wife, which corresponds to the Old Kingdom tradition. These were the deepest shafts in the whole of tomb complex AS 68 and were perhaps related to the large niche in the southern part of the tomb chapel, where the false doors of the tomb owners were once placed (Vymazalová 2014: 12; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3). The burials in these two shafts thus belonged to Princess Sheretnebtu and her husband.

The burial from Shaft 2 presumably belonged to the princess herself. Her identity will hopefully be further confirmed by an epigenetic examination of the burial, which is under preparation by Hana Pířová and Šárka Bejdová, and their comparison to the physical remains of the individuals from the royal cemetery at Abusir, above all from Djedkare's family cemetery (Strouhal 2002). It is worth mentioning that Shaft 2 was not very large, and we cannot be sure whether its chamber was originally planned to receive a sarcophagus. The early death of this shaft's owner prevented the builders from finishing the planned work. It is possible that the builders originally planned to enlarge the shaft to make it suitable for moving a stone sarcophagus for the princess, or that a sarcophagus was planned to be made with limestone slabs, as in the tombs of Shepesuptah and Duaptah (see above). Even though she was of royal blood, her burial apartment remained

unfinished and her false door reliefs were not very finely carved (see also Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 7–8).

The burial chamber in Shaft 1 was the most splendid in the whole of tomb complex AS 68 and contained the finest sarcophagus and equipment. The identity of Sheretnebtu's husband, who gained the privilege of being married to a king's daughter, remains unknown and no traces of his names or titles have been found thus far. Some of the fragments of reliefs that were found in the tomb might have come from his false door (see Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová, *in preparation*). However, his burial chamber in Shaft 1 indicates that he enjoyed a very high social status, comparable perhaps to the tomb owner of AS 67 but surpassing the status of the other tomb owners in tomb complex AS 68, who have shallower shafts and less splendid tomb equipment (see also Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*).

Shafts 3 and 4 seem to correspond to the other two niches for false doors that existed in the western wall of the tomb (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 25), and they were most likely planned for two members of Sheretnebtu's family, probably her children. Shaft 3, however, had never been used for a burial, and it seems likely that the shaft had been planned for someone who might have later decided to be buried in a different place.

While Shafts 1–4 seem to have been planned from the beginning (they were situated in a row along the eastern wall of the chapel and were relatively large), the last two shafts in the tomb, Shafts 5 and 6 seem to have been an addition to the original plan, and they were located to the north of a secondary wall built of limestone pieces, perhaps to close the older part of the tomb (see fig. 11, see also Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová, *in preparation*). Shaft 5 was located by the eastern wall, while Shaft 6 was hewn in front of the serdab by the western wall of the tomb, and its builders or later the robbers broke into the chamber of Shaft 4.

The examination of the human bones and other finds from the burial shafts in tomb AS 68c has not been concluded. However, it is clear that two women were buried in Shafts 2 and 4 and four men were buried in Shafts 1, 5 and 6. An anthropological examination revealed that at least two of the burials in Shafts 5 and 6 seem to have been related to the princess due to specific features on their skulls (Petra Havelková, personal communication). This seems to confirm that the owners of the shafts in tomb AS 68c were most likely members of Sheretnebtu's closer family, including perhaps her offspring.

While six persons were buried in this tomb, only four names are attested in association with the tomb. It is, however, not possible at the moment to assign all these names to the known burials. Sheretnebtu's name occurs on fragments of her false door, which were found in the tomb and around it within the tomb complex in 2012 (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014). Her burial was most likely placed in Shaft 2. A small statue from the tomb's serdab belonged to an “overseer of the gang” Iti (Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2013: 29–31; Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3–7), while a libation offering table and an inscribed block belonged to Ankh[ema]ptah, and his wife was Neferhekenhathor (see above). It is quite possible that the false door of

Ankhiemaptah was once placed in one of the niches in the western wall of the tomb, and as Shaft 3 was unused, it would be tempting to speculate that these individuals might have been buried in Shafts 4–6 (for a more detailed discussion see Vymazalová – Arias Kytarová, *in preparation*).

Conclusions

Of the three tombs under discussion (for the tomb of Nefer AS 68d, see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 26–30; Bárta, *in preparation*), we may conclude that the tomb of Princess Sheretnebtj and her family (AS 68c) shows signs of the higher rank of its owner. This is supported not only by the fact that he married a king's daughter, but also by the size of his tomb chapel (Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3), the depth of the burial shaft, the size of the burial chamber, and the remains of his tomb equipment that included, among other things, a very finely made monolithic sarcophagus and four canopic jars. The tomb moreover contained a serdab with beautiful statues, and its entrance was decorated with at least one large naos with engaged statues (see Vymazalová – Dulíková 2014: 3–7; Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*).

In comparison, the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a) and its two burials seem more modest. Not only that the chapel, shafts and burial chambers were of smaller dimensions but also no canopic jars were found. Moreover, Duaptah's sarcophagus was made of limestone slabs instead of one piece of limestone.

It is difficult to draw conclusions on the tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b). His burial seems very simple and no objects from the tomb equipment survived, which can be due to the ancient robbers' activities. The size of Shepesuptah's tomb and the remains of his chapel's casing of Tura limestone, however, indicate that his tomb was very badly robbed, and it is therefore likely that the present appearance of this tomb very much differs from its original design.

The fourth rock-cut tomb in the tomb complex of Princess Sheretnebtj, the tomb of Nefer (AS 68d) has been discussed by Miroslav Bárta (see Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 26–30; and Bárta, *in preparation*). Nefer's tomb chapel was not as spacious, the burial shafts not as deep as those of Sheretnebtj and her husband, and the burials were more modest than the latter. He, however, had a serdab with beautiful statues, a roughly carved but nicely painted false door (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 28), and two naoi with engaged statues that decorated the sides of his tomb's entrance (Bárta – Vymazalová, *forthcoming*).

Tomb complex AS 68 provides rich evidence on its continuous use for burials over the period between the late Fifth and the late Sixth Dynasties. The four rock-cut tombs contained several generations of the owner's families while their other relatives and possibly also other associated individuals were buried in the courtyard and the corridor. The evidence from this tomb complex comprises a great deal of anthropological material and many interesting objects of tomb equipment, including the largest groups of non-royal statuary ever discovered in Abusir.

Note:

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Abstract:

Exploration of the tomb complex of king’s daughter Sheretnebtj, which was discovered in 2012, continued in the archaeological season of 2013. In October–November, the work concentrated on the underground parts of the tombs, including the burial shafts and burial chambers. In tomb AS 68c, two shafts were unusually deep; at a depth of 11.00 m under the ground the burial chambers of a man and a woman had been hewn. The man’s chamber contained a large sarcophagus of fine limestone and the remains of his burial and his tomb equipment, while the woman’s chamber remained largely unfinished and contained her rather simple burial placed on the floor. The so far discovered evidence indicates that this was the burial of Princess Sheretnebtj. Another four shafts in the tomb contained four other burials of a female and three males, most probably the couple’s descendants.

In addition, the shafts in the two western rock-cut tombs were explored. In the tomb of Shepesuptah (AS 68b), a single shaft was dug in the tomb’s chapel, while the tomb owner was buried in a burial chamber south of the chapel. The shaft in the chapel was large but reached only 1.40 m deep and was never finished and never used for burial. The two shafts in the tomb of Duaptah (AS 68a) revealed the burials of two men; the southern shaft belonged to Duaptah himself while the northern shaft to a certain Nefermin.

The burials were mostly very simple, and all of them were disturbed by tomb robbers. The preserved bones might, however, still reveal important details about the individuals buried in the rock-cut tombs, and they will therefore be studied in order to trace the family relationships among the tomb owners.

Abusir South – Sheretnebtj – rock-cut tomb – tomb complex AS 68

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