

# The rock-cut tomb of Penmes at Saqqara

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## ABSTRACT

The rock-cut tomb of Penmes is located on the so-called Bubasteion cemetery at Saqqara, a site which has been explored by the Egyptian mission of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities headed by Dr. Mostafa Waziri, Secretary General of the SCA. The tomb was found during the end of the second excavation season in 2019. The article describes the architecture of the tomb, which contained some decorated elements such as a window slab and a false door, as well as finds including wooden statues. In addition, inscriptions provide us with evidence on the tomb owner and the members of his family that can be confronted with the preliminary results of the investigation of human remains found in the tomb.

## KEYWORDS

Saqqara – rock-cut tomb – architecture – false door – wooden statues – anthropology

## المقبرة الصخرية لـ بن مس بسقارة

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## المخلص

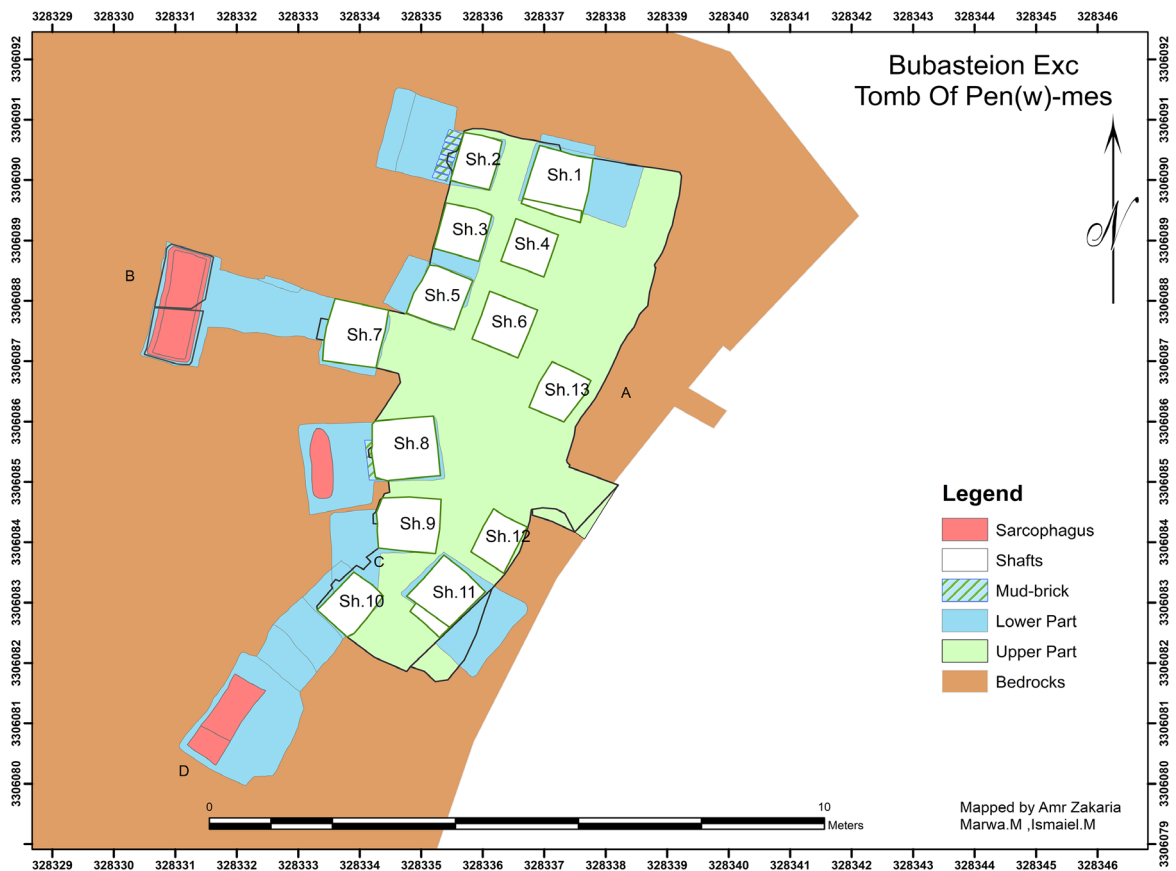
تقع المقبرة الصخرية لـ بن مس بجبانة البوباسطيون بسقارة، وهو الموقع الذي يتم الكشف عنه من قبل البعثة المصرية للمجلس الأعلى للآثار (SCA)، وزارة السياحة والآثار، برئاسة الدكتور مصطفى وزيري، الأمين العام للمجلس الأعلى للآثار. حيث تم العثور على المقبرة في نهاية موسم الحفائر الثاني، وذلك خلال عام 2019. توضح تلك الورقة البحثية التخطيط المعماري للمقبرة، والتي تحتوي على بعض العناصر الزخرفية مثل اللوحة والباب الوهمي، بالإضافة إلى العثور بأحد آبار المقبرة على تماثيل خشبية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقدم لنا نقوش المقبرة أدلة على هوية صاحب المقبرة وأفراد عائلته والتي يمكن مقارنتها بالنتائج الأولية لدراسة العظام البشرية التي تم العثور عليها في المقبرة.

## الكلمات الدالة

سقارة – مقبرة صخرية – عمارة – باب وهمي – تماثيل خشبية – أنثروبولوجيا

This rock-cut tomb is located on the so-called Bubasteion cemetery at Saqqara, a site which has been explored by the Egyptian mission of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the area to the west of the tombs explored by the French Mission under Alan Zivie (Waziri – Youssef 2019: 84). The tomb was found during the end of the second excavation season in 2019, and it is situated in the eastern part of the site, in the north-west edge, to the north-west of the previously explored tomb of Wahty.<sup>1</sup>

1 For preliminary report on the excavation of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in the sacred animal necropolis at Bubasteion in Saqqara, see Waziri – Youssef (2019).



**Fig. 1** Plan of the tomb of Penmes and the surrounding structures (drawing Amr Zakaria, Marwa Mohamed, Ismail Mostafa)

The tomb of Penmes (Tomb no. 11) has north-south orientation and entrance of the tomb is not in the center of its eastern façade but slightly to the south of the center (fig. 1). The exterior of the tomb, namely its eastern façade was not decorated and no fragments of a limestone lintel or other architectural features were collected during the excavation. The only decoration that survived *in situ* on the eastern façade of the tomb was a rectangular limestone slab set up in the façade by the north side of entrance (fig. 2), which has two rectangular openings representing a window for ancient visitors (see below). The two openings allowed a view directly towards the false door inside the chapel, which probably attracted people who came to the cemetery to give offering for the tomb owner.

The entrance of the tomb on the eastern façade measures 110 cm in width, 140 cm in height, the cult chapel hewn in the bedrock was found filled with rubble and had been robbed in antiquity. It had an irregular plan consisting of one chamber, which measured max  $8.9 \times 3.7$  m and the height of its ceiling reached 1.8 m. The walls of the chapel are not smoothed and have traces of chisel marks. The chapel was undecorated except of the west wall, in which several simple false doors were carved above shafts, and one inscribed limestone false door was set up above the main shaft (Shaft 7). This false door was found *in situ* within a niche hewn in the wall above the shaft and was placed upon a limestone pedestal which probably served as an offering table (see below).



**Fig. 2** The rock façade of the tomb of Penmes (photo Mohammad Youssef)

The floor of the cult chapel features openings of 13 burial shafts. The main shaft (Shaft 7) seems to be situated in a niche at the center of the west wall, which is associated with the main false door. Seven shafts (nos. 1-6, 13) were hewn in in the north side of the chapel in two rows along the west wall, and five more shafts (nos. 8-12) were situated in the south part of the chapel by its east and west walls. Some of these shafts were left incomplete and were never used for a burial.

Shaft 1 is 90 × 90 cm in size at its opening but becomes narrower and irregular towards its bottom; it is 3.1 m deep. The burial chamber is located in the east wall of the shaft. The chamber is small, 110 × 65 cm large and 65 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. Remains of human bones were collected in the debris of the chamber.

Shaft 2 is situated underneath an unfinished plastered niche cut in the west wall of the chapel. The shaft is 82 × 67 cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 1.9 m deep. The burial chamber is located in the west wall of the shaft. The fill of the shaft consisted of limestone chips and some pottery sherds. The burial chamber is small, it was blocked by a mud brick wall, its entrance is 80 cm wide and 77 cm high, the chamber itself is 125 × 105 cm and 110 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. Inside the burial chamber is a rectangular pit 70 cm wide, 160 cm long and 30 cm deep. Remains of human bones were collected in the debris of the chamber.

Shaft 3 is situated underneath a small niche cut in the west wall of the chapel, with two unfinished false doors covered with plaster. The shaft is 85 × 75 cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 2.1 m deep. The burial chamber is

located in the south wall of the shaft. The chamber is small,  $1.40 \times 0.65$  m and 65 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. The debris of the chamber contained remains of human bones together with small remains of wood most probably from a wooden coffin, which itself has almost disappeared.

Shaft 4 is  $75 \times 73$  cm in size at its opening, but the shaft was never finished, and it reaches only 15 cm in depth.

Shaft 5 is  $75 \times 88$  cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 1.2 m deep. The burial chamber is located in the west wall of the shaft. The chamber is small,  $105 \times 30$  cm and 47 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. Remains of human bones were found in the debris of the chamber.

Shaft 6 is  $80 \times 80$  cm in size at its opening, but the shaft was never finished, and it reaches only 15 cm in depth.

Shaft 7 is the main shaft in the tomb. It is located directly in front of the false door in the center of the west wall of the chapel, in a niche. It is  $110 \times 90$  cm in size at its opening and reaches 1.5 m deep. At the bottom of this shaft is the entrance which leads to a corridor. This entrance is 70 cm wide and 85 cm high, a small wall to the left of the entrance is 35 cm wide. The burial chamber is located to the west of the shaft and accessible through a short descending corridor, 1.9 m long, 1 m wide and 90 cm high. The entrance to the corridor was blocked by a limestone slab. The burial chamber has a rectangular plan,  $1.7 \times 1$  m large, it is 58 cm high and contained a burial pit in which a small sarcophagus was made of limestone block; it is 188 cm long,  $73/53$  cm wide (outer/inner), 10 cm thick and 50 cm high. The lid of the sarcophagus was made of two blocks, the southern one was  $80 \times 86$  cm large, the northern one  $80 \times 103$  cm large. The lid was found broken and human bones were scattered inside the sarcophagus.

Shaft 8 is situated underneath a small plastered false door cut in the west wall. The shaft is  $100 \times 105$  cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 3.4 m deep. The burial chamber is situated in the west wall of the shaft. It was still blocked by a wall of mud bricks. The chamber is small,  $155 \times 100$  cm, and 87 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. The shaft was filled with chips of limestone and *tafla* with additions of sand and fragments of pottery sherds.

Shaft 9 is situated underneath a small plastered false door cut in the west wall. The shaft is  $100 \times 90$  cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 2.8 m deep. The burial chamber is located in the west wall of the shaft. The chamber is small,  $180 \times 75$  cm, and 73 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. The shaft was filled with chips of limestone and *tafla* with additions of sand and fragments of pottery sherds. Remains of human bones were collected in the debris of the chamber.

Shaft 10 is situated underneath an unfinished false door made of limestone blocks covered with plaster; it measures max. 115 cm in width, and 110 cm in height. The shaft is  $0.90 \times 0.80$  m large at its opening but the presence of the false door above the shaft's western edge makes its top size reduced to  $0.65 \times 0.90$  m. Deeper down the shaft becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 1.9 m deep. In the south wall is an opening that leads to another shaft,  $90 \text{ cm} \times 80 \text{ cm}$  in size; it is 115 cm deep; thus the total depth of both shafts is 3.05 m. At the bottom of the second shaft, the burial chamber was hewn towards the south and its entrance measures  $85 \times 90$  cm. The chamber has a rectangular plan and is  $1.9 \times 1.5$  m large and 0.90 m in height. Inside this burial chamber three wooden statues were found placed along its east and

south walls, there were three limestone slabs placed along the western wall partly destroyed under it a remain of human bones.

Shaft 11 is 90×87 cm in size at its opening but becomes smaller and irregular towards its bottom; it is 3.6 m deep. The burial chamber is located in the east wall of the shaft. The chamber is small, 155×75 cm and 80 cm high, and its walls were only roughly cut in the bedrock. Remains of human bones were found in the debris of the chamber.

Shaft 12 is 80×70 cm in size at its opening, but the shaft was never finished, and it reaches only 15 cm in depth.

Shaft 13 is 80×60 cm in size at its opening, but the shaft was never finished, and it reaches only 10 cm in depth.

### THE LIMESTONE WINDOW SLAB

As mentioned above, the window slab (Saqqara register no. 20312, now in the New Capital Museum) was found *in situ* in the eastern façade of the tomb of Penmes, which was otherwise not decorated. Originally, it was set up by the north side of the entrance to the chapel, and offers a view towards the false door of the tomb owner.

The window slab is rectangular and measures 54×39 cm and it 8 cm thick (fig. 3). It is carved of white limestone. It features two rectangular openings in the central part, ca. 5×10 cm large,



Fig. 3 The window slab (photo Mohammad Youssef)

and a raised rim on all four sides. Hieroglyphic inscriptions in sunken relief covered the rim on all four sides of the window slab, as well as the spaces above, between and beside the openings.

The inscription on the rim starts in the top right corner with the name and two titles of Penmes, it reads: *z3b smšw h3jt z3b nht-hrw Pn-ms* – “juridical elder of the court/audience hall,<sup>2</sup> juridical ‘tally man’ or tally man of the judiciary,<sup>3</sup> Penmes”.<sup>4</sup> The right side of the rim contains the name and title of one of his sons: *z3.fzš Wr-jr(j).n* – “his son, the scribe, Weriryen”.<sup>5</sup> Another son is mentioned on the left rim: *z3.fzš Ih3* – “his son, the scribe, Iha”.<sup>6</sup> On the bottom side of the rim of the window slab the inscriptions refers to Penmes’s wife: *hmt.f hm(t)-k3 Ipt* – “his wife, the ka-servant, Ipet”.<sup>7</sup>

The central part of the window slab above and around the two openings contains more inscriptions. On the right side it reads: *wd.n(i) nw hrj rsj* – “I placed this on the south (side)”. Above the openings the inscription continues: *z3t.f* – “his daughter” and two names are given between the openings and to the left of them, *Ih3t* – “Iha”<sup>8</sup> and *Tntt.j* – “Tjenteti”.<sup>9</sup>

The inscriptions on this window slab thus mention the family members of the tomb owner, including his wife, two sons and two daughters. It remains unclear whether all these six individuals were buried within the tomb.

## THE FALSE DOOR OF PENMES

The false door of Penmes (Saqqara register no. 20313, now in the New Capital Museum), the main focus of the mortuary cult of the tomb owner, was situated in the western wall of the cult chapel in a niche which was noticeably off-center of the chapel. Its northern edge is 3.5 m from the northern end of the west wall; while its southern edge is 4.6 m from the southern end of the same wall which however runs in north-west – south-east direction.

The false door is composed of six small blocks of fine white Tura limestone, which constituted its lintel, both outer jambs, a central niche, a drum and a central lintel (fig. 4a, b). It has no cavetto cornice and torus moulding, which became popular in the mid-Fifth Dynasty (Wiebach 1981: 18). The false door corresponds to the type II.1 as defined by Adolf Rusch, showing a projecting lintel, one pair of jambs and a reasonably deep recessed central niche (Rusch 1923: 106–112, pl. A; Vandier 1954: 394–401; Strudwick 1985: 15–16). These features are typical of tombs built during the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties, and are rarely attested in the Sixth Dynasty. The complete false door measures 1.36 m in height and is 1.08 m wide while the thickness is 13 cm. It was set in the west wall upon a limestone block, which seems to represent a kind of an offering table, as it is inscribed.

The block underneath the false door is inscribed with two lines of hieroglyphic inscription, one vertical and the other one horizontal. The vertical line reads: *z3b nht-hrw Pn-ms* – “juridical

2 Jones (2000: 813, no. 2974).

3 Jones (2000: 807, no. 2951).

4 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 355).

5 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 326).

6 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 259).

7 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 231–232).

8 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 261).

9 Scheele-Schweitzer (2014: 736–737).



‘tally man’” or “tally man of the judiciary, Penmes”, and it comes to the middle of the horizontal line dividing it into two parts. The horizontal line reads from the right to left: *t, hnk̄t h̄3* – “a thousand loaves of bread and jars of beer”, *mnht h̄3, sš h̄3* – “a thousand pieces of cloth and a thousand calcite-alabaster vessels”. The name of Penmes is situated right between these two parts of the horizontal lines perhaps as an emphasis that these thousands of offerings are made for Penmes himself.

The false door itself bears hieroglyphic inscriptions carved in sunken relief and figures of Penmes and his family members which are executed in low relief.<sup>10</sup> The hieroglyphs and figures still bear the original polychromy, which includes reddish brown, green, blue, yellow and black, while the figures of Penmes and his sons are painted in reddish brown with blue, yellow and white features, while the figure of the owner’s wife and daughter are painted in yellow ochre with white and blue details. The depictions show features indicating the so-called second style, with elongated limbs, large heads, attenuated waists as well as specific details including large eyes and high-set ears (see Russmann 1995; Brovarski 2008: 49–89).

The inscriptions and the figures all face right, i.e., towards the north. The depictions and inscriptions thus are not symmetrical on this false door.

The lintel contains the hieroglyphic inscription divided into two horizontal lines. The inscription contains the offering formula, and the titles, epithets and name of the tomb owner, and it reads from right to left: (1) *htp dj nswt Inpw hntj zh-ntr k̄rst.f m hrt-ntr j̄3w nfr wrt* (2) *nb im̄3hw hr ntr ʕ̄3 z̄3b nht-hrw šh-Hr Pn-ms* – “(1) May the king give an offering and Anubis, the foremost of the divine booth, that he may be buried in the cemetery at a very good old age (2) possessor of reverence with the Great God, juridical ‘tally-man’ of the *šh*-granary of Horus, Penmes”. At the end of the text in the bottom line of the inscription there is a depiction of the tomb owner as a determinative, in the form of a male figure seated on a backless chair with bull’s legs, which bears traces of yellow and black colors. This type of chairs is characteristic for the period between the mid-Fourth to mid-Fifth Dynasty (Cherpion 1989: 26). The man has a short chin beard and is wearing a short curly hair/wig, a short yellow kilt and holds a yellow staff in his right hand while the left-hand rests on his lap and is opened.

The false door contains no central panel with the characteristic offering scene. The two small central pieces constitute the drum and the very small lintel above it. The inscription that covers them reads: (1) *z̄3b nht-hrw* (2) *Pn-ms* – “(1) juridical ‘tally-man’ (2) Penmes”.

The right outer jamb has the inscription arranged in two vertical lines with one large depiction underneath both of them. It contains the offering formula, and the titles, epithets and name of the tomb owner: (1) *htp dj nzwt prt-hrw n.f hnk̄t k̄3 trp rnpt tr r̄ nb* (2) *z̄3b šmšw h̄3jt n̄t im̄3hw hr ntr ʕ̄3 rh nzwt Pn-ms* – “(1) May the king give an offering, may an invocation offering come forth for him, loaf of bread and jar of beer, oxen, geese every year, every season, every day (2) juridical elder of the court/audience hall, possessor of reverence with the Great God,<sup>11</sup>

10 The use of low relief on false doors is attested until the end of the Fifth Dynasty (see Strudwick 1985: 24). For a selection of false doors with raised relief see the following: Rahotep (Harpur 2001: 109, fig. 98, pls. 65, 71); Nefer (G2110, Manuelian 2009: figs. 6.76–6.78); Kaninesut I (G2155, Manuelian 2009: figs. 15.53, 15.57–15.60); Merib (G2100 I, Manuelian 2009: fig. 4.51); Ptahhotep II (Harpur – Scremin 2008: 207 [293]–212 [305]).

11 Jones (2000: 480, no. 1789).



one who is known to the king,<sup>12</sup> Penmes”. The depiction at the bottom of the right jamb shows the tomb owner striding. He has no beard and is wearing a short curly hair/wig covering his ears, a white kilt, and a blue collar. He is holding a staff in his left hand and a *hrp*-scepter in his right hand. Two sons are depicted by his sides in form of small children with side locks of youth and holding his legs. The front boy has his left finger in the mouth, and both these small figures are identified as *zš Wr-jr(j).n* – “scribe, Weriryen”.

The left outer jamb contains the inscription arranged in two vertical lines with one large depiction underneath. It contains the offering formula and an autobiographical phrase referring probably to the construction of the tomb:<sup>13</sup> (1) *htp dj nzw t Inpw prt-hrw n.f m rnpt tr r<sup>c</sup> nb* (2) *dd.f rdi.n(i) ḥ<sup>c</sup> nw hrj ršj nnk mḥt ir(t).n(i) im n itt ḥ(i)* – “(1) May the king give an offering and Anubis, may an invocation offering come forth for him at every year, every season, every day (2) He says: I had this built on the south (side), I am complete with what I did there without my arm taking (anything from anyone).” The inscription then follows with a horizontal line reading: *rh-nzw Pn-ms ḥmt.f ḥm(t)-k3 Ipt* – “one who is known to the king, Penmes, and his wife, *ka*-servant, Ipet”. Below follows their depiction. Penmes is shown striding, wearing a short curly hair/wig, a blue collar, a short white kilt with yellow fold. He is holding a staff in his left hand and a baton in his right hand. His wife is standing behind/beside him, touching his shoulder with her left hand. She has long hair and is dressed in long white dress and wearing a blue collar and bracelets. Two children are shown with the couple. A small boy with a lock of youth is depicted in front of Penmes, holding his staff. He is identified as *Iḥ3* – “Iha”. A daughter with a pleated lock is standing in front of Ipet, looking to her and holding her dress. Her name is *H[...].nwt* – “Kh[...].nut”.

The central niche shows two vertical lines of inscriptions that read: (1) *z3b nḥt-hrw hrj-sšt3 n ḥwt-wrt* (2) *im3ḥ(w) hr ntr-ḥ3 rh-nzw Pn-ms* – “(1) juridical ‘tally-man’ privy to the secret of the Great Court<sup>14</sup> (2) revered before the Great God, one who is known to the king,<sup>15</sup> Penmes”. Underneath the inscription follows an enlarged depiction of the tomb owner in striding posture, with a short beard and a shoulder long wig, wearing a blue collar and a white kilt. He has a leopard skin tied on his left shoulder, which is partly covering the chest and back. He is holding a baton in his right hand while his left hand rests on his chest, perhaps grabbing the animal skin. A small figure of a son with a side lock of youth is depicted in front of Penmes. He is touching his father’s knee with his right hand, and the inscription above him identifies him as *Iḥ3* – “Iha”.

## THE WOODEN STATUES

Three wooden statues were found in the chamber at the bottom of Shaft 10 of the tomb. Even though there is evidence of statues placed in burial chambers in other Old Kingdom tombs,<sup>16</sup> this shaft was used for burial in a pit parallel to the west wall. The statues were placed on the floor of the chamber, two along the eastern side of the chamber with heads one to the north

12 Jones (2000: 327–328, no. 1206).

13 For such phrases, see above all Kloth (cf. Kloth 2002: 230–235; Kloth 2018: 29–39).

14 Jones (2000: 635, no. 2326).

15 Jones (2000: 327–328, no. 1206).

16 For instance, the tomb of Kairsu in Abusir (see Bárta *et al.* 2020). For other evidence in Abusir, see Bárta – Vymazalová (2018).



**Fig. 5** The statues found in the burial chamber in Shaft 10 (photo Mohammad Youssef)

and the other to the south, and one statue in perpendicular position along the south side of the chamber with head to the west (figs. 5, 6).

1. A wooden statue of a striding male figure with the left leg forward (Saqqara register no. 20309, now in the New Capital Museum<sup>17</sup>) was found by the eastern side of the chamber, lying on its left side with head to the north faced to the east and legs by the head of statue 2. The statue is relatively well preserved but shows some cracks on the head and chest; it is max. 69 cm high and 18 cm wide. It shows a striding man wearing a shoulder long wig, which reveals small parts of his earlobes, and it is painted black. He has a round face with large eyes, plump lips and a hardly visible thin moustache painted in black on the upper lip. He is dressed in a short kilt with the right side pleated, showing remains of yellow ochre painting. He has a collar around his neck, however, its colors are no longer visible. Both arms are positioned along the body and hands are closed in fists grasping a “Schattenstab”. Front parts of his feet are missing and the base of this statue is not preserved.

2. A striding male statue (Saqqara register no. 20310, now in the New Capital Museum<sup>18</sup>) was found by the east side of the chamber, lying on its back and facing upwards. The figure is relatively well preserved but still shows large cracks in the wood; it is max. 110 cm high and 30 cm wide. The male has an oval face with large eyes, thick eyebrows, plump lips and a black

17 The statue was handed over to the Museums Sector Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020, in preparation for its transfer to the Museum of the New Administrative Capital.

18 The statue was handed over to the Museums Sector Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020, in preparation for its transfer to the Museum of the New Administrative Capital.



**Fig. 6** The statues from Shaft 10 (photos Mohammed Youssef and Mohamed El-Seaidy)

painted mustache. He is wearing a short curly wig covering his ears, which is painted black. His body is well carved. He is dressed in a short kilt with partial pleating on the right side, which bears remains of yellow ochre painting. Most likely, he was wearing a collar around his neck, however its colors are entirely lost today. His right arm is fixed to the body with a wooden nail; it is positioned along the body and hand closed in fist around an elongated object. The left arm consists of two pieces that are fastened with wooden nails at the shoulder and elbow. The forearm is bent forward and the hand holding a wooden staff<sup>19</sup> that rests on the pedestal in front of the left foot. The pedestal is 55×27×8 cm large and bears a hieroglyphic inscription on the front part, carved in sunken relief: (1) *z3b nḥt-ḥrw śmśw h3jt imj-ḥt (n) z3(w) pr(w)* (2) *sb3 špśw? nzwt Ḥtp-k3?* – “(1) Juridical ‘tally-man’ and elder of the ceremonial hall, under-supervisor of sons-of-houses<sup>20</sup> (2) royal instructor of the noblemen (?) Hetepka (?)”.

<sup>19</sup> For this type of staff, see Fischer (1978: 5–7).

<sup>20</sup> Jones (2000: 296, no. 1081).

3. A wooden statue showing a seated male figure (Saqqara study no. 433). The piece is in bad condition, with cracks in the wood, and most of the surface coating missing, however, some remains of the painted coating is still visible. The statue is max. 83.5 cm high with the pedestal and 75.5 cm without pedestal, 21.5 cm wide (chest area), and 49 cm thick, and its pedestal measures 49 cm in length, 21 cm in width and 8 cm in thickness. The pedestal is partly damaged, and it shows some inscription. The figure is sitting on a block stool with no back pillar. No inscriptions are carved on the block stool. The figure has an oval face damaged with a crack, with thick lips, clear nasolabial folds, and large eyes. Small remains of coating with red ochre painting survived around the eyes. The man is wearing a short curly wig, painted black and covering his ears.

He is dressed in a short kilt. His right hand is resting on his knee, with the palm open, while his left arm is bent across his chest and the left hand in fist rests under his right breast. Remains of the coating on the figure show that he was wearing a collar of blue and green stripes, his body was painted in red ochre, his kilt was white, and the pedestal was also red ochre. The figure is not well proportioned, as the body is too large comparing to the legs.

All the three statues that were found in the chamber in Shaft 10 featured male figures. Only one of these three statues is inscribed, and it is unclear whether all the three statues belonged to one owner, or they represented more than one individual. The inscription on one statue (no. 2 above) refers to Hetepka who is not attested as a member of Penmes's family on the window slab or false door (see above). Hetepka's relationship to Penmes and his family remains unknown, however, he was of similar social standing as he held the same two offices like Penmes "juridicial 'tally-man' and elder of the ceremonial hall". The two other titles "under-supervisor of sons-of-houses and royal instructor of the noblemen (?)" point to an educational aspect of his career.

## THE STUDY OF THE HUMAN REMAINS (BY MAHA SAYAH)

As indicated in the archaeological report, eight individuals were buried in the tomb. Their skeletal remains were found in eight shafts of the shafts (see above). The general condition of the skeletal remains was medium to bad, mostly due to high humidity and salinity in the burial chambers, which negatively affected the bones. No remains of wrappings or mummification were recorded on the remains, with no skin, hair or textiles preserved in any of the skeletons.

For each skeleton, taphonomy was examined, sex, age (Todd 1921a and 1921b; Miles 1962; Brothwell 1981; Lovejoy *et al.* 1985; Brooks – Suchey 1990) and stature estimated, non-metric traits recorded (Carolineberry – Berry 1967; Finnegan 1978; Hauser – De Stefano 1989; Mann – Hunt 2005) as well as dentition and evidence of pathological conditions.

### SHAFT 7

Shaft 7 probably belonged to the main tomb owner. Remains of the burial were found in the burial chamber inside the sarcophagus, which was broken on the west side. The body was not in anatomical position, which indicates activities of the ancient tomb robbers. The skeleton was nearly complete (70%), however, in bad state of preservation. The bones were partly fragmented, and some were missing (*e.g.* clavicles).

The skull and pelvic morphology indicate that this deceased was a male; he was more than 60 years old at death, based on the pelvic morphology and dental wear. The stature could not be estimated due to the fragmentary and extremely fragile condition of the bones. The recorded pathological conditions included extensive periostitis of the head of the left femur, greater trochanter and lesser trochanter had extensive inflammation of the cortical bone.

#### SHAFT 1

The skeleton was found on the floor of the burial chamber of Shaft 1 placed on the left side in north-south orientation in a slightly flexed position, the skull to the north is anterior up and squatting on the chest. The skeleton was incomplete (30%) and the bones were in bad state preservation.

The remains belonged to an adult female based on the skull and pelvic morphology, aged 30–35 years based on auricular surface morphology and dental wear. The stature could not be estimated due to the fragmentary condition. The pathological conditions included slight calculus in mandibular and maxillary teeth from labial and buccal.

#### SHAFT 2

The skeleton was placed in the burial pit hewn in the floor of the burial chamber in Shaft 2. It was placed in extended supine position on the left side, with the skull to the north and face to east. Both arms were flexed forward the skull. The skeleton was complete (100%) and the bones were in medium state of preservation.

The remains were of a female based on the skull and pelvic morphology, age 19.9 years based on the pelvic morphology, dental eruption and epiphysial fusion. The stature based on long bone was between 160 and 164 cm. The recorded pathological conditions included slight cribra orbitalia on both eye sockets, slight porotic hyperostosis in left parietal and occipital and very slight on the right parietal. In addition, congenital unilateral hypoplasia of the superior lateral of the first vertebra of the sacrum was recorded, slopping from medial to lateral.

#### SHAFT 3

The skeleton was found inside the burial chamber covered with mud and silt and due to the collapsed ceiling, it was very fragmentary. Three pieces of a coffin were also found in the chamber, which may have belonged to this burial or were stored there. The deceased was on the left side in east-west orientation, with the head to the west, in a slightly flexed position. The skeleton was incomplete (50%) and in bad state of preservation.

This burial belonged to an adult male based on the skull and pelvic morphology, aged 30–35 years based on auricular surface morphology and dental wear. The stature could not be estimated due to bad state of preservation. The recorded pathological conditions included slight calculus in mandibular and maxillary teeth from labial and buccal.

## SHAFT 5

The skeleton was found on the floor of the burial chamber in Shaft 5, placed in north-south orientation in slightly flexed position on the left side, with skull to the north and squatting on the chest, face to the east. The skeleton was incomplete (50%) and the bones were in bad state of preservation.

The burial belonged to an adult female based on skull and pelvic morphology, aged 45–50 years based on auricular surface morphology and dental wear. The stature could not be estimated due to the bad condition of the bones. No pathological conditions could be observed due to the bad state of preservation of the skeleton.

## SHAFT 9

The skeleton was placed on the floor of the burial chamber in Shaft 9. It was on the left side in loosely flexed position, with face to the east. The skeleton was complete (100%) and the bones were in medium state of preservation.

The remains belonged to an adult female based on the skull and pelvic morphology, aged 39–44 years, based on pubic symphysis, auricular surface and dental wear. The stature could not be estimated due to the fragmentary condition of the long bones. The recorded pathological conditions included medium calculus in right mandibular teeth from lingual and buccal, round healed abscess on the second right maxillary incisor, osteoarthritis in left mandible condyle according to osteophytes and eburnation. In addition, green stick fracture was documented on the mid shaft of the left tibia.

## SHAFT 10

Skeletal remains found in the burial pit hewn in the chamber in Shaft 10 were placed on the left side in loosely flexed position with the head to the north and face to the east. The skeleton was well preserved and complete (100%), the bones were in bad state of preservation and very fragile.

This skeleton belonged to a male based on the skull and pelvic morphology, aged 45–50 years based on the pelvic morphology and dental wear. The stature of this adult, based on long bone examination, was between 170 and 172 cm. The recorded pathological conditions included symmetric thinning of biparietal bone of the skull, which is associated with senile osteoporosis, a number of healed fractures, such as fracture of the right radius (Smith fracture), compression fracture of the second lumbar vertebra, fracture of three left ribs, and osteoarthritis on first and third cervical vertebrae. In addition, first and second left ribs were merged from mid-shaft (the anterior surface is lobulated but the inferior is very fine) left first and second rib, which may be a nonmetric trait.

## SHAFT 11

The skeleton was found on the ground of the burial chamber in Shaft 11 with no remains of a burial container. The body was placed on the left side, in a loosely flexed position, with skull

to the north and face to east. The skeleton was well preserved and complete (100%). The bones were in good condition of preservation.

This individual was a female based on the skull and pelvic morphology, aged more than 60 years, based on the pelvic morphology and dental wear. The stature based on the long bone was between 160 and 164 cm. The recorded pathological conditions included the symmetric biparietal thinning on the skull, and dental diseases including an active abscess on the first left molar (buccal side), another abscess on the left maxillary second premolar (labial side), and caries on the right canine teeth.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The tomb Penmes at the Bubasteion area belongs to a larger group of Old Kingdom tombs. It has a rock cut chapel with 12 burial shafts and one main cult place that belonged to the main tomb owner, Penmes. He was a member of a lower to mid-level of administration, holding the functions of a juridical elder of the court and juridical “tally man”.

According to the preserved epigraphic evidence, Penmes was married to lady Ipet, and had at least four, perhaps five children. His sons, Weriryen and Iha, are mentioned on the window slab set in the façade of the tomb and twice on his false door in the niche in the western wall of the rock-cut chapel. Two daughters, Ihat and Tjenteti, are mentioned on the window slab while another daughter, Khenut (?) occurs on the false door. Beside these seven family members, a name of an eight individual, Hetepka, is attested on one of the statues that were found in the tomb. His relationship to Penmes is unclear.

The remains of human skeletons found in the niches at the bottom of the burial shafts show that eight individuals were buried in this tomb, including three males and five females. They probably included the members of Penmes’s family. Penmes himself was most probably buried in Shaft 7, and he lived to the age of more than 60 years. It would be tempting to associate the two other males buried in Shafts 3 and 10 with his two sons, or possibly with Hetepka, and the five females in Shafts 1, 2, 9 and 11 with his wife and daughters. Such identification is, however, very speculative and we cannot exclude that the buried individuals had a different relationship with the main tomb owner. They may have included his mother as well as later generations of the family.

The dating of the tomb can be established on the basis of the epigraphic and iconographic evidence, as well as on the general context of this necropolis, as the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. Pottery finds that will be analyzed in the future can shed further light on the tomb’s dating.

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