

The tomb of Khuwy at Djedkare's royal cemetery at South Saqqara. Preliminary report on the 2019 spring season

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ABSTRACT

The royal necropolis surrounding the pyramid complex of Djedkare at South Saqqara is largely unexplored. In the 2019 spring season, the Egyptian mission uncovered a large mastaba in the north-east part of the necropolis. This tomb belonged to Khuwy, and it boasts some features with royal connotations, including an altar with two *sn*-symbols, the plan of the substructure reflecting the royal pyramids, and mummification of the body of the owner. In addition, the tomb provides us with one of the earliest attested decorated burial chambers, specifically the antechamber in the substructure. The wall paintings, which are very well preserved, comprise many motifs related to the provisioning of the deceased, as attested in later Old Kingdom examples of decorated burial chambers. Besides this, however, these paintings include some themes uncommon in substructures at that time, namely the tomb owner sitting at an offering table and sailing boats. The uncovered evidence seems to point to a late Fifth Dynasty date of the tomb (perhaps Djedkare/Unas) and indicates a high social status of the tomb owner, Khuwy, who was highly likely very close to the royal family.

KEY WORDS

Old Kingdom – South Saqqara – Djedkare – pyramid complex – mastaba – Khuwy – decorated burial chamber

مقبرة خوى بجبانة الملكة بجنوب سقارة. تقرير مبدئي عن موسم الربيع 2019

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ملخص

لم يتم الكشف إلى حد كبير عن الجبانة الملكية المحيطة بالمجموعة الهرمية للملك جدكارع بجنون سقارة. إلا أنه خلال موسم الربيع 2019، كشفت البعثة المصرية عن مصطبة كبيرة في الجزء الشمالي الشرقي من الجبانة. وتنسب تلك المقبرة إلى شخص يدعى خوى، حيث تحتوي على بعض المميزات ذات الدلالات الملكية، بما في ذلك مذبح للقرايين بعد علامتين *sn*، كما أن مخطط البناء السفلي للمقبرة يشبه إلى حد كبير مخططات الأهرامات الملكية، وأيضاً تم تحنيط جسد صاحب المقبرة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، توجد بالمقبرة واحدة من أقدم حجرات الدفن المزخرفة في الدولة القديمة، وتحديداً الحجرة الأمامية داخل البناء السفلي. وتشمل مناظر الجدران، والتي تعتبر على درجة عالية من الحفظ، العديد من المناظر المتعلقة بتوفير المؤن للمتوفى في العالم الآخر، وهي المناظر التي صُوِّرت في وقت لاحق بنهاية الدولة القديمة داخل المقابر ذات حجرات الدفن المنقوشة. ومع ذلك، إلى جانب هذا، تتضمن هذه المناظر بعض الموضوعات غير شائعة التواجد في البناء السفلي من المقابر في ذلك الوقت، خاصة منظرًا يمثل صاحب المقبرة جالسًا أمام مائدة القرايين وكذلك رَحْبم داخل القوارب. وتشير الأدلة التي تم الكشف عنها إلى احتمالية تأريخ المقبرة بأواخر الأسرة الخامسة (ربما جدكارع / أوناس)، كما تشير أيضًا إلى المكانة الاجتماعية العالية لصاحب المقبرة خوى، الذي من المرجح جدًا أن يكون ذا صلة قرابة بالعالمة المالكة.

الكلمات الدالة

الدولة القديمة – سقارة الجنوبية – جدكارع – مجموعة هرمية – مصطبة – خوى – حجرة دفن منقوشة



Fig. 1 The position of the tomb of Khuwy on Djedkare's royal cemetery at Saqqara: 1 – the pyramid of King Djedkare, 2 – the funerary temple of King Djedkare, 3 – the pyramid of Djedkare's queen, 4 – funerary temple of Djedkare's queen, 5 – tomb of Khuwy (photo WorldView-2 [resolution 0.5 m, 7.11.2010], Saqqara, Egypt, © 2010 DigitalGlobe)

The documentation works in Djedkare's pyramid complex have been ongoing since 2010, focusing mainly on the king's funerary temple (see Megahed – János – Vymazalová in this volume, with further references to the earlier seasons), but the surrounding cemetery, however, has remained largely unexplored. In 1952, the expedition led by Ahmad Fakhry uncovered eighteen mud brick shafts located by the east side of the king's funerary temple and along the south side of its causeway (Fakhry 1959: 30; Fakhry 1961: 181). These shafts contained rather poor burials, except for one which had a decorated burial chamber; only a little information was published by Mohamed Moursi in 1988 (Moursi 1988). In 2016, the current mission cleared and consolidated the decorated chamber of king's noble Pepyankh Setju and its associated shafts, in order to allow their further study (tomb MS1; Megahed – János – Vymazalová 2017: 42–48). The explored shafts date to the late Sixth Dynasty (Moursi 1988; Megahed – János – Vymazalová 2017: 45–47; János – Vymazalová 2018).

No other parts of Djedkare's royal cemetery had been explored until now. Many structures are, however, clearly visible under the sand along the west side of the king's pyramid as well as to its north, north-east and along both sides of its causeway. While part of the king's family was buried at the royal cemetery at Abusir (Verner – Callender 2002), the closest members can be expected to be buried near to the king. Therefore, exploration of Djedkare's royal cemetery started in spring 2019 between 1st March and 15th April.¹ During this short season, the works focused on the north-eastern part of the cemetery, where modern looters uncovered some blocks of the eastern wall of a large tomb in 2017.

THE TOMB OF KHUWY (MS-EAST-1)

Tomb MS-East-1, which belonged to Khuwy, is situated to the north-east of the pyramid complex of Djedkare's queen (see Megahed – János – Vymazalová

¹ We would like to thank the inspectors of the Ministry of Antiquities, Mohamed Fathy, Asmaa Gad el-Maula and Omneia Thabet for their kind support during the fieldwork. We appreciate the expertise of our conservators, Ismail Radwan and Ashraf Youssef. Our thanks go also to the foremen, Mohamed Antar, Said Abu Krain and Farag El Nahas, as well as to all the workmen without whom our work would not be possible. Our team also included Mounira Hussein, Reham Zaky, Nermeen Aba Yazeed (pottery specialist), Zeinab Hashesh and Ahmed Gabr (anthropology specialists). For the 2019 spring season, see also the German report: Megahed – Vymazalová (2019).



Fig. 2 The tomb of Khuwy situated to the north-east of the pyramids of Djedkare and his queen (photo H. Vymazalová)

in this volume), on the edge of the hill overlooking the modern village of Saqqara (figs. 1 and 2). Its core walls are constructed of irregular pieces of local limestone and mud mortar, while the casing of the outside walls and of the chapel rooms were of large blocks of white limestone. The tomb is 26.3 m long in a north-south direction and 19.0 m wide in an east-west direction, and the highest preserved part is the south end of the core of the west wall, which reaches 4.3 m high above the level of the floor preserved in the eastern part of the tomb. The outside walls of the tomb are slightly inclined and were smoothed.

Several secondary burials were documented above the tomb and to the east of it, some of which were placed in simple mud brick and limestone structures, while others were in wooden coffins and in pottery vessels; these burials are generally similar to those uncovered in the area between the king's and queen's pyramid complex (see Megahed – Jánosi – Vymazalová in this volume).

THE SUPERSTRUCTURE

The superstructure of the tomb contained several chapel-rooms in its south-east part. The plan of the chapel-rooms is of Type 7b/7c according to George Andrew Reisner (1942: 185).

The entrance to the chapel is situated in the east façade by the south-east corner of the tomb (figs. 3 and 4). It was once most likely decorated with an architrave bearing an inscription in sunken relief, many fragments of which were uncovered in the debris in this area. The entrance itself was originally closed with

a wooden door. Only one floor slab is preserved *in situ* in the entrance room, showing the traces of a one leaf door and a *snt*-game scratched right behind it.

The north-south oriented entrance room was decorated with low reliefs, which partly survived on the west wall; some loose blocks with reliefs were also uncovered, which belonged to the entrance room and will be reconstructed to their original position in the future. The south part of the west wall featured the tomb owner on a boat fishing [OEE 1.1],² while the scene on the north part of the west wall showed him on a boat fowling [OEE 1.1]. The better-preserved fowling scene contains, besides the large figure of the tomb owner, also two smaller figures. In front of the tomb owner stands a small figure of [*Nfr*]-*ḥtp*, “[Nefer]hetep” (Ranke 1935: 198, no. 14; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 475 [1942]), who was most likely the tomb owner's son (see also Harpur 1987: 136). Another small figure standing behind the owner was only partly preserved and was identified as *Nfr-sšm*, “Neferseshem” (Ranke 1935: 200, no. 4; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 481 [1984]).

An entrance in the centre of the west wall of this room gives access to a rectangular north-south oriented room with remains of low relief decoration preserved on the east wall. Only the bottom register is preserved, which depicts a grain processing theme, including a threshing floor with young cattle [OEE 3.1.14], winnowing and heaps of grain [OEE 3.1.15]. Some fragments of reliefs were uncovered in the fill of this room, including personifications of funerary estates. Two names of funerary estates are preserved on these fragments, one reads *Mr-nfirt-Izzi*, “Who loves perfection is Izzi”,³ and

² OEE = Oxford Expedition to Egypt: Scene-details Database.

³ Funerary estates with the name composed of the same elements are also attested for the Kings Userkaf, Sahure and Teti. The domain *Mr-nfirt-Wsr-k3.f* was located in the 6th nome of Lower Egypt (see Jacquet-Gordon 1962: 142, no. 12). Sahure and Teti had the *ḥwt*-estates with this name, which included the cartouche of each respective king. The former was situated in the 7th or 8th nome of Lower Egypt (see Jacquet-Gordon 1962: 40, no. 12, 412, no. 1).

Fig. 3 Plan of the tomb of Khuwy, with the (1) entrance room, (2) chapel, (3) serdab and (4) burial apartment (drawing H. Vymazalová)

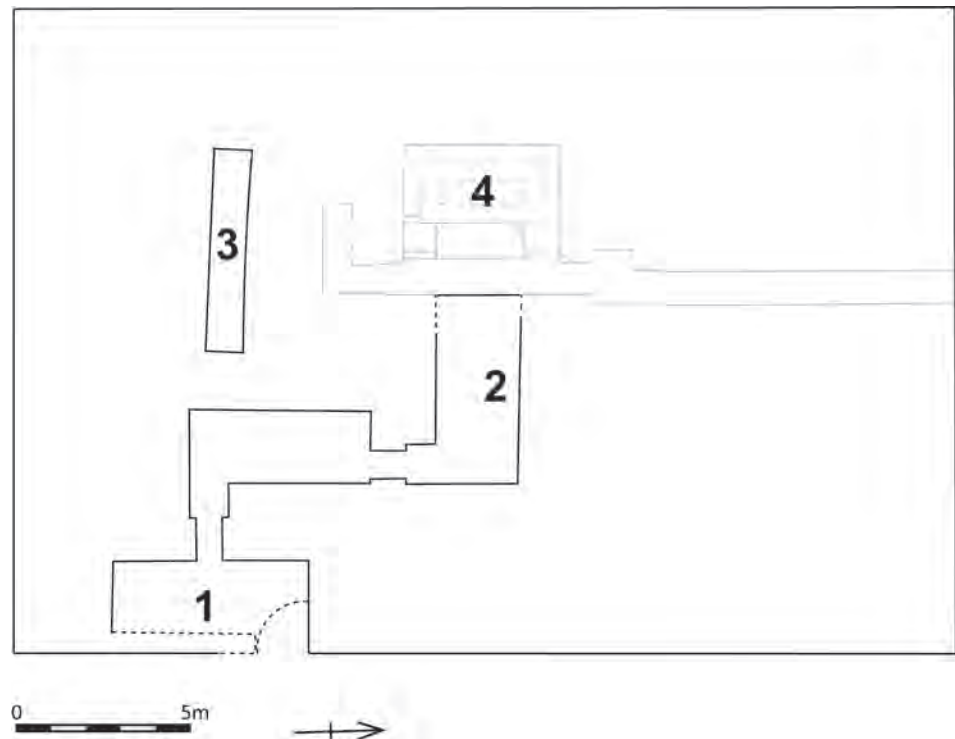


Fig. 4 The south-east part of the tomb showing the remains of the entrance room and the entrance to the chapel (photo H. Vymazalová)



the other one reading: *St-ib-Hr III ms*, “[...] Setibhor”⁴. This evidence clearly demonstrates that the tomb owner enjoyed the privilege of getting offerings from the funerary domains of the king, Djedkare, and his queen (for discussions on funerary estates, see e.g. Jacquet-Gordon 1962; Khaled 2008: 23–62, 193–208; Vymazalová 2015: 167–238).

An entrance in the east part of the north wall of this room gives access to the chapel. Remains of the

decoration survived on the east wall of the entrance thickness, showing the lower half of the tomb owner facing south, sitting on a wooden chair and receiving offering bearers who lead an oryx antelope to him (fig. 5). Other species of cattle and wild animals were probably depicted in the lost registers above.

The chapel itself is east-west oriented. Only the bottom part of the low relief decoration is preserved on some blocks of its north wall, showing the feet of

⁴ Funerary estates with the name of Setibhor are attested in the tombs of Akhtihotep and Ptahhetep (II) (Jacquet-Gordon 1962: 387, no. 2, 390, no. 16, 392, no. 22, 395, no. 34, 399, nos. 2–3, 402, no. 17), among funerary domains of kings of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty.



Fig. 5 Remains of the relief decoration in the entrance to the chapel (photo M. Megahed)

offering bearers facing towards the west. No remains of the false door were uncovered *in situ*; however, mortar on the floor by the west wall of the chapel indicates its original position. The west wall of the chapel is built of stronger blocks of grey limestone unlike the side core walls; it was clearly intended to form a strong support for the false door itself. Part of the floor of the chapel is preserved, and the west side of the room contains a large offering table of grey limestone, decorated on the top side with a large *htp*-sign and two *šn*-symbols on its sides. This unusual feature, which undoubtedly has a strong royal connotation (see *e.g.* Barta 1970, and further below), together with the high quality of the preserved reliefs clearly indicate a strong connection of the tomb owner to the royal family. The offering table was slightly moved in antiquity (fig. 6) and exploration

of the area underneath revealed a hole hewn by the ancient robbers to the underground chambers.

In the south-west part of the tomb, another room was situated, namely the serdab. It was entirely closed with no access and no opening to the chapel. The inner walls of the serdab were cased with limestone blocks, partly missing. It once contained wooden statues with inlaid eyes, of which only small wooden fragments survived. Six pairs of eyes and two more eyes of two incomplete pairs were found on the ground level in the west part of the serdab. They consist of copper frames, smooth, light eye-white and a crystal pupil. These clearly indicate that at least eight statues of various sizes were once placed here. These probably included not only male but also female sculptures, as indicated by small fragments of plaster coating of red and yellow ochre.



Fig. 6 The slightly moved offering table in the west part of the chapel indicated activities of ancient tomb robbers (photo M. Megahed)

THE SUBSTRUCTURE

The substructure of the tomb is strongly inspired by the royal pyramids of the time (see fig. 3). The entrance is situated in the north wall of the tomb, slightly west of its north-south axis.⁵ A descending corridor leads to a vestibule, from which a short entrance passage gives access to an antechamber. To its west the burial chamber is situated, accessible through two entrances in the north and south ends of the antechamber. From the south walls of the antechamber another small passage leads to a storeroom situated further south.

This plan of the subterranean area is closer to a simpler layout known from some other Old Kingdom tombs, which comprised a burial chamber composed of two parts: an outer room and a smaller, inner one for the sarcophagus; furthermore, a small niche was prepared on the south side of the outer room perhaps for the canopic jars (for an example, see *e.g.* the tomb of Rawer in Giza, Hassan 1944: 296–297).⁶ In Khuwy's tomb, the inner room (burial chamber proper) is as long as the outer room (antechamber), and they are divided by a built-up wall. In some tombs, this dividing wall is much smaller and is in the shape of a pillar (*e.g.* the tomb of Userkafankh, Borchartd 1907: 109–112, esp. Bl. 20).

In the tomb of Khuwy, the north-south oriented antechamber (outer room) is long and narrow. Its walls and floor are well preserved, and the four side walls of this room are decorated with low reliefs with preserved polychromy – this decoration make this tomb one of the earliest examples of non-royal tombs with decorated substructure in the Old Kingdom (see further below).

The antechamber was found loaded with smaller and larger pieces of limestone, which filled the central and south part of the room to a height of *ca.* 2.5 m. Only the north part of the antechamber just behind the access and by the north entrance to the burial chamber was left without any fill (fig. 7). A small opening in the top of the east wall of the antechamber right under the ceiling was the result of the activity of the ancient tomb robbers. The debris of the antechamber contained fragments of two canopic jars, fragments of pottery vessels, animal bones and a small quantity of fruits; these items were most likely moved here by the ancient tomb robbers. In addition, parts of a human body, most likely of the tomb owner, and a large quantity of linen of various kinds of weave were found in the antechamber. Some of the body parts were wrapped in bandages, while other showed remains of dark resin.⁷

The north-south oriented burial chamber has walls cased with large blocks of fine limestone. Its side walls were undecorated and the room once contained a sarcophagus of white limestone, which was heavily damaged by ancient tomb robbers. Only the south-east



Fig. 7 The antechamber before the removal of its fill (photo H. Vymazalová)

corner of the sarcophagus survived *in situ* in the burial chamber, while its major part as well as most of the floor of the burial chamber were smashed to pieces and removed. Many pieces of the destroyed sarcophagus and the floor of the burial chamber were heaped in the antechamber; this may indicate that the ancient robbers were not interested in the fine white limestone but mostly in valuable objects. On the other hand, we cannot exclude the possibility that they intended to transport the stones later but, for some reason, never did. The side walls of the burial chamber, however, show outlines of the sarcophagus, as only the walls above it were smoothed (fig. 8). A pedestal supporting the lid once existed along the west wall of the burial chamber, as indicated by mortar outlines on the floor and the wall itself. Both the north and the south entrances to the burial chamber seem to have been closed at their bottom parts, and part of the closure of the south entrance is still *in situ*. The corner of the north entrance shows an adjustment which facilitated manipulation of the coffin during the burial.

⁵ The entrance to the substructure of Djedkare's pyramid is also shifted by about 2.6 m to the west of the pyramid's north-south axis (see Maragioglio – Rinaldi 1977: 66).

⁶ In Rawer's tomb, the substructure is, however, accessed by a descending corridor from the east. Moreover, the two rooms were divided by a two-leaf-door, while no door is attested in Khuwy's tomb.

⁷ The physical remains are planned to be studied by anthropologists in the upcoming excavation seasons.

The small east-west oriented storeroom has walls cased with smaller blocks of limestone. Some of these blocks bear hieratic builder's inscriptions with the name and title of the tomb owner, *imy-r3 hntyw-š pr-ꜣ Hwuy*, "overseer of the land tenants of the Great House, Khuwy". Three small inscriptions also give dates, including days 23–25 of the 3rd month of the *3ht*-season, showing the progress of the work during the construction of the substructure. The storeroom originally perhaps contained the burial equipment, but it was looted by ancient tomb robbers; only few remains were found in this room, including fragments of two canopic jars and their lids, fragments of pottery vessels, animal bones and dried fruits. Parts of the floor and parts of the south and west walls were removed by the tomb robbers perhaps in search of presumed hidden valuables, exposing mud brick masonry which apparently surrounded the underground chambers. The substructure of the tomb was obviously built in an open pit under the ground level, and above it the chapel was constructed in the superstructure of the tomb.

The design of the substructure of the tomb is rather unusual but not entirely unique. Descending passages leading to the burial apartments are attested as Reisner's Type 9 of the late Fifth and Sixth Dynasty, often leading from the east to north-south oriented

burial chambers (Reisner 1942: 150–199). In the royal cemetery of Abusir, several tombs feature descending passages from the north, belonging mostly to members of the royal family. One such tomb with access from the centre of the north wall by means of a descending passage belonged to the eldest king's son, Werkaure, who was most likely the son of Nyuserre (Krejčí – Arias Kytarová *et al.* 2014); however, the detailed form of its substructure is not the same as in Khuwy's tomb (Krejčí 2014: 31–37). Also, the twin tomb Lepsius XXV/1–2, which probably belonged to two female members of the king's closest family, had access from the north and burial apartments very similar to that of a pyramid (Krejčí 2008: 170–174, 176–179). The most similar plan of substructure to Khuwy's tomb can be found in the tomb of Ptahshepses Junior II at Abusir (Bárta 2000). Its superstructure contained many rooms and a courtyard from which an entrance led to the substructure (Bárta 2000: 45–55). The descending corridor opened into a burial chamber divided by a pillar into two parts, and a canopic chamber to the south (Bárta 2000: 56). These thus constitute a clear parallel to the burial chamber, antechamber and storeroom of Khuwy's tomb. It is worth mentioning that Ptahshepses Junior II was very likely son of king's daughter Khamerernebt and Vizier Ptahshepses (Verner 1986: 45; Bárta 2000: 59), *i.e.* a member of wider royal family.



Fig. 8 East wall of the burial chamber showing the outline of the sarcophagus, the corner of which is preserved *in situ*; most of the floor is reconstructed. The upper part of the entrance shows the adjustment that facilitated manipulation of the coffin during burial (photo H. Vymazalová)

DECORATION OF THE ANTECHAMBER

The four walls of the antechamber were fully decorated with low relief and polychromy, which is preserved in good condition. Decorated burial chambers are well attested from the later part of the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period (see mainly Jéquier 1929; Lapp 1993; Bolshakov 1997: 113–122; Brovarski 2005; Dawood 2005; Kanawati 2010; for an updated overview, see also Jánosi – Vymazalová 2018). The earliest attested example may be the decorated burial chamber in the tomb of Djedkare's vizier Rashepses (El-Tayeb 2013: 8–9; El-Tayeb 2014: 63–66, 156–164; El-Tayeb 2018: 301–304; see also Jánosi – Vymazalová 2018: 218), which seems to confirm the previously posed hypothesis that the earliest attestations of decorated burial chambers predate the Pyramid Texts in the royal monuments (e.g. Kanawati 2010: 15–21; Megahed 2016: 45).

The later decorated burial chambers, which were more common in the Sixth Dynasty and in the First Intermediate Period, were often small chambers cased with limestone slabs, and their decoration featured motifs associated with provisioning the deceased in the afterlife. They usually included an offering list, depictions of offerings of food and drinks, sacred oils, cloths, and personal equipment, palace façade motifs, granaries; and the inscriptions included mostly the offering formula and the name and titles of the tomb owner (see the previous references, also Lapp 1993: 1–5; Jánosi – Vymazalová 2018: 215–219, with further bibliography). It has been noticed that the decorated burial chambers at Saqqara, unlike some of the examples from Giza, do not usually contain human figures (Lapp 1993: 1–2, 28, 37; Bolshakov 1997: 118–119; Dawood 2005). However, the early decorated chambers at Saqqara, including the tomb of Rashepses (El-Tayeb 2013) and the newly uncovered tomb of Khuwy are exceptions to this rule.

The decoration in the substructure of the tomb of Khuwy is extraordinary in one more way: the decoration does not cover the walls of the burial chamber but the walls of the antechamber (or outer room). The burial chamber proper, as well as other parts of the substructure remained entirely undecorated. The decoration in the antechamber contains similar themes and motifs as the later attested tombs (pls. I and II). We can find here predominantly themes associated with the provisioning of the deceased with food and drinks, while some other motifs like depictions of personal items are not included in Khuwy's tomb. Moreover, scenes of the deceased owner are also included, a highly unusual feature in the substructures of the Old Kingdom tombs. This part of the decoration was most probably a repetition of themes that were captured in the offering chamber in the tomb's superstructure. The decoration of the chapel is, however, almost entirely lost, and therefore a comparison of the motifs is not possible.

NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS OF THE ANTECHAMBER

The north wall as well as the south wall features a scene of the tomb owner sitting in front of the offering table and heaps of offerings. On the north wall, he has one arm across his chest, while on the south wall he is shown holding a piece of cloth instead, with the other arms in both cases reaching for the bread on the offering table. The bread is depicted in the traditional shape. The inscription above the head of the tomb owner gives us his titles and name: *smr-w^cty imy-r³ hntyw-š pr ʕ³ z3b ʕd-mr pr ʕ³ wr 10 Šm^c šps nzwt im³hw smr pr Hw^y*, “sole companion, overseer of the tenants of the Great House, judicial ʕd-mr-official of the Great House, great one of ten of Upper Egypt, noble of the king, revered, companion of the (royal) house, Khuwy” (for the name, see Ranke 1935: 267, 13; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 588 [2687]).

The bottom part of the north and south walls show two registers of boats, including larger boats sailed by the tomb owner in the upper registers and two smaller boats following in the bottom registers. On both walls, the figure of the owner sailing the boats is identified as *smr pr mry nb.f z3b ʕd-mr pr ʕ³ šps nzwt Hw^y*, “companion of the (royal) house, beloved of his lord, judicial ʕd-mr-official of the Great House, noble of the king, Khuwy”. The boats on both walls are directed towards the west, which seems to symbolise the journey of the deceased to the other world and/or to important places associated with funerary beliefs (see e.g. Junker 1940: 56–57).

Scenes of the tomb owner at an offering table are rather rare in the burial chambers, where human figures are most often omitted. However, we can find it on the east wall of the burial chamber of Kahertah in Giza (Junker 1947: 117–120, Abb. 56, Taf. 21; Lapp 1993: Taf. 4a), in the tomb of Rawer in Giza (Hassan 1944: 297; Lapp 1993: 28) and in the tomb of Hennet in Sheikh Said (Davies 1901: 30–31, Taf. 26; Lapp 1993: 28). Here the offering table scene forms part of the theme of the offering list on the same wall, while in Khuwy's tomb it occupies two walls neighbouring those with the offering list. Among the various themes that are attested in the burial chamber in the tomb of Kaiemankh in Giza (Junker 1940: 43–96), one can find the tomb owner on boats, depicted on the north wall of the chamber (Junker 1940: 51–63, Taf. 3–7; Lapp 1993: 28–29). In that case, however, the deceased is shown in a passive position while in Khuwy's tomb he is the one who sails the boats himself.

WEST WALL OF THE ANTECHAMBER

The top of the west wall of the antechamber bears a long line of a hieroglyphic inscription reading from right to left, i.e. from the entrance to the south. This inscription contains the offering formula together with titles and epithets of the deceased: *htp di nzwt Inpw hnty zh-ntr tp dw.f imy-r³ hntyw-š pr-ʕ³ Hw^y krst(w).f m hrt-ntr zmit imntt nfr wrt im³hw hr nzwt hr ntr ʕ³ smr-w^cty mry nb.f z3b ʕd-mr pr ʕ³ hry-sšt3 n nzwt Hw^y*, “offering given by the king and Anubis, foremost of the divine booth, on

the top of his mountain, (to) overseer of the tenants of the Great House Khuwy, may he be buried in the cemetery in the western desert in good old age, revered with the king and with the Great God, sole companion, beloved of his lord, judicial *ḥd-mr*-official of the Great House, secretary of the king, Khuwy". The small parts of the west wall above the north and south entrances which lead to the burial chamber bear two registers filled with offerings.

The major part of the west wall is decorated with two large palace façades with beautifully elaborated details of geometrical patterns. They are separated with a vertical column of hieroglyphic inscription, giving the titles, epithets and name of the tomb owner: *smr-w^cty ny mrwt ḥry-sšb n nzwt m st.f nbt imy-r3 ḥntyw-š pr-ḥ3 z3b ḥd-mr pr-ḥ3 smr pr Ḥwy*, "sole companion, possessor of love, secretary of the king in all his places, overseer of the tenants of the Great House, judicial *ḥd-mr*-official of the Great House, companion of the (royal) house, Khuwy".

Themes of the objects of personal equipment, which are usually found on the west walls in later examples of the decorated burial chambers (Lapp 1993; Brovarski 2005), are not included in the tomb of Khuwy. One remarkable and rather touching detail, however, is a finger print (or perhaps a palm print) of an ancient artist, which is well preserved in the coating on the west wall.

EAST WALL OF THE ANTECHAMBER

The east wall decoration consists of three registers. The two upper registers are occupied by the so-called canonical offering list (see Barta 1963), while the bottom one contains offering bearers as well as a slaughtering theme.

The offering list is the so-called type A (see Barta 1963: 47–77). It comprises a total of 94 items, each written in a rectangular compartment ending with a determinative of an offering bearer holding the respective item in his hands, followed by a number. Some of the determinatives of the offering bearers, namely those at the beginning of the list, are shown standing while the majority of them are depicted kneeling (pl. II: 2).

The two registers consist of a different number of listed items: the first register contains 42 items while the second one contains 52 items; the columns of individual items in the second register are narrower than in the first one. A small part of the first register was damaged by the ancient tomb robbers who cut a tunnel leading from the chapel to the substructure, but the respective items of the offering list can be reconstructed because some of the damaged fragments were found fallen into the room.

The first register is opened with the *mw z3t*, "water for libation", followed by the seven sacred oils and two kinds of eye paint, natron, offerings for the breakfast meal and main meal and ending with the list of various types of bread (compare to Barta 1963: 47–48, nos. 1–38). The second register continues with the

bread types, followed by various cuts of meat, poultry, types of bakery products and drinks, beer and wine, and fruits (compare to Barta 1963: 48–50, nos. 39–95).

The third register on the east wall contains the theme of slaughtering bulls and offering bearers. The slaughtering occupies the central part, and it depicts butchers sharpening knives and portioning four slaughtered bulls. Each of the bulls has a different colour. Two of them are cut open showing the insides of their bellies. The scene is divided into two halves directed from the centre to the sides of the east wall. The captions above the scene contain dialogues of the butchers.

On both the north and south sides of the third register next to the slaughtering scene, we can find offering bearers carrying cuts of the slaughtered bulls, walking in the direction of the two depictions of the tomb owner seated at the offering table on the north and south wall of the room. The figures are accompanied with a heading explaining the situation. On the south side, the inscription opens with *shpt stp-st z3 in ḥmw-k3 nw pr-dt m ḥr nb m 3wt dt*, "bringing meat-cuts and poultry by the funerary priests of the house of eternity on every day for eternity", and the offerings are moreover specified as: *prt-ḥrw n imy-r3 ḥntyw-š pr-ḥ3 smr-w^cty Ḥwy*, "invocation offering for the overseer of the tenants of the Great House, Khuwy". A similar inscription carved above them on the north side of the third register specifies the offerings further as: *prt ḥrw t ḥnkt pzn z3 k3 r^c nb*, "invocation offering (consisting of) conical bread, beer, flat bread, poultry and beef every day".

DISCUSSION

The tomb of Khuwy was badly damaged in its superstructure, but its substructure is an example of an exceptionally well preserved decorated burial apartment of Old Kingdom date. The tomb, however, offers us no direct clues concerning its owner's connection with the royal family of the Fifth Dynasty, especially to King Djedkare or Queen Setibhor. Through a careful evaluation of the evidence, we can, however, find some indirect hints to the status of the deceased and to the date of his tomb. In this particular case, the location of the tomb, its architecture and decoration can be considered as indications of its dating and evidence concerning the high status of the owner, Khuwy. The following points can be taken into consideration:

1. The location of the tomb in the north-east part of the royal cemetery which surrounded the pyramid complex of Djedkare and his queen is one of the indications of a close relationship of Khuwy to the royal family. In a similar type of the site, in the royal cemetery at Abusir (e.g. Verner 2017) and at Saqqara, in the vicinity of Pepy I (e.g. Collombert 2011 and 2015), only the members of the royal family and individuals closely associated with them were buried. Khuwy constructed his tomb to the east of the queen's funerary temple, near the edge of the desert hill which slopes down eastwards to the

- cultivated fields. This may indicate that the area nearer to the queen's and king's funerary temples was already occupied, and thus Khuwy's tomb may be slightly later.
2. The tomb of Khuwy was rather large (26.3 × 19.0 m), which is another indication of his importance. If we compare the size of Khuwy's tomb to those from the Abusir royal necropolis,⁸ which are not much older, we cannot find many parallels among the so-far explored tombs. Leaving aside the many-times-expanded mastaba of Vizier Ptahshepses, who married a king's daughter, or the tomb of the princesses, which was built for several individuals, the Abusir tombs of comparable size are not many. Slightly smaller than Khuwy's tomb are those of Djadjaemankh (26.40 × 15.52 m, Borchartd 1907: Taf. 22), Lepsius XXV/1 (24.0 × 11.5 m, Krejčí – Callender – Verner *et al.* 2008: 161) and Ptahshepses Junior II (23.1 × 16.3 m, Bárta 2000: 45). On the other hand, the tombs of Userkafankh, Nebtyemneferes, Nakhtsare, and Khekeretnebtj are all considerably smaller in size.⁹
 3. The large offering table in Khuwy's chapel is decorated with two *šn*-symbols, which are symbols associated with the royal sphere. The *šn*-ring was a symbol of eternal (recurrent) life and was used to surround the names of kings as well as held by protective deities above kings' depictions. It was closely associated with a king's accession to the throne and the rituals during the *sed*-festival (e.g. Barta 1970: 12–16). During the Old Kingdom, the occurrence of the *šn*-symbol in non-royal context is rather scarce and comes from the context of the wider royal family.¹⁰ The *šn*-symbol on the offering table of Khuwy, therefore, might be an indirect indication of his connection to the royal family.
 4. The plan of the substructure in Khuwy's tomb is rather exceptional. Similar access by a corridor from the north can be found in the tombs of the family members of the Abusir kings. The closest attested parallel to Khuwy's substructure is, however, in the tomb of Ptahshepses Junior II at Abusir, who was most likely the son of a king's daughter and a vizier.
 5. The relief decoration in both the superstructure and the substructure is of a very high quality and seems comparable to (or even finer than) the reliefs from the pyramid complex of Djedkare as well as the one of his queen, Setibhor. In addition, the quality of the wall paintings is extraordinary. While it is mostly destroyed in the superstructure, it still shows many fine details, which are preserved especially well in the tomb substructure. Some parts of the painted decoration in the substructure corrected small imperfections of the reliefs. Khuwy's tomb in general features the traditional style of ancient Egyptian art, with no hints of the so-called second style. It is worth mentioning that the bread placed on the offering tables has the traditional form, and is not depicted in the form of reeds.
 6. The decoration of the entrance room includes on its west wall the theme of the owner fishing and fowling, *i.e.* in an active pose (for this theme and the associated dating criteria, see Harpur 1987: 52). The figure of his son at the bow of the boat and shown in the same position as Khuwy is an indication of its dating to the time of Unas (according to Harpur 1987: 136).
 7. The painted reliefs of the chapel is almost entirely lost, but small remains of agricultural scenes survived on the east wall of the first room, and fragments of depictions funerary estates also most likely came from this wall (for the themes on east walls of chapels, see Harpur 1987: 65–68, 75). The names of the funerary estates show again a very close relationship to Djedkare and his queen. Especially noticeable is the funerary domain bearing the queen's name, Setibhor, as funerary estates with her name are so far attested only in tombs dating to the reign of Djedkare and perhaps Unas (Ptahhetep (II) and Akhtihotep).
 8. Clear traces of mummification were uncovered in the substructure of the tomb. These include parts of the body of the deceased, as well as his canopic jars. Of the preserved parts of the body, some survived only as bones, covered with dark resin. Other parts, however, were still wrapped in many layers of linen bandages, some of which were also soaked in dark resin. In addition, the canopic jars contained resin on the inner walls and also on the lids. The lids moreover bear remains of textiles which once helped to seal the jars. The exploration of the tomb showed no evidence of its later reuse, and therefore there seems to be no doubt that the preserved body remains and canopic jars belonged to Khuwy himself.
- For the above summarized reasons, especially nos. 5.–7. give us indications that the tomb of Khuwy was most likely constructed and decorated in between the reigns of Djedkare and Unas, featuring the earlier artistic style, but including some features starting under the latter king. This dating, which is based on the current, rather preliminary stage of study, will need to be compared with pottery finds and other material, which are yet to be analysed.
- All the above listed points also give us strong indications of the very high social standing of the tomb owner, Khuwy. Especially points 1.–6. and 8. seem to be strong arguments to place him amongst the closest entourage of the king. While even the very high officials of

⁸ We intentionally compare the tomb from Djedkare's royal cemetery to the tombs from the Abusir royal cemetery due to their proximity in time as well as similar conditions for their construction (*i.e.* control by the kings), and available publications.

⁹ The sizes of the tombs are as follows: Userkafankh: 18.5 × 12.7 m (Borchartd 1907: Taf. 20), Nebtyemneferes: 15.9 × 11.5 m, and Nakhtsare: 15.1 × 10.1 m (Krejčí – Callender – Verner *et al.* 2008: 22, 40), Khekeretnebtj: 18.2 × 9.8 m (Verner – Callender 2002: 110, fig. 9.1; this is the largest of the tombs in the so-called Djedkare's family cemetery).

¹⁰ This evidence includes statues of high officials who wear bracelets in the form of the *šn*-symbol; these date to the Third and Fourth Dynasties when the high offices were held by members of the royal family (see Barta 1970: 15).

Djedkare, including his viziers, were buried elsewhere in the Memphite necropolis, Khuwy had himself buried in a large tomb with very fine relief and painted decoration and a substructure strongly inspired by the royal pyramids. Moreover, he had access to mummification, which was not widespread at that period. Despite him not having any titles of the royal family members, we may presume – with a certain degree of reservation – that Khuwy may have belonged to the wider circle of the royal family. He may have been a member of a side, secondary branch of the royal family, similarly to e.g. Ptahshepses Junior II at Abusir. At the moment, however, this is only a preliminary, working hypothesis.

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Pl. I The decorated antechamber in the substructure of the tomb of Khuwy, view of the north wall (photo S. Vannini)



Pl. II: 1 The decorated antechamber in the substructure of the tomb of Khuwy, view towards the south wall (photo S. Vannini)

Pl. II: 2 The north end of the two registers of the offering list on the east wall of the antechamber (photo P. Košárek)



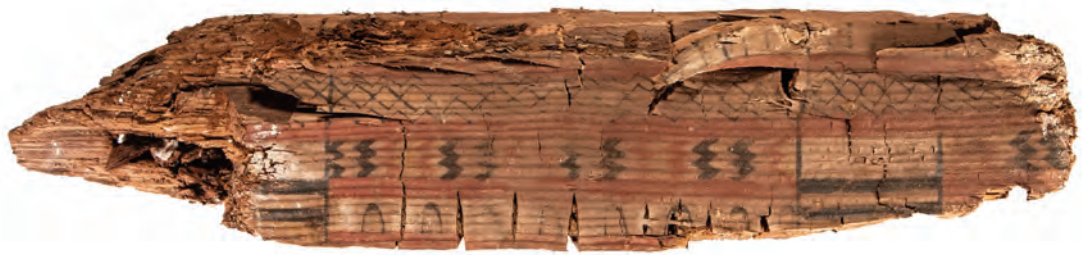
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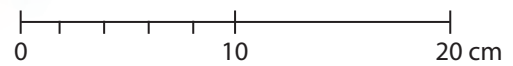
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Pl. III: 1 Pottery from the burial chamber of Shaft 3 (photo P. Košárek)

Pl. III: 2 Miniature copper spouted jar from Shaft 3 (25/AS104/2018) (photo P. Košárek)

Pl. III: 3 Miniature copper bowl with fragments of other miniature vessels from Shaft 3 (25/AS104/2018) (photo P. Košárek)

Pl. III: 4 Fragment of decorated wooden coffin with remains of decoration from Shaft 1 (photo P. Košárek)



Pl. IV White limestone stela of Sekhemka and Henutsen (1/AS104/2018) (photo P. Košárek)