THE LIBYAN PERIOD IN EGYPT
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES
INTO THE 21TH – 24TH DYNASTIES:
PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY,
25-27 OCTOBER 2007

G.P.F. BROEKMAN, R.J. DEMARÉE and O.E. KAPER (eds.)

NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR HET NABIJE OOSTEN
LEIDEN
PEETERS
LEUVEN
2009
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THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD NECROPOLIS AT HERAKLEOPOLIS MAGNA

M. Carmen Pérez Die

Excavations at the Third Intermediate Period necropolis at Herakleopolis Magna were carried out by the Spanish Archaeological Mission in 1966 and in the years 1984 to 1999 (pl. 1). Since the excavations began, we have published several monographs and articles on the necropolis along with monographs on the inscriptions and pottery from the site, but what was missing was a book with general conclusions about the necropolis. The publication of these excavations is imminent, and this article contains a summary of that book.

The Third Intermediate Period necropolis is of a considerable size and occupies the upper levels of the sectors A, C, L and M, as shown on the topographical site plan. The necropolis was in use for many years, and in its final phase it had undergone many transformations and reuse; for this reason it was very difficult to establish what it had been like originally. This necropolis was a ‘royal’ cemetery used for the burials of the sons of kings, descendents of the Theban High Priests of Amun, important Herakleopolitan dignitaries and priests, who lived during the 22nd–23rd dynasties. It was reused during the 25th and in the early years of the 26th dynasties (up to and including Psammetik I).

The chronology relating to the Third Intermediate Period, according to the data provided by the excavations, is as follows:

1.- There are remains of ancient buildings perhaps of the 21st dynasty, which were used as support and foundation for some later tombs (no 5 and no 6), erected during the second phase of the cemetery’s construction.

2.- The main tombs were built during the mid- to late-9th century BC, most probably around the reign of Osorkon II; and during much of the 8th century the cemetery was extended to the south, east and west. At the same time, in the 8th century some of the tombs constructed in the previous

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2 This plan will be presented in the final publication.
stage deteriorated and were repaired, reconstructed and extended: the tomb of Tanetamun, the antechamber of tomb no 6 and tomb no 2. The central common chapel may date from this time.

3.- During the final years of the 8th century and much of the 7th century BC (including the reign of Psammetik I), the necropolis was reused for numerous individuals occupying all the available spaces. This reuse has caused the loss of much essential data for the interpretation of the necropolis in its initial phase.

To sum up, the Herakleopolitan necropolis excavated so far was constructed during the Libyan period (22nd and 23rd dynasties) and extended during the presence of the Kushites of the 25th dynasty and the reign of Psammetik I.

The Architecture of the Tombs
The necropolis from the Libyan period excavated by the Spanish Mission indicates a different mentality for this period than that prevailing in other periods. The Egyptian tradition of spending time and money on building tombs had disappeared. As suggested by Leahy, the Libyans may have built their tombs posthumously, without taking earlier architectonic traditions into account. The attitude to death had changed, with a new indifference to the building of a monument. Collectivization took precedence over individuality.

The location of the necropolis within the precinct of a temple was common practice in the Third Intermediate Period (as in Tanis, Medinet Habu). In Herakleopolis the Third Intermediate Period necropolis was located near the temple of Herishef, although we have still not found the temenos wall, nor have we been able to confirm the relationship between the necropolis and the sanctuary of the local deity.

We have drawn up detailed plans of the necropolis. For sector L, the plans show the site of the tombs and the numbering of the chambers (pl. 2). All the Herakleopolitan tombs from the Third Intermediate Period, as we found them in their final phase, are made up of various enclosures built of stone and mud brick. Pl. 3 shows the roofs of the tombs (reconstructed).

The stone chambers have lintels and the mud brick ones were roofed with low vaults. We have established that the mud brick chambers were constructed later than the stone ones, but we do not know exactly how much later, whether many years had passed or only a few; but as they appear now, they seem to have been built to a similar design originally, although they may perhaps have been rebuilt at different times.

The tombs were built in fairly deep pits excavated from ground surface level. This meant that earlier strata were destroyed, dating from the early years of the Third Intermediate Period, the New Kingdom, the Second Intermediate Period and the First Intermediate Period.

Desert sand was deposited on the floor of the graves with the floor slabs laid on top. The stone walls of the chambers were then built of ashlars on these (pl. 4); and afterwards the stone walls were faced with mud bricks (pl. 5), except on some facades and doors (pl. 6). Perimeter walls were built all around the outside of the tomb. The tombs had an enclosure in front of their door, which may have served as the access for the shaft.

The internal surfaces of the walls are well worked and smooth, with remains of stucco, which may have been used as a surface for decoration with painted religious scenes and texts, very little of which has survived to the present day (pl. 7).

In the mud brick enclosures the floors are at a higher level than in the stone chambers. They are rectangular with a vaulted mud brick roof (pl. 8). They were not very high and all the vaults were found to have fallen in, crushing the bodies buried in these tombs, but traces on the walls allowed us to identify the original architectural design (pl. 9). These vaulted chambers have a small

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archway situated at the lowest point of the side wall. The chambers must have been partially or completely buried; the higher mud brick roofs and walls built round them were visible from the outside, so that we can consider them as the sub-structures of the tombs. The most difficult question is to decide whether each tomb had its own independent funerary chapel to celebrate the funerary rites; if they did, it is not known where this was situated. The hypothesis that it could have been located as some kind of superstructure on top of the stone chambers is not supported by archaeological evidence, although the later reuse of all these spaces for numerous other burials may have destroyed such structures.

The only enclosure which was used as a funerary chapel for all the tombs is a rectangular space surrounded by mud brick walls and four stone columns, but this is also dated after the tombs were made, in the 9th century BC, as shown by the stratigraphy (pl. 10).

There are four types of Herakleopolitan tombs:

Type 1: Tombs with four or more chambers, of mud brick and stone: tombs nº 1, nº 3, nº 6 and nº 7.

These usually have a small, narrow access shaft built of mud brick, found badly damaged or almost destroyed, leading to the door of an antechamber. This antechamber is linked to other perpendicular chambers made of stone (tombs nº 1, nº 3, nº 7) or mud brick (tomb nº 6). They may also have another parallel vaulted room in mud brick. The floor plan of these tombs is very similar to the tombs of Psusennes I (NRT III) and Osorkon II (NRT I) in Tanis.5 The existence of an antechamber preceding the two chambers is also found in the tomb of Kama (D/F) at Leontopolis.6

Type 2: Tombs with three stone or mud brick enclosures: tombs nº 2, nº 4 and nº 5.

These are entered through an antechamber that may have been used as an access shaft. This leads into the funerary chamber, of which the exterior wall may have been decorated with inscriptions (tomb nº 4), or engraved as it was to be left visible (tomb nº 2). The floor plan of these two first enclosures is very similar to that of tomb NRT V at Tanis, and the stone chamber is identical to the tomb of Prince Shoshenq at Memphis, but without inscriptions.7 There may be a third vaulted mud brick enclosure on one side (tombs nº 2 and nº 4) of which, as is usual, the roofs have fallen in.

Type 3: Simpler tombs with only one or two chambers, surrounded by mud brick walls which cover the grave. The roof has not survived in any of them. These find their parallel in tombs NRT IV and VI at Tanis.

Type 4: Tombs with no substructure: these are reused enclosures which had been destroyed, or where the burials were covered with a thick layer of mud brick which was then opened up from above to insert other skeletons.

The owner of a tomb cannot always be identified, and in some cases we are working on the basis of hypotheses, since some inscriptions did not appear in situ but at some distance from the original tomb. However, we must remember that only part of the necropolis has been excavated and that in future new tombs may be found, which will let us modify or confirm the hypotheses.

6 H. Gauthier, ASAE 21 (1921), 17-39.
7 A. Badawi, ASAE 54 (1954), 157-177.
presented here. The documents (inscriptions and objects) that have been found while not “in situ”, are the following:8

A.- Reused blocks of Imenhaemipet (fig. 1).9

B.- Lintel of the tomb of Osorkon 1, son of the Great Chief of the Ma (fig. 2).10

C.- Scarab of Shesheq, son of the Great Chief of the Ma, Padinaret (fig. 3).11

D.- Shabtis of queen Shebensopdet, possibly reused during the 7th century BC (fig. 4).12

E.- Offering table of Osorkon 4, son of Smendes (fig. 5).13

F.- Fragment of the offering table of Osorkon 5, son of Nimlot (fig. 6).14

The documents A, B, C were linked to the Meshwesh ethnic group. The most important of these are A and B; Document A is the door jambs and lintel possibly from the tomb of Imenhaemipet (fig. 1), and B is the lintel of the tomb of Osorkon 1 (fig. 2). Both were “in command of the five great fortresses of the Meshwesh” according to the interpretation of this title proposed by Jansen-Winkeln.15 Both were First Prophets of Herishef, Generals and Commanders. The tombs of Osorkon I and Imenhaemipet were part of the necropolis of the First Prophets of Herishef, which has not yet been found. This cemetery may lie some distance away from our excavations, or it may have been destroyed and dismantled.

The exact date of these priests is difficult to establish, although we may suggest the 21st dynasty or, at the latest, the early 22nd dynasty during the reign of Shoshenq I. The data indicating the 21st dynasty are the remains of constructions which came to light underneath the tombs nº 2, 5 and 6 in the East Zone of Sector L, the presence of a considerable quantity of pottery from this period, and also the mention of fortress situated in the region of Herakleopolis during the 21st dynasty.16 In addition, the writing of Meshwesh (only the determinative) has some parallels in the 21st dynasty.17

The hypothesis that both may have lived at the beginning of the 22nd dynasty (Shoshenq I) is based on the fact that the levels found near the cemetery, which are dated by Aston between the end of the 20th dynasty to the early years of the 22nd dynasty, contain a settlement with civil constructions with characteristic circular structures, which systematically reuse the space, and which were used as recipients or containers.18 Moreover, the title “son or daughter of the Great Chief of the Ma” is very common at the beginning of the 22nd dynasty.19

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8 Various inscriptions have been found mentioning the name of Osorkon. A correlative number has been used for each document to identify them.
11 M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, *Excavaciones I*, nº 49, 70. This piece is without archaeological context, from the surface.
If the date of the 21st dynasty is confirmed, we can conclude that Herakleopolis was the place of origin of the 22nd dynasty, and that during the early years of this dynasty some members of the family of the Great Meshwesh chiefs settled in Herakleopolis.

**Document D** - We have found the reused shabtis of queen Shebensopdet, with her name inscribed in a cartouche (fig. 4). On the basis of stylistic parallels of the figurine, it can be dated to the reign of Osorkon II. Aston makes her the wife of Harsiese A and mother of Takeloth II.

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20 This theory has been defended by some authors on the basis of the Pasenhor Stela: M. Malinine, G. Posener and J. Vercoultter, *Stèles du Sérapeum*, I, doc. 31, 10. Pasenhor, who was alive in 730 BC, details his genealogy going back 15 generations, including ancestors from the 22nd dynasty and also from the 21st dynasty at Herakleopolis; Kitchen and Yoyotte do not accept this theory, but during the Leiden conference, T. Sagrillo again presented this hypothesis as highly probable.


24 D.A. Aston, this volume.
**Document E.** - The offering table of a son of Smendes, named Osorkon 4 (fig. 5), was found out of context, on the floor of the chapel, in front of tomb 2.

![Fig. 5 Text on the offering table of Osorkon 4](image)

**Document F.** - The fragment of an offering table of Osorkon 5, son of Nimlot (fig. 6), who may be identified with Nimlot B, son of Shoshenq I or with Nimlot C, the son of Osorkon II. It was found in front of Tomb 1, behind the columns to the north of the chapel.25

![Fig. 6 Fragmentary offering table of Osorkon 5](image)

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25 See the tables and Tomb nº 1 below.
In the cemetery the Spanish Archaeological Mission found tombs constructed during the mid- to late-9th century BC, most probably from around the reign of Osorkon II, and during much of the 8th century.

The principal tombs of the Third Intermediate Period necropolis are the following:

**Sector L: East Sector**

**Tomb nº 4** This belonged to Tanetamun, the Great of the Harim-ladies of Herishef. Her canopic jars, shabtis, and heart scarab were found inside the burial chamber. The door of this chamber was inscribed, and on the roof of the tomb there was an inscribed statue base (pl. 11, figs. 7-10).²⁶ Tanetamun was the daughter of Smendes (III), the First Prophet of Amun and of the Divine Mother Ihe/Asetemakhbit. Her daughter was the Imyt bah priest of Herishef, Tanetsheritieniah. This Smendes III was the son of king Osorkon I, the brother of Iuwelot, who lived between 884-874 BC, according to Kitchen’s chronology. The mother of Tanetamun, who held the title of “Divine Mother”, or “Mother of a King”, may also have been the mother of king Harsiese of Thebes, according to the latest research carried out by Jansen-Winkeln.²⁷ This means that Tanetamun and her brother king Harsiese belonged to the generation of Osorkon II and the death of Tanetamun may have occurred in the mid- to late-9th century BC. Aston goes further in his interpretations and links this family with queen Shebensopdet (Document D),²⁸ who is mentioned on the shabtis, making her the wife of the king Harsiese, and therefore sister-in-law of Tanetamun.

On the statue base placed above the tomb (fig. 7), there is also mention of a man named Osorkon 3, whose mother was Tchysetch, who held the titles of King’s son of Ramesses, Great Chief of (Per)sekhemkheperre, General, Commander, Prophet of Herishef.

![Fig. 7 Inscription on the statue base from Tomb 4](image.png)

**Tomb nº 2.** Situated near the tomb of Tanetamun, slightly to the north (pl. 6). The owner was a man named Osorkon 2. The shabtis found inside the tomb mention the titles of King’s Son, General and Prophet of Herishef (fig. 11).²⁹

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²⁸ D.A. Aston, this volume.
²⁹ M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, *Excavaciones I*, nº 19, 47.
Other documents found in the necropolis make us consider another hypothesis: if the title “king’s son” was a shortened form of “king’s son of Ramesses”, as was suggested by Payraudeau,\textsuperscript{30} we would be able to identify this Osorkon 2 with the Osorkon 3 mentioned on the Tanetamun statue base. On the other hand, the offering table found on the floor of the chapel mentions another son of Smendes, also called Osorkon 4 (Document E), who could be identified with the other two mentioned above (figs. 12-13).

\textsuperscript{30} F. Payraudeau, \textit{GM} 198 (2004), 79.
If we accept this hypothesis, the owner of tomb 2 would have been a man called Osorkon, son of the First Prophet of Amun Smendes, and of a woman named Tchysetch, and half brother of Tanetamun (on his father’s side), who was alive during the reign of Osorkon II. We know that he must have died after his sister as his tomb was built later than that of Tanetamun. The titles of this Osorkon, owner of tomb 2, would be: “King’s son of Ramesses, Great Chief of (Per)sekhemkheperre, General, Commander, Priest of Herishef”.

If we do not accept the identification of these three persons and we consider that tomb nº 2 belongs to the king’s son Osorkon 2 mentioned only on the shabtis, we can assume that the tomb of Osorkon 4, son of Smendes\(^{31}\) has not yet been excavated or that it has been dismantled and destroyed.

**Tomb nº 6**, situated behind that of Tanetamun and chronologically from the same period (mid - late 9\(^{th}\) century BC).

Owner: Tcheretch: mentioned on the shabtis, heart scarab and canopic jars (fig. 14-15).\(^{32}\) Father: Nimlot, Mother: Tasheritenaset.

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\(^{31}\) This Osorkon 4 may perhaps be identified with the Osorkon 3 mentioned on the statue base of tomb 4.

**Tomb nº 5.** The tomb nº 5 was built on the ruins of buildings, which perhaps date from the 21st dynasty, although this is only a hypothesis (pl. 12). Inside tomb nº 5 there were two burials; one of them, who was buried with a gold and lapis lazuli necklace (Pl. 13), we know was a woman named Tanetsheriteniah from her heart scarab (fig. 16).\(^{33}\) Perhaps this woman reused the burial equipment of the original owner. The other man had a bead net and a winged scarab (fig. 17). We can date the construction of this tomb complex to around the mid-9th century BC or the second half of this same century.

![Heart scarab of Tanetsheriteniah from Tomb 5](image1)
![Scarab from Tomb 5](image2)

**North Sector:** Tombs 1 and 3, which were built at the same time.

**Tomb nº 1.** Owner: Osorkon 6,\(^{34}\) documented on the shabtis found inside the tomb (fig. 18), who may be identified with the other Osorkon 5 (Document F), mentioned on a fragment of an offering table placed just in front of the door of his tomb: “Osorkon son of the king’s son of the Lord of the Two Lands, Nimlot” (Pl. 14, fig. 6).

![Shabti of Osorkon 6 from Tomb 1](image3)
![Shabti of Paenherishef from Tomb 3](image4)

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\(^{33}\) M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, *Excavaciones I*, nº 55, 73.

If his father was Nimlot B (940 BC), the brother of king Osorkon I, his grandfather may have been the king Shoshenq I (954-924 BC), and therefore Osorkon 6 must have been alive during the period of Smendes III (884-874 BC). If his father was Nimlot C (855-840 BC), his grandfather must have been Osorkon II (874-840 BC.), and the tomb may have been built in the second half of the 9th century BC. For the moment, we prefer to identify him with the son of Nimlot C and with the owner of tomb nº 1 also called Osorkon 635, since the stratigraphy seems to confirm this.

**Tomb nº 3**

The interior of this tomb had been disturbed and inside we found many human remains. The original owner may have been Paenherishef, God’s Father of Khonsu, whose shabtis were found placed in the antechamber and in the sarcophagus chamber (fig. 19).36 The closest parallels to these shabtis are those of prince Shoshenq (860 BC.), son of Osorkon II, and those of his son prince Takeloth, who lived around 820 BC.37

**West Sector**

**Tomb nº 7.** This belonged to yet another Osorkon 7. 38 His heart scarab and canopic jars were found: on the scarab “the son of the Lord of the Two Lands” is mentioned (fig. 20). The stratigraphy studied by Aston shows that the foundation trench for the construction of the tomb starts from levels, which can be dated to the time of Osorkon II, so that the burial of this Osorkon 7 may have taken place towards the mid-9th century BC or during the second half of that same century.

**Tomb 8-9.** This tomb consists of two parallel chambers, which were found containing various other corpses. The stratigraphy and the foundation trench for the construction of the tomb at more recent levels than the previous ones make us date this tomb to the 8th century BC.

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35 See the tables below.
37 Tanis, l’or des pharaons, nº 33, 34, 150.
38 M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, Excavaciones I, nº 54, 72.
Sector C

**Tomb 10.** Only one of its two chambers has been excavated. It was built between the 9th and 8th centuries BC. The anepigraphic canopic jars and shabtis were found inside and outside the tomb. They belonged to Ipy, Priest and God’s father of Amun (fig. 21). 39

**Burial under a layer of mud brick.** Ankhsmatauy with shabtis and canopic jars found near the human remains. Titles: *Sameref* priest, *Heka-areq* priest (fig. 22-24). 40

![Figs. 22-24 Shabti and two canopic jars of Ankhsmatauy](image1)

![Fig. 25 Shabti of Djedptahiuesankh from T 66-3](image2)

Sector A

**T 66-3.** Anepigraphic canopic jars and shabtis of Djedptahiuesankh, perhaps from the early 8th century BC (fig. 25). 41

From all these data we have drawn up two tables summarising the Herakleopolitans related to the royal family during the 22nd dynasty. In Table nº 1 Osorkon 5 (Document E) is shown as the son of Nimlot C. This is our preferred option. In Table nº 2 Osorkon 5 is shown as the son of Nimlot B.

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Table 1

1st Generation: Shoshenq I, husband of Karamat. Parents of Osorkon I.

2nd Generation: Osorkon I, husband of Tashedkhonsu. Parents of Takeloth I. Osorkon I is also the father of Smendes III.

3rd Generation: Takeloth I, son of Osorkon I and Tashedkhonsu and father of Osorkon II. Smendes III, son of Osorkon I. Smendes III, husband of Ihe/Asetemakbit and both parents of Tanetamun; Smendes III may have been also the husband of Tchysetch, mother of Osorkon 3. Ihe/Asetemakbit may have been the mother of king Harsiese (opinion of Jansen-Winkeln).

4th Generation: Osorkon II, son of Takeloth I and father of Nimlot C. Takeloth II, son of Harsiese and Shebensopdet (opinion of Aston), husband of Karamat.

5th Generation: Nimlot C, son of Osorkon II, father of Osorkon (5 and 6) and of Karamat. Tashertatenptah, daughter of Tanetamun.

6th Generation: Osorkon (5 and 6), son of Nimlot C and brother of Karamat. Takeloth II, son of Harsiese and Shebensopdet (opinion of Aston), husband of Karamat.

7th Generation: Prince Osorkon, son of Takeloth and Karamat.
Table 2

1st Generation: Shoshenq I, husband of Karamat. Parents of Osorkon I. Another son of Shoshenq I is Nimlot B.

2nd Generation: Osorkon I, husband of Tashedkhonsu. Parents of Takeloth I. Osorkon I is also the father of Smendes III. Another son of Shoshenq I is Nimlot B, father of Osorkon 5.

3rd Generation: Takeloth I, son of Osorkon I and Tashedkhonsu and father of Osorkon II. Smendes III, son of Osorkon I. Smendes III, husband of Ihe/Asetemakhbit and both parents of Tanetamun; Smendes III may have been also the husband of Tchysetch, mother of Osorkon 3. Ihe/Asetemakhbit may have been the mother of king Harsiese (opinion of Jansen-Winkeln). Nimlot B, father of Osorkon 5.

4th Generation: Osorkon II, son of Takeloth I and father of Nimlot C. Tanetamun and Osorkon 4, children of Smendes III. Perhaps this Osorkon 4 could be identified with Osorkon 3 and 2? King Harsiese, son of Ihe/Asetemakhbit (opinion of Jansen-Winkeln), husband of Shebensopdet (opinion of Aston).


6th Generation: Karamat daughter of Nimlot C. Takeloth II, son of Harsiese and Shebensopdet (opinion of Aston), husband of Karamat.

7th Generation: Prince Osorkon, son of Takeloth II and Karamat.
The Third Intermediate Period necropolis appeared to be full of human remains, buried from the mid-9th to the mid-7th century BC. The total number is 1287 although the majority of bodies either showed considerable deterioration or they were incomplete (pl. 15-16). These were the original tomb-owners who were alive during the 22nd and 23rd dynasties (9th and 8th century BC) and those who reused this place during the 25th and early 26th dynasties (up to and including Psammetik I), late 8th and first half of the 7th centuries BC).

The information we have on each group differs: we know the names and titles of the original owners, thanks to the inscriptions which appear on the objects included in the burial equipment, but it is very difficult to identify the individual bodies. We know practically nothing about those buried during the final phase of the cemetery, as there are no inscriptions to provide information. This indicates absolute poverty and very limited economic resources at that time.

Some of the human remains were laid inside the chambers. In other Third Intermediate Period necropoles, e.g. at Tanis, the owner’s family would also have been buried in the same tomb, which meant that they were reopened, the burial equipment was re-arranged and the interior put in order. It is not known if any of the individuals found in the interior of the chambers of the Herakleopolitan necropolis were such family members, who accompanied the owner to his or her ‘eternal dwelling place’.

Individuals were also buried outside the stone and mud brick chambers, piled up on the roofs or nearby. We found that in some areas some kind of order was maintained, with a certain distance left between the bodies, but this was not the most common practice. Piling up and overlaying the bodies was the norm, suggesting common graves or collective burials, difficult to interpret or explain because of the lack of written sources. The individual corpses are hardly ever complete, as a considerable part of them has been lost. We must remember that the battle took place between the Kushite Piye and the king of Herakleopolis Pefjtjauawybast (A), but we do not have any evidence to identify the individuals buried in the necropolis with those who died in battle.

During the reutilization of the necropolis there was no ritual intention observed in the placing or orientation of the bodies, but rather simply a ‘spatial’ occupying of any available places.

Anthropological studies allow us to define the ages of many of the people; this was possible for 890 bodies out of a total 1287. Most are found to be in the adult and infant age groups and few belong to the juvenile, mature and senile age groups. We have been able to establish that in some areas of the necropolis the presence of some age groups is clearly larger than in others, especially adults and children; the highest concentration of children is found in tomb nº 6 where they represent 90% of the total burials. More usually, however, both adults and children are found together in the different sectors, with similar percentages of both groups or a slight majority of one group, generally adults.

The age of death for children was around 2-3 years old, when they were weaned and more exposed to infections. The average life expectancy must have been about 40 years, as can be seen from the scarce presence of mature and senile individuals. The most common pathologies were osteoarthritis, an especially age-related condition, and enthopathies, most probably related to lifelong activities involving considerable muscular strain. Iron deficiency anaemia has also been detected, caused either by a dietary deficiency, or by iron loss through haemorrhaging originating from certain parasites or other gastrointestinal conditions. The dental abrasion seen is due to consuming cereals ground with sandstone millstones. The cause of death could not be established for any of human remains.

Out of the 1287 individuals we have only been able to identify 164 males and 119 females, 22% of the total. Anthropologists Roldan and Gómez have detected traces of a negroid population among some of the bone remains analyzed, although they recognize that the absence of intact skulls makes racial determination much more difficult.

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We know that only 85 corpses conserve remnants of mummification, barely 6.6% of the total 1287, which is a tiny percentage of the total number of individuals. The corpses were placed in sarcophagi - very few -, or in graves dug in the earth, or they were laid directly on the ground or on top of other individuals. The most common position was in supine decubitus. As for sarcophagi, we only discovered one anepigraphic example made of granite and of considerable size inside tomb nº 3 (pl. 17). The other containers discovered were situated outside the chambers and rested directly on the ground, on stones or on potsherds; these coffins were made of poor quality, perishable materials and sometimes seem to be imitations rather than authentic sarcophagi or coffins. These containers were made of wood or mud brick in a anthropoid, oval or square shape.

When the corpses were placed on the ground, sometimes the ground on which they were laid was especially prepared. This was done by spreading layers of earth, desert sand, mud bricks or potsherds underneath the body, to support it and keep it from moving. It was then covered with earth, stone or mud brick from the vaulted roofs which had collapsed and fallen in on top. Many individuals were covered with pieces of polychrome cartonnage, mainly masks and pectorals, with clay, stone or bronze eyes placed in the eye sockets.

As far as the burial equipment is concerned, the dating of the tombs to the Libyan period (22nd – 23rd dynasties) explains the peculiarities of the Herakleopolis necropolis. These Libyans adopted the Egyptian ritual and were buried with the funerary equipment that would have accompanied any Egyptian; they used canopic jars, shabtis and gold and silver objects. On the other hand, there are evident parallels with the tomb furniture of the Kushite kings of the 25th dynasty and we can conclude that influence between Herakleopolitans and Kushites was reciprocal. In the opinion of Lull, the adoption of Egyptian ritual by the Kushites must have begun towards the end of the 9th century BC, with the most consistent changes dating from the 25th dynasty onwards. The Kushite rulers who were buried in Sudan were accompanied by items of typical Egyptian burial equipment which in many cases are very similar to those found at Herakleopolis. In agreement with Lull, we think that the Kushites took back Egyptian craftsmen with them to Kush to produce these objects, as is shown by the Stela of Taharqa. Some Herakleopolitans may have been included among these craftsmen who moved to the south.

The burial equipment which accompanied the owners of the most important tombs was very different from that found with the human remains in places where the necropolis was being reused. The following can be highlighted:

**Canopic Jars.** Various sets have been found, relating to the burials of the wealthiest and most influential persons. Four types have been distinguished, following Aston’s typology, which can be dated from the mid-9th to the mid-7th century BC.

The canopic jars usually appear inside the stone tombs, not in their original position but always displaced. The jars did not contain the mummified viscera but they were empty, as was usual during the Third Intermediate Period.

Only a few stone or faience vases and Egyptian blue figurines have been found in the necropolis, but these have been of enormous interest. The production and use of the stone jars may have been a result of the reduced number of faience jars, which were more costly and more difficult to obtain. Most stone jars found in the Third Intermediate Period necropolis are broken and parts of

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45 I am very grateful to Dr. Aston for this information.
the same item have been found in different areas, and some even associated with two different individuals.46

For the shabtis we have been able to draw up a typology along the lines of Schneider’s work.47 What is certain is that these figures came from a local workshop in Herakleopolis, which supplied its products to the inhabitants of the region. We have found both inscribed and uninscribed faience shabtis, both mumiform and dressed as the living, which can be dated between the 9th and 7th centuries BC. Other shabtis were made of clay or faience in open moulds, which were filled with pressed clay. After firing these moulded shabtis were painted with blue on a white ground, imitating faience. They can be dated to the 8th and 7th centuries BC and they most resemble shabtis belonging to the 25th dynasty.

Amulets were also associated with the burials in the final phase of the Herakleopolitan cemetery. Mainly ‘divinities’ amulets have been found as is usual in the Third Intermediate Period. From the Late Period onwards the types of amulets multiplied, with a great profusion appearing of what Petrie has termed ‘powers’, ‘properties’ etc.48 The closest parallels to those found in Herakleopolis were found in Lahun.49

We have been able to verify that the shabtis were not normally associated with the amulets, so that we conclude that the burials with shabtis and those with amulets belong to two different chronological moments, with the burials with shabtis being somewhat older and further back in time.

Scarabs have been found in fairly large numbers in the necropolis. Among a total of 79 examples various types can be distinguished: heart scarabs, winged scarabs, scarab rings and scaraboids. The heart scarabs were found on the breast of the corpses and the winged scarabs were associated with the bead nets that covered the bodies. These date from between the second half of the 9th and the first half of the 7th century BC. Many scarabs appeared in the stratum corresponding to the 8th – 7th century BC, although parallels allow us to date them to the New Kingdom.

Beads formed part of necklaces and bracelets. Both kinds of adornments were normally accompanied by amulets and shells. One outstanding gold necklace is decorated with cornelian and lapis lazuli.

Shells were also included in necklaces, especially cypraea or cowrie shells. The anodonta shells were found near the hands of the deceased, which suggests that they were used as substitutes for small containers, in a more exotic material than usual.

Studies on the pottery found during the early years of the excavations were published in Volume II of the series on the excavations in Ehnasya el Medina.50 However, in recent years David Aston has continued investigating the Third Intermediate Period ceramics, modifying earlier datings and setting more precise dates for them. Intact and fragmentary pottery vessels used for food or drink were found. The fragments of plates may have substituted the stone offering tables and are usually associated with cups, dishes and bowls. The fact that these receptacles appeared in fragments may be due to a magical ritual of the breaking of jars, as we have documented for the djeseret jars?

The study of the burial equipment has allowed us to draw a series of conclusions about the Herakleopolitan people that were buried in this necropolis. They provide clear evidence of their belief in a life after death and the need to be buried with objects and funerary equipment to accompany both men and women in the afterlife. However, we can see that of the 1287 corpses buried in the necropolis only 563 of them (44 % of the total) possessed items of burial equipment.

46 M.J. López, F. Quesada, M.A. Molinero, Excavaciones Arqueológicas en Egipto II, 205-278.
49 W.M.F. Petrie, Illahun, Kahun and Gurob, London 1892.
On the other hand, the economic possibilities of the Herakleopolitans also determined their burial equipment, and in the tombs of the dignitaries there is a notable richness and a wide selection of exceptional items such as canopic jars, shabtis or heart scarabs. When the cemetery was reused on a large scale by people of a lower social class or in times of internal crisis, this picture changed dramatically. The poverty of the burials found is clear, but also evident is the continuation of Egyptian customs and traditions.

The study of the inscriptions on objects found in the necropolis have allowed us to find out more about the history of this period as well as about the religious beliefs of the Herakleopolitans. The Third Intermediate Period necropolis has left us the tombs of the local rulers who held civil, military and religious offices as is evident from their titles; they were Generals, Commanders and High Priests of Herishef.

The parentage of these persons is shown by their lineage. The main personages were:

- 1. Sons of the Great chiefs of the Meshwesh.51
- 2. King’s son.

Some of the names of the people buried in Herakleopolis are Libyan. The mention of a son of the Great Chief of the Meshwesh Osorkon 1 on a chronologically older lintel shows that this ethnic group had settled in Herakleopolis since much earlier times, possibly even before the founding of the 22nd dynasty.52

There are very few mentions of royalty in the Herakleopolitan documents. Unfortunately we have not found any object where the name of an Egyptian sovereign appears.53 The only royal names that has appeared is on the reused shabtis of queen Shebensopdet, who is called the “wife of the Lord of the Two Lands” with her name inscribed in a cartouche (Document D).

Another royal title that appears in the inscriptions is “king’s son of Ramesses”.54 It is difficult to establish the exact meaning of this title and opinions range from considering them as direct descendants of the Ramesside Pharaohs through the female line, so that their mother’s name is used, to those who see them as the governors of a specific territory situated in the Delta, or those who consider them as collaborators of the sovereign. In the opinion of some authors the mention of a “king’s son” is an abbreviation of “king’s son of Ramesses”.55 In the Herakleopolitan documents the title “king’s son of Ramesses” is used for Osorkon 3.

The military had wide ranging powers in Herakleopolis: there were Generals,56 the highest military authority in the region, holding high office in the city government and Commanders, who directed the troops and took decisions at the time of attack. The Herakleopolites who held these titles were Imenhaemipet, Osorkon 1, Osorkon 2, Osorkon 3 and Osorkon 4.

The province of Herakleopolis was strongly fortified during the New Kingdom and the early years of the Third Intermediate Period. The military establishment lived in fortresses set up here: the fortress of Mermeshaef, the fortress of the Shardana and most importantly, the five great fortresses of the Meshwesh which housed the Libyans before they became Pharaohs and moved to the north of the country. Furthermore, Osorkon I established a new stronghold and domain named Persekhemkeperrre at the entry to Lahun. After it had been built, the other fortresses

51 J. Yoyotte, BIFAO 57 (1958), 81-91; idem, Mélanges Maspero 1/4, 138.
52 M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, Excavaciones I, nº 17, 44 note b.
53 M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, Excavaciones I, nº 57, 74. It is very difficult to identify the king. According T. Säve-Söderbergh, New Kingdom Pharasonic Sites, The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia, 1991, 140-141, faience copies are thought to have been distributed as gifts or as a token of royal favour.
55 See note 30.
situated in the Herakleopolitan Nome did not appear again in the texts; this may be due to a military and administrative restructuring of the Herakleopolitan nome undertaken by Osorkon I, which affected the strongholds built at an earlier date. This fortress was under the control of the governors of Herakleopolis from its foundation, as indicated by the title Great Chief of Persekhemkhopeperre.57

In addition to Libyans we have documentary evidence for other foreigners present in Herakleopolis during the Third Intermediate Period: the Tuher (Asiatic soldiers based in Egypt from the battle of Qadesh onwards),58 the Kushites or Sudanese with many cultural parallels found in the cemetery at Herakleopolis,59 and also the Phoenicians who provided numerous pottery jars made by them.60

Many deities are mentioned in the inscribed documents: The cult of the main deities of Herakleopolis continued in the city’s temple. The most numerous references are to the god Herishef,61 the principal god of Herakleopolis Magna, with a sanctuary which is currently being excavated. Other deities included:62 Osiris of Naref whose temple contained a relic of his right leg; Hathor the wife of Herishef, who was a cosmogonic deity, both mother and daughter of Re; Isis, the wife of Osiris of Naref; Horus, Harsomtus (the child god Horus) and Horsiese (who succeeded his father); Aayt Bastet, a lion-headed deity, especially venerated during the Third Intermediate Period in Herakleopolis; Thot, who took part in the funerary rites of Herakleopolis proclaiming Osiris victorious; Neith, linked to Osiris and the embalming rites of the god, who wove the bandages for him to wrap his mummified body; Nephthys, who watched over the dead body of Osiris along with her sister Isis, acting as mourner.

Priestly titles:63

a.- First Prophet of Herishef. This was the highest rank among the local clerics. He presided over and carried out the ceremonies in the name of the king, organized the cult and the management of the temple and its financial resources, and ensured the safety of the god in his sanctuary.

b.- Prophet of Herishef, attached to the temple.

c.- The Sameref priest. This was a priest linked to the funerary rites, especially to the ritual of Opening the Mouth, and to the cult of Osiris and his identification with the god Herishef.


e.- Divine father of Khonsu. Khonsu was a deity venerated mainly at Thebes who may have possessed a cult in Herakleopolis too. Khonsu was identified with Herakles, who in fact, is Herishef.

f.- Great of the Harim-ladies of Herishef, linked to the cult and to the ceremonies carried out for this deity. This priestess was not necessarily celibate and the women who held this post were the wives or daughters of priests.

g.- Imtyt bah of Herishef.64 This title can be translated as “the one in whom is the phallus”, referring to the sexual and fertility characteristics of Herishef. The woman who held this title was...

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58 S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, RdE 7 (1950), 67; A. Gardiner, The Library of Chester Beatty: Papyrus Chester Beatty I, verso G 1 , 8; idem, Kadesh Inscriptions, 40; W. Helck, Beziehungen, 490-491; M.C. Pérez Die, P. Vernus, Excavaciones I, nº 12, p. 39, note a.

59 See note 43.

60 M.J. López, F. Quesada, M.A. Molinero, Excavaciones II, 106-110.

61 M. Gamal Mokhtar, Ihnâsya el Medina (Herakleopolis Magna): Its importance and its role in pharaonic history, Bibliothèque d’étude 40, Cairo 1983, 139-177; LÄ II, 1015.


63 M. Gamal Mokhtar, Ihnâsya el Medina, 196-200.
considered the spouse of the god, and she had to be celibate. This priestess had her own domains, which shows the high position she held among the clergy of Herakleopolis.

**Restoration.**
The restoration carried out in the stone chambers in the tombs at Herakleopolis was supported by the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The initial idea was to replace the roof slabs in their original position, as most of them were found broken and fallen into the chambers. After chemical analysis carried out at the University of Cairo of samples of stone from the tombs, which confirmed the poor quality of the stone, we opted for a simpler and completely reversible solution.

We designed modular metallic supports which can be adapted to any surface and which rest on telescopic supports, adjustable in two directions. These were used to support metallic structures placed inside the tombs, with the roof slabs resting on them. The slabs have been put together with mortar reproducing the original type used. The external appearance of the tombs is now almost the same as it must have been in antiquity (pl.18-19). The necropolis has been fenced off and can only be visited, at the times when we are working on the site, with a permit from the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

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Plate 10.

Plate 11.

Plate 12.

Plate 13.

Plate 14.

Plate 15.
Egyptological Publications
Series published by the Netherlands Institute for the Near East, Leiden

Volume 23

THE LIBYAN PERIOD IN EGYPT
Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st-24th Dynasties.
Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25-27 October 2007
G.P.F. Broekman, R.J. Demarée and O.E. Kaper (eds.)

This volume contains the Proceedings of a conference held in October 2007 at Leiden University on the Libyan Period in Egypt.

The study of the Third Intermediate Period, and most notably its chronology, has become stuck in controversies ever since publications by David Aston, Anthony Leahy, John Taylor and others raised doubts as to the chronology presented in Kitchen’s seminal study The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1972). There had been only a single conference held on the Libyan dynasties before, organized by Leahy at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1986 under the title Libya and Egypt. There was clearly a need to discuss the controversial aspects of the chronology and culture of the period with all the parties involved.

The timely nature of the conference was confirmed by the enthusiastic response from those colleagues who were invited to participate. In the end, a total of 24 speakers presented in front of an audience of some 120 scholars and students hailing from fifteen different countries. It was thought that the chronological issues surrounding Dynasties 21-24, the Libyan Period, should be the principal focus of discussion, because it is here that the largest uncertainties still remain. In addition, several scholars were invited to present recent archaeological finds from their own field work. Only by considering new material may we hope to solve the remaining problems, and new insights into the Libyan Period are likely to emerge from the combined study of a wide variety of sources.

The topics of controversy lie mainly in the realm of chronology. Apart from this, several papers deal with the cultural developments of the period. An interesting joint theme that emerges from these is the appearance of archaism in the art of the second half of the Libyan period. Several papers include comments on a newly found interest in the proportions and iconography from the classical periods of the past, notably of the Middle Kingdom.

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