

From the Delta to the Cataract

Studies Dedicated to Mohamed el-Bialy

Edited by

Alejandro Jiménez-Serrano and Cornelius von Pilgrim



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ISSN 1566-2055

ISBN 978-90-04-29344-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-29345-8 (e-book)

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Linen Weaved in Year 2 of Amenhotep II

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Abstract

عُثر على قطعة كبيرة من ثوب كتاني ترجع للعام الثاني من حكم أمنحتب الثاني بالقرب من مقبرة جحوتي (TT 11) في دراع أبو النجا. ويتم هنا تحليل القطعة ومناقشة النص الذي يؤرخها بالعام الثاني لأمنحتب الثاني والمقارنة مع علامات ونقوش على ثياب كتانية أخرى كي نستطيع أن نحدد بطريقة أفضل أهمية هذا الإكتشاف المعروف حالياً بمتحف الأقصر.

On the 22nd of November of the year 2000, Mohamed el-Bialy, at that time head of the SCA on the West Bank of Luxor, accompanied me to visit some early Eighteenth Dynasty tomb-chapels that I thought could deserve further investigation. Our survey ended at Dra Abu el-Naga, and he guided me to the tomb-chapel of Djehuty (TT 11), overseer of the Treasury and overseer of works under the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. He was well acquainted with the monument, as he was then working on his PhD dissertation dealing with the queens of the early Eighteenth Dynasty, which he defended at the university of Lyon five years later. In memory of that very day, I express my deepest gratitude to Mohamed el-Bialy, and I dedicate to him this contribution concerning the excavation that followed soon after, at the entrance of Djehuty's funerary monument.

Archaeological Context

The earliest record on the tomb-chapel of Djehuty goes back to Richard Lepsius' epigraphic campaign. Through his diary,¹ now part of the collection of the Berlin Egyptian Museum but kept at the Berlin Academy of Science,

1 Karl R. Lepsius, *Notebook* (1844, kept at the Berlin Museum–Academy of Sciences, Berlin), III, 82; VII, 421–22.

we know that he spotted the monument on the 23rd of November 1844, and copied then part of the façade's inscription, which he continued a bit more on the 5th of December.

At the beginning of November 1898, Wilhelm Spiegelberg and Percy Newberry commenced an archaeological season at Dra Abu el-Naga, financed by the Fifth Marquis of Northampton. The report, published nine years later,² consists of a superficial description of some of the works undertaken, a mere list of monuments unearthed and an uneven selection of the objects found. While a few inscriptions and inscribed objects are discussed at some length (partly by Kurt Sethe), others are barely mentioned. For that reason, Spiegelberg's *Fundjournal 1898–99*, kept at the Griffith Institute archive, turns to be a relevant source of information.³ The campaign lasted about three months, and they spent almost one third of the time in and around TT 11. They cleared an area of six meters away from the façade, and entered inside the monument.

The inscriptions on the façade, on both sides of the entrance, and on the south/west side-wall of the courtyard, became soon after an easy target for the thieves operating on the West Bank at the turn of the century. Hence, in 1909 the Antiquities Service decided to build in front of it a stone-wall and a wooden roof. The work was supervised by Charles G. Jelf, assistant of Robert Mond. Jelf registered in his *Notebook*: "Front court cleared, an excavation of 7 meters by 5, and 3 meters deep," between September 27th and 29th; "Two walls in an L, to enclose the sculptures," between October 2nd and 7th; and "Roofed, and a 1 m retaining wall built above," between October 10th and 11th.⁴ He took three photographs "with the large camera," which are now kept at the Griffith Institute archive.⁵ The photograph recording the final building stage of the protection is particularly interesting for the present report, since it shows that the area that was cleared by Jelf was the minimum necessary to safeguard the reliefs and inscriptions, and it coincided with the area cleared by Spiegelberg a decade before. It indirectly shows also that the rest of the courtyard was not excavated at the end of the XIXth century, and was not disturbed at the beginning of the XXth

2 The Marquis of Northampton, Wilhelm Spiegelberg and Percy E. Newberry, *Report on some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis during the Winter of 1898–99* (London: Archibald Constable, 1908).

3 Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Fundjournal 1898–99* (1899, kept at the Griffith Institute archive).

4 Charles G. Jelf, *Notebook 1909–10* (1910, kept at the Griffith Institute archive), 1.

5 Jelf, *Notebook*, 7; photos 1731; 1685 = AHG/28 652; AHG/28 651; 1684; see José M. Galán, "Early investigations in the tomb-chapel of Djehuty (TT 11)," in *Sitting beside Lepsius. Studies in Honour of Jaromir Malek at the Griffith Institute*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 185, edited by Diana Magee, Jeannine Boruriau and Stephen Quirke (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), figs. 8–10.



FIGURE 4.1 *Stage of the excavation outside Djehuty's tomb-chapel (TT 11) when the linen was found.*

century. This circumstance was confirmed when a systematic excavation was conducted recently on Djehuty's open courtyard.

A Spanish-Egyptian mission has been working in Dra Abu el-Naga, in and around the tomb-chapels of Djehuty and Hery (TT 11–12) since January 2002. During the second field-work season, on the 30th of January 2003, an untouched Twenty-first Dynasty wooden coffin was found on Djehuty's courtyard, about 30 cm above the floor, near the north/east side-wall and only 5.5 m away from the modern closing stone-wall (i.e., 9 m away from the façade). The coffin was resting on the ground and without any kind of protection.⁶

Ten days before, at about the same distance from the modern wall, but this time above the north/east side-wall of Djehuty's courtyard, at a height of

6 Galán, "Early investigations," 161; *idem*, "Dra Abu el-Naga (Luxor) y el 'Proyecto Djehuty,'" and objects nos. 45–62 of the catalogue *120 Años de arqueología española en Egipto*, edited by María del Carmen Pérez Die (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2009), 254–55 no. 62; *idem*, "Excavations at the Courtyard of the tomb of Djehuty (TT 11)," in *xth International Congress of Egyptologists*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, edited by P. Kousoulis (Leuven: Peeters, in press).

2.50 m above court's floor, a small dump area of ancient rubbish was excavated. Next to a dismembered mummy, the head of an anthropomorphic coffin lid was found.⁷ From its size (27 × 17 × 15 cm) and wig, it seems that it belonged to a girl. It was left only with the whitewash coating previous to the polychrome decoration, having only the eyes and eyebrows outlined in black, and the eyes' interior painted in white. It probably dates also to the Twenty-first Dynasty. It was in this same context that thirteen fragments of the so-called "Apprentize's board" were found.⁸ This school-board can be dated to the coregency of Hatshepsut-Thutmose III, and it most probably comes from a contemporary nearby tomb-chapel that was ravaged in antiquity, possibly TT 11.

The Linen

Among the wide variety of objects found in this mixed up context (see fig. 4.1), there is an outstanding piece that deserves special attention: an inscribed rectangular linen cloth, 47 × 16 cm (plus a fringe of 7 cm). The original length and width of the sheet is uncertain, since two tangential sides are ripped. The weave is made by tabby 1/1, compacted and uniform, although the thickness and twisting of the yarn varies. In general, the warp has a thinner and more twisted yarn. The compactness of the yarns is of 66 for the warp count, and 61 for the weft count per 2 cm. The finishing border of the warp has a reinforcement of five picks with groups of four threads each, and it has a fringe made of groups of eight warp threads, with a knot at the edge of the sheet to avoid fraying. The right selvage of the weft has a seam.⁹

The inscription follows the weft. It takes up an area of 15.5 × 1.5 cm, near the corner formed by the two topped off borders. It was written in red ink, which is an unusual feature, and in carefully traced cursive hieroglyphs, nicely spaced vertically along the fringed border. The ink's ferruginous component has pierced and torn the linen in several spots. Nevertheless, the cloth and the inscription can be considered in good condition.

7 Galán, "Dra Abu el-Naga (Luxor) y el 'Proyecto Djehuty,'" 252–53 no. 61.

8 José M. Galán and Mohamed el-Bialy, "An Apprentice's Board from Dra Abu el-Naga," *Egyptian Archaeology* 25 (2004): 38; José M. Galán, "An Apprentice's Board from Dra Abu el-Naga," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93 (2007): 95–116, pl. 2–3.

9 Examination and report by Pía Rodríguez Frade. For an introduction to the terminology used in the description of a linen cloth and weaving techniques, see Barry Kemp and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, *The Ancient Textile Industry at Amarna, Sixty-eight Excavation Memoir* (London: Egypt Exploration Society 2001), 57–146.

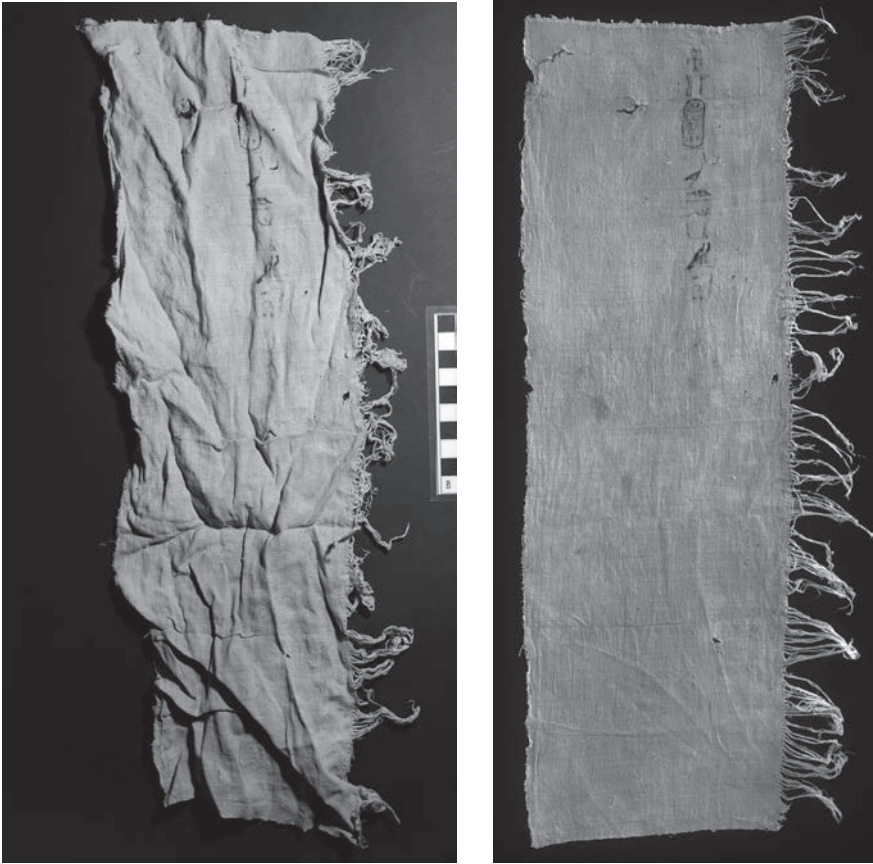


FIGURE 4.2 *Linen cloth as found and after being flattened.*

Marks on Linen

The inscription opens with two superimposed and crossed signs, probably deriving from cursive hieroglyphs: the horizontal one could be equated to the house-sign (O1), \square , *pr*, and the vertical one may be considered a simplified rendering of the twisted-flax-sign (V28), ⌘ , *h*, although the vertical straight line of the latter is usually written with a series of small diagonal brush strokes instead. The *h* could be a contraction and stand for the generic word for “cloth” *hbs*, $\text{⌘} \text{⌘} \text{⌘}$, but it could also indicate a measurement.¹⁰ The signs are probably

10 Jana Jones, “Some Observations on the Dimensions of Textiles in the Old Kingdom Linen Lists,” in *Egyptian Culture and Society. Studies in Honour of Naguib Kanawati*, Suppléments aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte 38, edited by Alexandra Woods, Ann

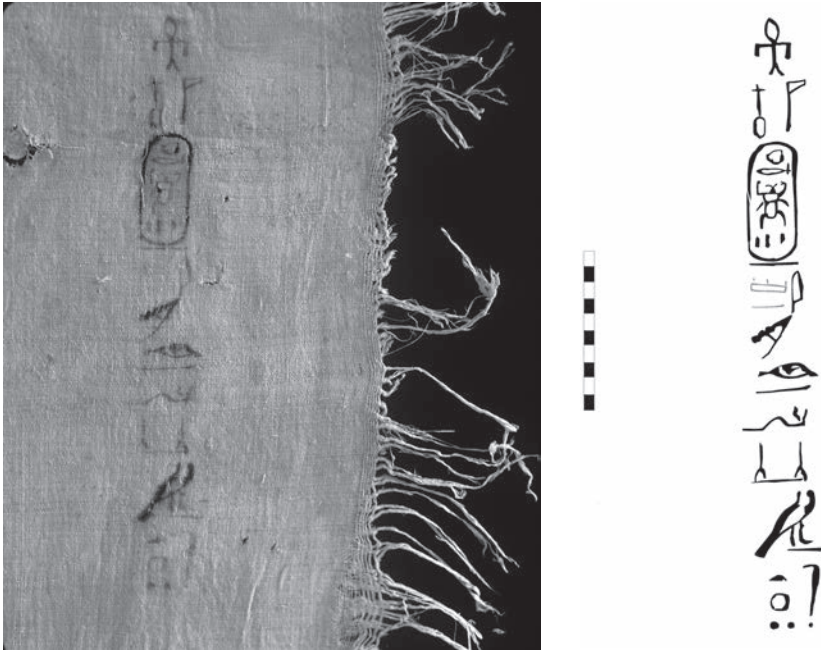


FIGURE 4.3 Detail showing the inscription in red ink (drawing by Ana de Diego).

not to be pronounced, but to be taken as some kind of mark or indication.¹¹ While weaver's marks were usually inlaid, brief ink inscriptions informed of the fabric's quality, type of garment, its source, owner, or were just laundry marks.¹² Identity marks of this kind were also used by potters, stonemasons, gangs of workmen, soldiers, etc.¹³

McFarlane and Susanne Binder (Cairo: Publications du Conseil Suprême des Antiquités de l'Égypte, 2010), 251, 254; *idem*, "The 'linen list' in Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Egypt: Text and textile reconciled," in *Textile Terminologies in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean from the Third to the First Millennia BC*, Ancient Textiles Series 8, edited by Cécile Michel and Marie-Louise Nosch (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 101.

- 11 Andrea McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt. Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59–61.
- 12 William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: a Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part 1: from the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom* (New York: Harper & Brothers—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1953), 259–60.
- 13 Ben Haring and Olaf Kaper, eds., *Pictograms or Pseudo Script? Non-textual identity marks in practical use in ancient Egypt and elsewhere* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2009); Petra Andrassy, Julia Budka and Frank Kammerzell, eds., *Non-Textual*



FIGURE 4.4 *Details of the inscription.*

The opening composite sign resembles the mark drawn on twenty-nine linen sheets found by Winlock associated to the so-called “slain soldiers” of King Montuhotep Nebhepetra, in tomb 512 at Deri el-Bahari.¹⁴ This same mark is attested on other cloths, such as the wrappings of princesses Mayet, Ashyt and

Marking Systems, Writing and Pseudo Script from Prehistory to Modern Times, Lingua Aegyptia–Studia Monographica 8 (Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2009).

14 Herbert E. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri 1911–1931* (New York: The Macmillan Company 1942), 123, pl. 21; *idem*, *The Slain Soldiers of Neb-hepet-Re Mentu-hotpe* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945), 25–28, pl. 14–15.




FIGURE 4.5 *Detail showing the linen pierced due to the ink's composition.*

Henhenet, but also on a stone-cutter's cooper chisel. A notable collection of linen sheets bearing marks traced on one corner was found in 1935–36 inside a wooden chest of the funerary equipment of Senenmut's parents, Ramose and Hatnofer.¹⁵ During that same Metropolitan Museum of Art archaeological

15 Catharine Roehrig, *Life along the Nile. Three Egyptians of Ancient Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 31, fig. 39; MMA neg. M16C.281–283, 295. I am grateful

season, inside a nearby anonymous tomb also of the early Eighteenth Dynasty, the mummy wrappings were inscribed with “embalmer’s labels.”¹⁶

Inscriptions on Linen

Inscribed linen cloths are documented since the Old Kingdom. George Reisner found inside the burial chamber of the Giza mastaba G 2220 B, dating to the reign of Menkaura, a linen pad used to fill out the contours of a woman’s body with a label in black ink, written in hieratic, indicating “fine *šm*^c-t-(linen).”¹⁷ Forty-three pieces of linen were found covering the mummy resting inside the burial chamber of a princess called Khentkaues, seven of them bearing a hieratic inscription in black ink.¹⁸ The Czech archaeological excavations at King Djedkare’s family cemetery in Abusir yield several pieces of “royal” linen, with private names and titles written in black ink (king’s subordinates and their assistants, an overseer of weavers, an overseer of provisions, and others), found inside the plundered burial chamber of the princess Khekeretneby’s mastaba.¹⁹ Finally, in the burial chamber of Pepy I’s pyramid, Maspero found in 1880 a linen cloth bearing a vertical black ink inscription in cursive hieroglyphs: “Noble linen (*mnḥt špst*, ) made for the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Pepy, may he live forever.”²⁰

At the end of the Eleventh Dynasty, out of the sixty-two inscribed linen sheets found associated to the slain soldiers (see above), twenty-six have a private name written in hieratic near one of the corners.²¹ Sixty inscribed linen sheets were found inside the coffin of Wah,²² who must have died early in the reign of the first king of the Twelfth Dynasty, Amenemhat I, and was

to Dorothea Arnold and the Metropolitan Museum of Art staff for letting me consult the photo archive in 2008.

16 MMA neg. M16C. 356, 358.

17 Yvonne J. Markowitz, Joyce L. Haynes and Rita E. Freed, eds., *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids. Highlights from the Harvard University- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002), 68 no. 16.

18 Zaky Y. Saad, *Royal Excavations at Saqqara and Helwan (1941–1945)*, Suppléments aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte 3 (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1947), 65, pl. 31b.

19 Miroslav Verner, *Forgotten Pharaohs. Lost Pyramids. Abusir* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 1994), 84; Miroslav Verner and Vivienne G. Callender, *Djedkare’s Family Cemetery, Abusir VI* (Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2002), 21, 46–48 no. 169, pl. 10.

20 Jones, “Dimensions of Textiles,” 255–56; *idem*, “The ‘linen list,’” 102–03.

21 Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri*, 123, pl. 21; *idem*, *The Slain Soldiers*, 28–31, pl. 16–20.

22 Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri*, 29–30, 223–28; Roehrig, *Life along the Nile*, 6–23.

buried below the terrace in front of the tomb-chapel of his master, the treasurer Meketra. The linen found amounted to 845 square meters, and many of them include an indication of its quality in one corner, and the owner's name and titles on the opposite one, written in black ink hieroglyphic signs. Eight of them include a year reference, but without a royal name, although the date must have referred to the reign of the last (or second last) Montuhotep. Half a dozen give other people's names.

Queen Neferu, buried in TT 319 (Winlock's tomb 101) at Deir el-Bahari, had linen cloths bearing private names, maybe those in charge of their weaving or delivery, among them the chancellor Khety,²³ and others bearing a label running parallel to the selvedge with weft fringe and near the finishing border with warp fringe, written in black ink and in cursive hieroglyphs: "The sole ornament of the king, priestess of Hathor, Neferu."²⁴ A similar linen label, bearing the royal name "The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, sa-Ra Montuhotep," was found among the grave cloths of Queen Ashyt,²⁵ and in tomb 512.²⁶ In the Eighteenth Dynasty as well, linen with a royal name ended up as part of the funerary equipment of high officials, as it is the case of Maikhepri, who owned a garment with the cartouche of Maatkara written in black ink.²⁷

Royal Linen in the Hands of Private Individuals

Indeed, linen was drawn from the royal storehouses and handed to the high officials as reward for their services to the crown,²⁸ or to distinguished ladies of the court as presents, since it was regarded as one of the most valuable commodities, as well as a status indicator. Thus, Ineni mentions in his autobiography referring to Hatshepsut: ". . . she enriched me, she filled my tent with silver, gold and good quality linen (*šsr nfr*) of the palace" (𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏).²⁹ Amenemhab called Mahu, reports in his autobiography, in TT 85: "My lord rewarded me with

23 Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri*, 101.

24 MMA neg. MBC 249.


25 Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el Bahri*, 44.



26 MMA neg. MBC 254.

27 CCG 24099; George Daressy, *Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois (1898–1899). Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, nos 24001–24990* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1902), 58, pl. 12.

28 Kirsten Butterweck-Abdelrahim, *Untersuchungen zur Ehrung verdienter Beamter*, *Aegyptiaca Monasteriensia* 3 (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2002).

29 *Urk.* IV 60, 16–17; Eberhard Dziobek, *Das Grab des Ineni. Theben Nr. 81*. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo. Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 68 (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1992), 44, pl. 34c.

gold, [...] and five sheets of linen” (*hbsw*; )³⁰ after saving Thutmose III from an elephant’s lunge by cutting his trunk, during a campaign in Syria-Palestine.

Among the booty captured after Thutmose III’s victory over Meggido, the Annals recorded “plenty of cloths (*hbsw*; ) of that enemy.”³¹ Later on, many of the foreign captives that were brought to Thebes and assigned to the temple of Amun in Karnak were involved in the production of garments of various kinds.³² Those garments were then collected by the vizier Rekhmira, who includes in his tomb-chapel (TT 100) a tableau showing the “Reception of garments (*mnḥwt*; ) in the temple of Amun in Karnak from the weavers/servants of the foundation, whom his majesty brought from his victories in the South and North, as the booty’s choice of the Good God, the lord of the Two Lands Menkheperra—given life, stability and dominion—.”³³ The temple workshops and magazines, as shown in these passages, also produced and distributed large quantities of linen.

The linen here under study was probably part of the funerary equipment of a high official who was rewarded with it by Amenhotep II early in his reign, and was buried in the central area of Dra Abu el-Naga. There are a number of tombs nearby whose owners and/or family members could have been buried in the reign of Amenhotep II, such as the unknown owner of TT 143.³⁴ Since the area has not been thoroughly excavated, the list of possible tombs from where the linen could have come remains open. To the north/east of TT 11, the tomb-chapel that was hewn wall-to-wall with that of Hery (TT 12), but 2 m higher up the hill, belongs to an overseer of the cattle of Amun called Baki, who could have died at the very beginning of Amenhotep II’s reign.³⁵ Wall-to-wall with the latter, to the north/east, the Spanish-Egyptian mission

30 *Urk.* IV 894, 3–4.

31 *Urk.* IV 667, 8.

32 *Urk.* IV 742, 14–15. For the numerous terms for linen in ancient Egyptian, see Katrin Scheele, *Die Stofflisten des Alten Reiches. Lexikographie, Entwicklung und Gebrauch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005); Jac J. Janssen, *Daily Dress at Deir el-Medīna: words for clothing* (London: Golden House Publications, 2008).

33 *Urk.* IV 1147, 13–1148, 4; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-re at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), 47, pl. 57.

34 PM I.1, 255–57; Friederike Kampp, *Die thebanische Nekropole: zum Wandel des Grabgedankens von der XVIII. bis zur XX. Dynastie*. Theben 13 (Mainz am Rhein: Phillip con Zabern, 1996), 428–29.

35 José M. Serrano, “Baki, supervisor del ganado de Amón,” *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Egiptología* 15 (2005): 91–94, advances the hypothesis that he could have been the father-in-law of the vizier Rekhmira, and thus he would have died earlier.

discovered in 2012 another tomb-chapel, pertaining to the overseer of weavers called Ay, so far only known through his funerary cones.³⁶ He must have died also in the mid Eighteenth Dynasty, but a more precise date for him is not yet possible. Moreover, above the row of tomb-chapels located at the foothill (TT 11, -399-, TT 12, Baki and Ay), there are other tomb-chapels, in the second and third levels, that could have been finished during the reign of Amenhotep II. Unfortunately, what can be spotted today of their layout and decoration is not enough to date them with enough guarantees. Richard Lepsius,³⁷ on November 23rd of 1844, entered a tomb-chapel above that of Hery (TT 12) that included a scene showing the owner adoring Amenhotep II. The tomb-chapel is now unlocated.³⁸

Dates on Linen

The text written on our linen indicates the date of its production: “**The Good God Aakheperura, beloved of Amun. The *mnht*-linen (𓄏𓄏) was made for him in year 2.**”

References to a regnal-year are not common on linen. As far as I can tell from the published material, this piece of linen cloth could be one of the earliest examples where a regnal-year date is indicated. The dating formula is quite peculiar, and became a standard label on linen at least from the end Eighteenth Dynasty onwards. The funerary equipment of Tutankhamun, for instance, included a linen cloth dated to the year 3 of Akhenaten: “[... the living Ra-horakhty, joyful] in the horizon, in his name/condition as the Light which is in the Sun-disk, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Neferkheperura Uaenra. The *mnht*-linen (𓄏𓄏) was made for him in year 3.”³⁹ The text was written in black ink, and in well traced hieroglyphs arranged vertically, near the finishing border with warp fringe. Among the materials used at the embalming of King Tutankhamun, there is a linen sheet (96.5 × 35.3 cm) with a horizontal inscription running parallel to the selvedge with weft fringe, written in black ink and well traced hieroglyphs, dating its production: “The Good God, lord

36 José M. Galán and Francisco L. Borrego, “Funerary Cones from Dra Abu el-Naga (TT 11–12),” *Memnonia* 17 (2006): 200, 204, pl. 36F, 39A.

37 Lepsius, *Text* III, 238.

38 Lise Manniche, *Lost Tombs: a Study of Certain Eighteenth Dynasty Monuments in the Theban Necropolis* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1988), 49 (TT Ag).

39 JE 62705; Carter no. 281a; Horst Beinlich and Mohamed Saleh, *Corpus der Hieroglyphischen Inschriften aus dem Grab des Tutanchamun* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1989), 131.

of the Two Lands, Nebkheperura, beloved of Min. The *mnḥt*-linen (𓄏𓄏) <was made for him> in year 6.”⁴⁰

The same dating formula was used years later, in the Twenty-first Dynasty, when the priests of Amun restored the tomb of Queen Merytamun and rebandaged the mummy in the year 19 of Pinedjem. Three sheets were labelled in the corners with their probable place of origin, “the house/temple of Amun,” and five bear their production date: “*mnḥt*-linen (𓄏𓄏) made by the High Priest of Amun, Masaharty, justified, for his father Amun, in year 18.”⁴¹ The inscription was written vertically, very near the finishing border with warp fringe, in well traced hieroglyphs. The black ink is slightly faded and turned brown from having been washed.

From the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, there is a linen with a vertical inscription written in nicely traced cursive hieroglyphs near the finishing border with warp fringe, including two cartouches with the name of the Napatean king Piye. The beginning and end of the text is missing, but what can be made up of the year indication points to year 30. Since the king was buried at el-Kurru, the linen, which was acquired at Luxor, probably was donated to Karnak temple and ended up in a tomb on the West Bank.⁴² Recently, Nigel Strudwick and his team discovered in the tomb of Senneferi (TT 99) abundant material dating to its re-use between the Twenty-first and the Twenty-six Dynasties. Among them there are fragments of two dated linen cloths, and a third one bearing a pair of royal cartouches of Shabaka.⁴³ The inscriptions are written vertically, near the finishing border with warp fringe, in black ink and carefully traced hieroglyphs.

The majority of the dated linen has the inscription written vertically in nicely traced cursive hieroglyphs, near the finishing border and a selvedge. The term commonly used in the dating formula is *mnḥt*-linen (𓄏𓄏). In most cases the linen is said to be made for the king, who donates it to a temple, or hands it directly to one of his courtiers as a reward.

40 MMA 09.184.220; Herbert E. Winlock, *Materials used at the Embalming of King Tut-Ankh-Amun* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1941), 8, pl. 8A; *idem*, *Tutankhamun's Funeral* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 30–31, fig. 24.

41 Herbert E. Winlock, *The Tomb of Queen Meryet-Amun at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1932), 48, pl. 40–41.

42 Richard Parkinson, *Cracking Codes. The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment* (London: The British Museum Press, 1999), 97.

43 Nigel Strudwick, “The Theban Tomb of Senneferi [TT 99]. An Overview of Work Undertaken from 1992 to 1999,” *Memnonia* 11 (2000): 253, pl. 58A; *idem*, “The Tomb of Senneferi at Thebes,” *Egyptian Archaeology* 18 (2001): 7–8.

Year 2 of Amenhotep II

The year 2 of Amenhotep II's reign can be equated with year 1448, or rather with year 1423 before our era, following der Manuelian's disquisitions on the possibility of fixing an absolute date by making use of Thutmose III's and Amenhotep II's lunar observation references.⁴⁴

The linen weaved on the year 2 of Amenhotep II is, so far, the earliest dated object and inscription of his reign. Thutmose III reigned for almost 54 years, and died (or was buried) on day 30 of the third month of *peret*, his son Amenhotep II accessing the throne the day after, which can then be assumed to be day 1 of the fourth month of *peret*, as recorded by Amenemhab called Mahu.⁴⁵ However, there are other documents that date Amenhotep's accession to day 1 of the fourth month of *akhet*: the Semna stela of the vizier Usersatet,⁴⁶ and the papyrus BM 10056.⁴⁷ If the latter dating is taken as more reliable than Amenemhab's poetic reference, it seems plausible that Amenhotep II had accessed the throne before Thutmose's death (otherwise a "pharaohless" period of eight months would have followed, which is not very likely). A coregency of four months has been postulated since long,⁴⁸ but Redford first, and then der Manuelian have argued for a coregency of two years and four months,⁴⁹ as the only way to explain why Amenhotep II's campaign over Syria-Palestine in year 3 was labelled "first campaign" in his Amada and Elephantine stelae,⁵⁰ and the next one, in year 7, was also recorded as the "first campaign"

44 Peter der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 26 (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1987), 1–19; *idem*, "The End of the Reign and the Accession of Amenhotep II," in *Thutmose III: a new biography*, edited by Eric H. Cline and David O'Connor (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 416–20; Erik Hornung, Rolf Krauss and David Warburton, eds., *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Anthony Spalinger, "The Date of Amunhotep II's First Accession," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 40 (2011): 387–97.

45 *Urk.* IV 895, 14–896, 8.

46 *Urk.* IV 1343, 10.

47 Stephen R.K. Glanville, "Records of a Royal Dockyard of the Time of Tuthmosis III: Papyrus British Museum 10056," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 66 (1967): 105–21, 1*–8*; Donald B. Redford, "The Coregency of Thutmose III and Amenophis II," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 51 (1965): 109–15; Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 19.

48 Alan H. Gardiner, "Regnal Years and Civil Calendar in Pharaonic Egypt," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 31 (1945): 27.

49 Redford, "The Coregency;" Manuelian, *Amenophis II*, 19–40.

50 *Urk.* IV 1289, 1–10; 1296, 7–16.

in his Memphis stela.⁵¹ According to der Manuelian, Amenhotep II would have started his “first campaign” as coregent and completed it as sole king of Upper and Lower Egypt in year 3. Der Manuelian restated his arguments almost two decades later.⁵² However, if Thutmose III is presumed dead by year 3 because Amenhotep II alone is mentioned on the Amada stela of year 3, the Dra Abu el-Naga linen, mentioning Amenhotep II alone in year 2, may now be used to reduce the possible coregency at least in one year, and to reopen the question of Amenhotep II’s early reign.

Moreover, since his two predecessors, Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, dispatched their first expedition abroad the following year after assuming the condition of single ruler of Egypt, in year 8 and year 22 respectively, as a way to make effective and strengthen their authority over their vassals,⁵³ it would be coherent that Amenhotep II would conduct his first campaign of victory in year 3, one year after being left alone on the throne, in year 2, and having exercised as acting king in a sort of coregency of about one year and four months at most. At that time, Thutmose III must have been around sixty years old, and his son Amenhotep II about twenty, according to the great stela erected by the latter near the sphinx at Giza.⁵⁴

The linen weaved in the year 2 of Amenhotep II and found at Dra Abu el-Naga, to the north/east of TT II’s open courtyard, was taken to Luxor Museum in spring 2004. It received the register no. 1010, and it was set on display due to the historical relevance of the inscription and the extraordinary chance of getting to know the exact production date of a linen cloth. It was placed between two framed glasses, and installed inside a large showcase in the upper floor of the original wing of the museum’s building.

Abbreviations

- PM I.1 = Porter, Bertha, and Moss, Rosalind. 1960. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. 1: The Theban Necropolis. 1: Private Tombs*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Urk. IV = Sethe, Kurt, and Helck, Wolfgang. 1927–1958. *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

51 *Urk. IV* 1301, 3–6, 15–16.

52 Manuelian, “Accession of Amenhotep II,” 420–22.

53 José M. Galán, *Victory and Border: terminology related to the Egyptian Imperialism in the XVIIIth Dynasty*, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 40 (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1995).

54 *Urk. IV* 1279, 8–10.