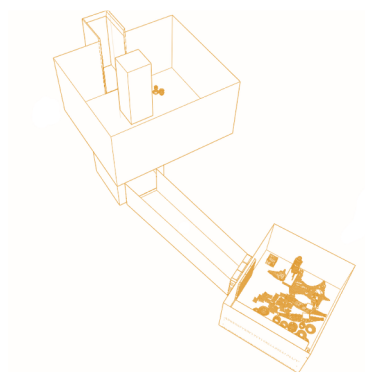


Hypothetical 3D reconstruction of the tomb of the nomarch Ini from Gebelein



Abstract: The paper presents a hypothetical reconstruction of the tomb of a provincial dignitary, Nomarch (district governor) Ini I, who lived during the First Intermediate Period (late 3rd millennium BCE) and was buried in the Northern Necropolis of Gebelein. The tomb was discovered by Virginio Rosa in 1911. An unpublished account of the tomb's discovery offers exact dimensions and a detailed description allowing to propose a reconstruction of its form and furnishing. Blender, an open-source software designed for three-dimensional modeling, has been employed for the task. The modeling process is described and followed by a discussion of the validity and usefulness of such reconstructions for archaeology and dissemination of research results.

Keywords: First Intermediate Period, burial customs, tomb, digital humanities, Northern Necropolis of Gebelein

Archaeological sites of the Gebelein micro-region provide information on various aspects of provincial culture in Egypt of the 3rd millennium BCE (see e.g. Morenz 2010; Del Vesco 2015). Although multiple large and opulent tombs dating to the late 3rd millennium BCE have been discovered in the Gebelein micro-region, the reasons for the area's prominence have yet to be satisfactorily explained, in no small part due to the scarcity of published results of previous investigations (for an

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overview of the region and its research history, see e.g. Fiore Marochetti 2013). Addressing this research gap is the goal of the Gebelein Archaeological Project, which has made Gebelein the focus of its archaeological and archival research. The Northern Necropolis [Fig. 1], where the tomb of Ini I is located, has been targeted by numerous explorers (not always scholars). This burial ground, which has provided the richest body of evidence from the Gebelein micro-region dating to the 3rd millennium BCE (Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020), served the population of Sumenu, a town located directly to the north (Ejsmond 2024a). A general reconstruction of the archaeological topography of the necropolis and its history was proposed by Wojciech Ejsmond, Aneta

Skalec, and Julia Chyla (2020) following recent field and archival surveys (see also the report by Ejsmond et al. 2017). This paper is a further step forward to a better understanding of the site and its individual monuments.

Presented below is a hypothetical reconstruction of a tomb of a local dignitary — the nomarch Ini I, who lived during the First Intermediate Period (approximately 2118–1980 BCE; Ejsmond 2024b: 1–2). In this period, considered a time of prosperity for the region (see e.g. Donadoni Roveri 1990; Morenz 2010), the local elite was able to develop unique cultural patterns that are evidenced in the archaeological record and can help shed light on the provincial culture(s) of Egypt in the late 3rd millennium BCE.

LOCATION AND DISCOVERY

The Northern Necropolis of Gebelein is located on the northern and northeastern slopes of the West Mountain of Gebelein [Figs 1 and 2]. Numerous authorized and illicit explorations were conducted in this area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the results of many of them either remained unpublished or were published only to a limited extent (see Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020; Ejsmond 2024a).

The oldest inhumations in the Northern Necropolis are dated to the Naqada I period, and the tombs continued to be constructed there until at least the Twelfth Dynasty, with some showing evidence of reuse up to the Graeco-Roman period (Weigall 1910: 298; Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020: 119; Ejsmond 2024a). Elite burials were situated in the upper part of a limestone promontory, called

Rock I in the field documentation of the current project (Ejsmond et al. 2017: 241–243, 246–251).

The tomb of Ini I was unearthed by Virginio Rosa on 25 February and explored until 27 February 1911. Rosa, who conducted the archaeological excavation on behalf of Ernesto Schiaparelli, at that time the director of the Egyptian Museum in Turin (hereafter Museo Egizio), meticulously described the progress of the excavation in his field journal (Rosa 1911; see also Schiaparelli 1921) [Figs 3 and 4]. This description has permitted to ascertain the general location of the tomb on the northern slope of Rock I [see Figs 1–3] (Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020: 110 and 121). The artifacts from the burial were sent to Museo Egizio, where they are exhibited (Leospo 1994: 54, 68).

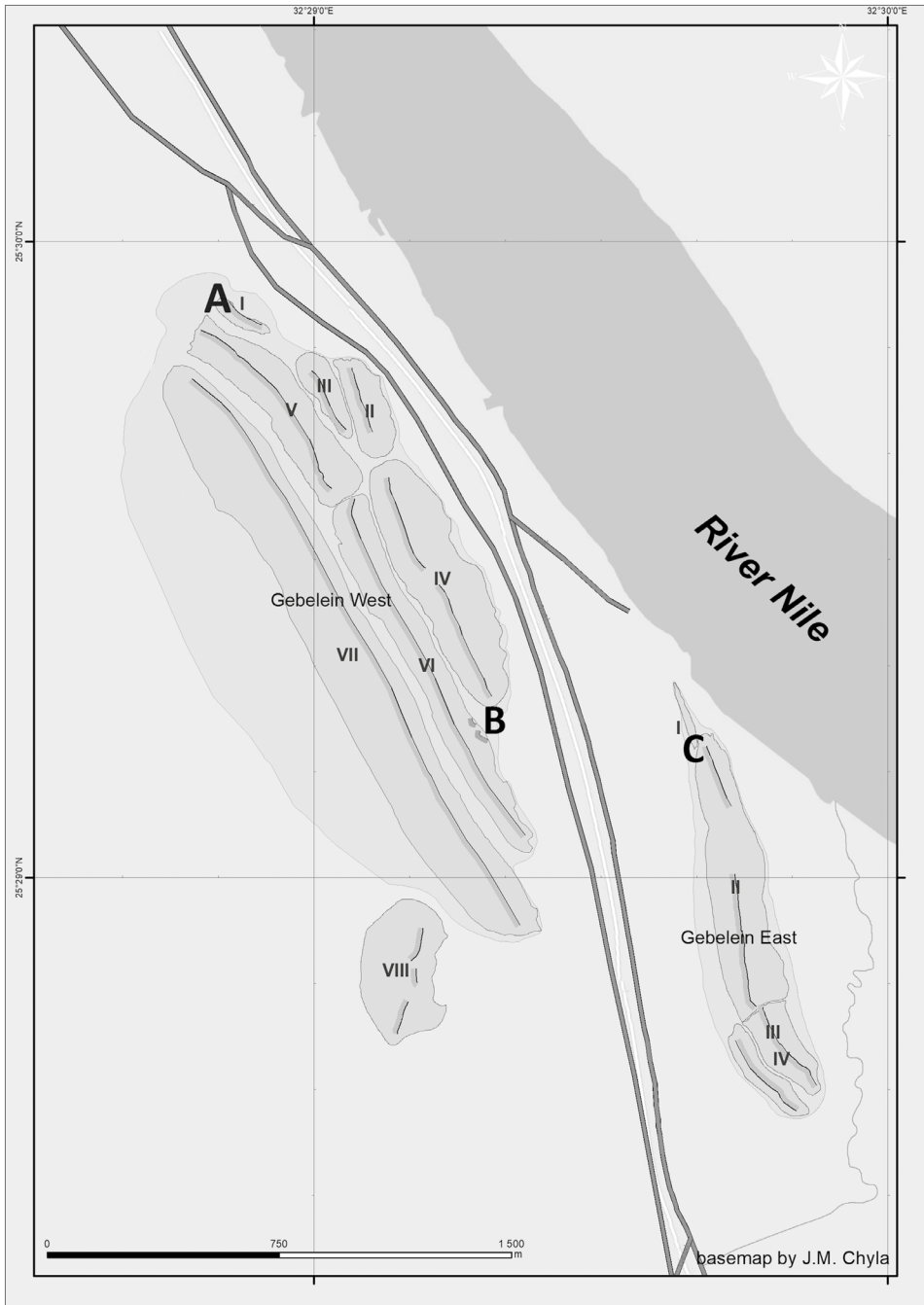


Fig. 1. Map of Gebelein: A – Northern Necropolis and location of the tomb of Ini I; B – Central Necropolis; C – the town of Per-Hathor (Map by J.M. Chyla, processing W. Ejsmond)

Ini I was Treasurer of the King of Lower Egypt/Seal Bearer of the King (*htmty bity*), the Sole Companion (*smr wʿt(y)*), Nomarch (*hrj tp ʿ3*), and Overseer of Priests (*imy-r3 hm ntr*) in the Temple of Sobek Lord of Sumenu. Several individuals named Ini are attested in the region and have, therefore, been accordingly numbered. A certain Ini son of Hekaib, mentioned in the stela of Hekaib (BM EA 1671), is referred to as Ini II and considered later than the First-Intermediate-Period Nomarch Ini I. Ini II was also the king's Sole Companion, and his mother was a priestess of Hathor (Polotsky 1930: 194; Morenz 2006). His chronology is based on the dating of the coffin of his brother Iqer, which has been assigned to the Twelfth

Dynasty (Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020: 110). The name Ini was also used by women, for instance by Lady Ini from the stela Turin Supp. 1271. However, since her dating can only generally be placed in the First Intermediate Period, she is simply referred to as Lady Ini.

Ini I's wooden coffin was published by Edward Brovarski (1976), while other items, only briefly mentioned in publications (e.g. Del Vesco 2015: 70–75), are available in the online catalogue of the Museo Egizio.¹ Although Ini I's tomb was dated generally to the First Intermediate Period (Leospo 1994: 43–44), Brovarski (1976: 34) placed Ini I in the early First Intermediate Period based on his titles, Giulio Farina dated him tentatively to the Eleventh Dynasty (Marro 1929: 44),



Fig. 2. Photo of the Northern Necropolis (looking southeast). The tomb of Ini I should be located in the lower right part of the image showing Rock I (Photo W. Ejsmond)

1 <https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/> (accessed: 5.05.2024).

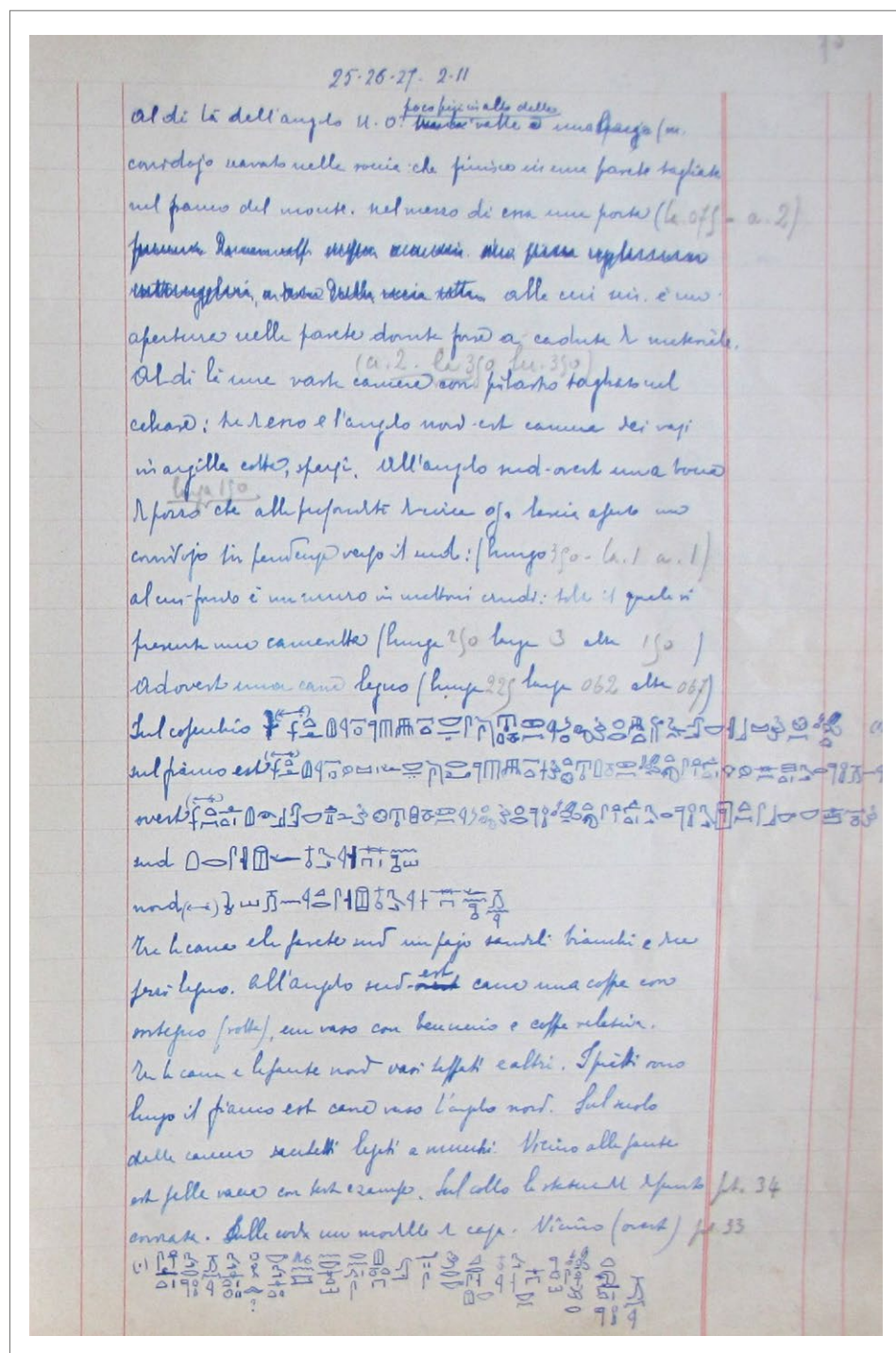


Fig. 3. Page 73 from Rosa's journal (Rosa 1911: 73; photo W. Eismond)

Anna Maria Donadoni Roveri (1969: 339) — to the Tenth Dynasty, while Michael Rice (1999: 78) pushed his tenure to the Eleventh Dynasty. The present authors concur with Enrichetta Leospo (1994: 43–44) and Günther Lapp (1993: 282), who placed the dating of Ini I's coffin broadly within the First Intermediate Period (understood here as the period from the Ninth Dynasty to the reunification of Egypt by Mentuhotep II in the Eleventh Dynasty) and excluded, for the time being, the possibility of a more precise dating. Indeed, as Lapp (1993: 192–193) rightly stressed, no clear criteria allow a precise dating of the Gebelein coffins from that period (see also Willems 2014: 36, n. 116; Ciampini 2017: 104). That said, some refinement of the dating can be proposed based on the use of the title *hrj tp* 3. Combining the title of nomarch with that of the supervisor of local priests and with court titles, which during the First Intermediate Period were rather honorific, was a common practice (Moreno García 2013: 151). Since Eleventh Dynasty rulers avoided appointing new nomarchs (Helck 1958: 207–208; Moreno García 2013: 147), one can infer that Ini I lived before the annexation of the Gebelein region by the Theban kingdom. Interestingly, contrary to the custom of the time, no emblem or name of the nome followed this nomarch's title (Brovarski 1976: 34–36). Thus, the early First Intermediate Period seems a feasible date of Ini I's tenure. One may speculate that the *terminus ante quem* should be the reign of the Theban king Intef II of the Eleventh Dynasty, whose name in the temple of Satet on Elephantine

Island (Bussmann 2010: 476) testifies to his control over the southern part of Upper Egypt. In such circumstances, Ini I could not have held the title of nomarch in the Theban kingdom. Of course this is very speculative, as many aspects of history and administration in the First Intermediate Period remain unclear (for an overview of the epoch, see e.g. Ejsmond 2024b). Overall, the lack of a nome name may have reflected Ini's high status, although not necessarily his position as local governor; it could have just been an honorific.

The tomb of Ini I stands out not only because it was found undisturbed, but also owing to its unique furnishing. A wooden statue of the deceased, found in the burial chamber, had been placed on a cowhide (Donadoni Roveri 1990: 26; see also below). Cowhides, especially used in such a way, are not attested in Egyptian burials (for an overview, see e.g. De Meyer et al. 2005–2006; Veldmeijer and Ikram 2024: 49–73), although this may be due to the poor preservation of such perishable materials at other sites. It is worth mentioning that a deposit consisting of a bull's or cow's head, two pots, a basket, and a flint knife was discovered in the Northern Necropolis and dated to the Predynastic or Early Dynastic Period (Les fouilles... 1930; Ejsmond 2024a: 157). Thus, the use of cattle remains in funerary contexts may have been a local tradition linked to the local cult of Hathor (Takacs 2017) and/or derived from the region's pastoral nomads, whose economy depended on cattle. According to Donadoni Roveri (1990: 26), such use of a cowhide may be traced to contemporary burial traditions

of the Kerma culture and interpreted as a Nubian influence.² Nubians are well attested in the area (Ejsmond 2019), and

their relations with Egyptians require a separate study, as does the furnishing of Ini's tomb.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TOMB

The field journal from the Italian excavations at Gebelein, currently housed in the State Archive in Turin (Rosa 1911), includes a report of the progress of the 1911 exploration in the Northern Necropolis [see *Figs 3* and *4*]. Unfortunately, it features very few drawings, and neither a map nor a generic plan of the explored area is offered, impeding identification of the exact location of some tombs. The journal contains references to photographs, but these

had been separated from the manuscript and only a few of them could be identified in the State Archive in Turin. Despite the lack of drawings of the tomb, however, the description is detailed enough to allow its hypothetical reconstruction.³ Rosa's handwriting and the fact that some words were crossed out and then corrected makes the reading difficult. The following transcription follows the lines and records changes to the original text made by Rosa.

[p. 73]

25-26-27-2-11

Al di là dell'angolo N.O. [an illegible word crossed out] ^{poco più in alto della} valle una lungo
[correction from another word] (m.

corridojo scavato nella roccia: che finisce in una parete tagliata

sul fianco del monte. Nel mezzo di essa una porta (la. 075 – a. 2)

[an illegible phrase crossed out]

[an illegible phrase crossed out] alla cui sin. è una

apertura nella parete dovuta pare a caduta di materiale.

Al di là una vasta camera ^(a. 2., la 350 lu 350) con pilastro tagliato sul

calcare: tra il esso e l'angolo nord-est camera dei vasi

in argilla cotta, sparsi. All'angolo sud-ovest una bocca

di pozzo ^{larga 150} che alla profondità di circa 050 lascia aperto un

corridojo fin pendenza verso il sud: (lungo 350 – la. 1 a. 1)

al cui fondo è un muro in mattoni crudi: tolto il quale si

presenta una cameretta (lunga 250 larga 3 alta 150)

2 In the light of current chronology, the late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period were contemporary with the Kerma Ancien/Early Kerma (about 2500–2050 BCE); for the dating and funerary traditions see e.g. Bonnet and Honegger 2021: 215–216, 219–220.

3 The authors are very grateful to Aneta Skalec for the transcription and translation of the pertinent fragment of Rosa's journal. The translation includes references to unidentified photographs.

Ad ovest una cassa legno (lunga 225 larga 062 alta 067)
Sul coperchio (trascrizione dell'iscrizione geroglifica)
sul fianco est (trascrizione dell'iscrizione geroglifica)
ovest (trascrizione dell'iscrizione geroglifica)
sud (trascrizione dell'iscrizione geroglifica)
nord (trascrizione dell'iscrizione geroglifica)
Tra la cassa e la parete sud un paio sandali bianchi e due
pezzi legno. All'angolo sud-est cassa una coppa con
sostegno (rotta), un vaso con beccuccio e la coppa relativa.
Tra la cassa e la parete nord vasi tappati e altri. I piatti sono
lungo il fianco est cassa verso l'angol nord. Sul suolo
della camera sacchetti legati a mucchi. Vicino alla parete
est pelle vacca con testa e zampe. Sul collo la statuetta defunto fot. 34
coronata. Sulla coda un modello di casa. Vicino (ovest) fot. 33
 [p. 74]
due barche con equipaggio parallele. Ad ovest fot. 31-32
della casa una scena di lavoro. fot. 33

Translation:

25-26-27-2-[19]¹¹

Beyond the N-W corner [of Rock I] just above the valley, there is another corridor [courtyard?] excavated in the rock: which ends with a wall cut in a side of the mountain. In the middle of it is a door (W. 0.75, H. 2 m) at the left side of which there is an opening in a wall, apparently due to the fall of material. Beyond it, there is a large chamber (H. 2; W. 3.90; L. 3.50) with a pillar cut in limestone. Between it and the northeast corner of the chamber, jars made of fired clay, scattered. In the southwest corner, a mouth of a shaft, width 1.50, which at a depth of about 0.90 leads to a corridor descending towards the south (long 3.90; W. 1 H. 1), at the bottom of which there is a wall made of mudbricks: once this

is removed, a small chamber (long 2.50; width 3; high 1.50) appears. At the west, a wooden coffin (long 2.25; width 0.62; high 0.67). On the lid [here a transcription of the hieroglyphs with the characteristics of the local palaeography — photographs of the inscriptions were published by Brovarski (1976), except for the one on the lid], on the east side [transcription of hieroglyphs, see Brovarski and *Fig. 3*], west [transcription of hieroglyphs, see Brovarski and *Fig. 3*], south [transcription of hieroglyphs, see Brovarski and *Fig. 3*], north [transcription of hieroglyphs, see Brovarski].

Between the coffin and the south wall, a pair of white sandals and two pieces of wood. In the southeastern corner, a bowl with a stand (broken), one jar with a spout and a pertinent

bowl. Between the coffin and the north wall, jars with lids and others. Plates are along the east side of the coffin towards the north corner. On the floor of the room, bags tied in heaps. Close to the eastern wall, a skin of a cow with head and legs.⁴ On the neck, a statuette of the deceased crowned with a wreath⁵ (phot.

34). On the tail, a model of a house. Close to it (west) (phot. 33), 2 parallel boats with crew. On the west side of the house, a scene of work⁶ (phot. 31–32, 33). (Rosa 1911: 73–74, trans. A. Skalec)


The description is followed by an inventory of artifacts found in the tomb [see Fig. 4]:

Vasi

piatti terra cotta levigate e non: rotti...; interi 4

Vasi con offerte a tappo vuote, coniforme: 10 { alt. 0.30 d. 0.12



Vasi  *terracotta non levigata: 2 { a. 0.14 d. 0.09*

1 vaso t.c. levigata con becco simile al bronzo d.c.s.

1 relativa coppa



Sostegno per vaso (rotto)



Sostegni altri vasi. 1



4 { a 0.164 d. 0.10

[text and drawing cancelled]

1 vaso  *grande*

Translation:

Jars (phot. 30).

Pottery plates, polish and no: broken [number not given], whole – 4.

Jars with clay stopper: 10 – H. 0.30; D. 0.12.

Pottery jars [drawing], not polished: 2: H. 0.14; D. 0.09.

1 pottery jar with a spout.

1 cup.

Support for a jar (broken).

Support for other jars – 1.

4 It is unclear whether the skull was included. It was decided that the final reconstruction [Figs 10 and 11] would not include it and only the skin from the head is shown.

5 The Italian term “coronata” can be understood as “corona (di fiori)” indicating a wreath of flowers.

6 Funerary model Turin S. 13271.

The tomb was also described by Giovanni Marro, the physical anthropologist of the Italian mission:

La speranza del rinvenimento di una tomba intatta nella località, sorse quando giunto lo scavo in prossimità della «montagna cioè» della roccia massiccia ei imbattemmo in un cumulo relativamente notevole, ben raddossato ed abbastanza individuato, di scheggie calcaree ancora bianchissime, non commiste

a materiale eterogeneo: quale consuetamente si trova in vicinanza di una tomba inviolata. [...] che la Missione ebbe la ventura di scoprire documenta anche, sia pure sotto diversi aspetti, Non tardammo, infatti, a mettere allo scoperto l'imboccatura di un declivio il quale, dopo averci portato alcuni metri sotterra acquistato un andamento quasi orizzontale dopo un percorso di una decina di metri conduceva in una camera sepolcrale



Fig. 4. Rock I, looking respectively south and west, during Italian excavations, perhaps Rosa's exploration. Approximate location of Ini's tomb in the frames (Photos Archivio Museo Egizio FMMA1643 and DD00066)

scavata anch'essa nella viva roccia, di forma irregolare, dalla volta bassa, senza alcuna opera di finimento.

L'ordine e l'integrità dei vari elementi componenti il notevole corredo funebre bastò a convincerci che questo ambiente non era stato visitato dai ladri e neppure danneggiato da altri elementi infesti. Vi campeggiava un monumentale sarcofago rettangolare di legno, chiuso da un coperchio piano; tutto ricoperto da uno stucco giallino, in perfetto stato di conservazione; sul quale a guisa di grande nastro correva tutto intorno, a poco più dei due terzi della sua altezza, una iscrizione geroglifica in nero, mentre un'iscrizione simile attraversava longitudinalmente il coperchio circa alla metà.

La lettura di questa iscrizione ei rese edotti che si trattava della tomba di Ana «gran capo» preposto al distretto (nómarca) di Gebelén, capo dei sacerdoti del tempio del

dio Sóbek —principe locale— risalente con ogni probabilità alla XI dinastia, come si può arguire da alcune particolarità nella scrittura geroglifica, secondo la lezione del Prof. Farina.

Translation:

The hope of finding an intact tomb in the area arose when the excavation reached the vicinity of the “mountain”, that is, the massive rock, and we came across a relatively large, well-grouped and fairly clearly identified pile of still very white limestone chips, not mixed with heterogeneous material: such as is usually found in the vicinity of an inviolate tomb. [...] which the Mission had the good fortune to discover and document, albeit under different aspects. We did not delay, in fact, in uncovering the entrance in the slope which, after having

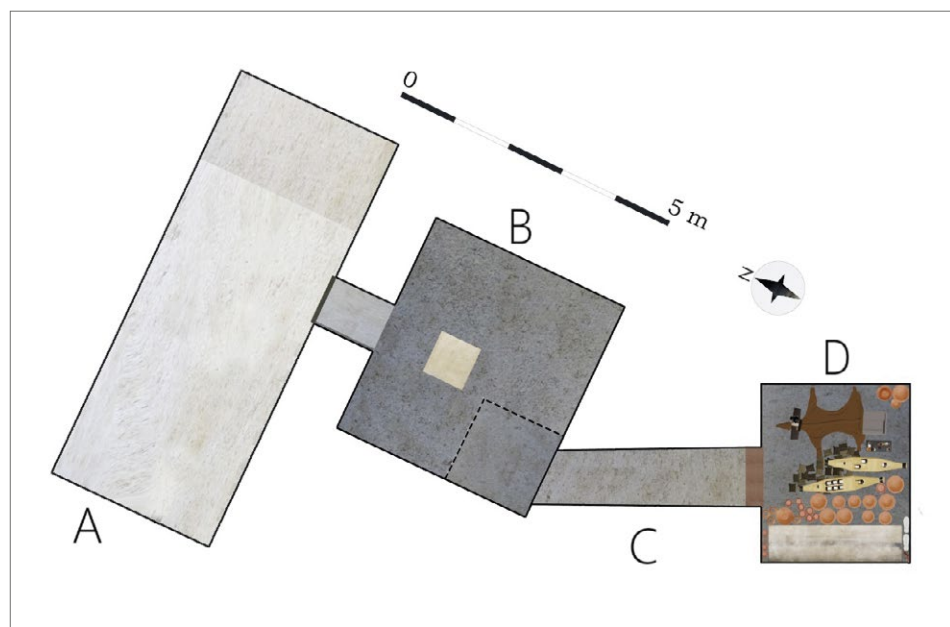


Fig. 5. Simplified plan of the tomb of Ini I based on the description: A – courtyard, B – chapel, C – corridor, D – burial chamber (Drawing J. Stępnik)

taken us a few meters underground, had an almost horizontal trend after a distance of about ten meters, leading to a burial chamber also dug into the living rock, of irregular shape, with a low vault, without any finishing work.

The order and integrity of the various elements making up the remarkable funeral assemblage was enough to convince us that this monument had not been visited by thieves or even damaged by natural elements. It featured a monumental rectangular wooden coffin, closed by a flat lid; all covered with yellow stucco, in perfect condition; on which, like a large

ribbon, a hieroglyphic inscription in black ran all around, at just over two-thirds of its height, while a similar inscription ran across the lid about halfway lengthwise.

The reading of this inscription made us realize that it was the tomb of Ana, “great chief” in charge of the district (nomarch) of Gebelein, head of the priests of the temple of the god Sobek —local prince— dating back in all probability to the Eleventh Dynasty, as can be deduced from some peculiarities in the hieroglyphic writing, according to the reading of Prof. Farina. (Marro 1929: 43–44, trans. W. Ejsmond).



Fig. 6. Rock-cut tomb GWR I 380 (Photo W. Ejsmond)

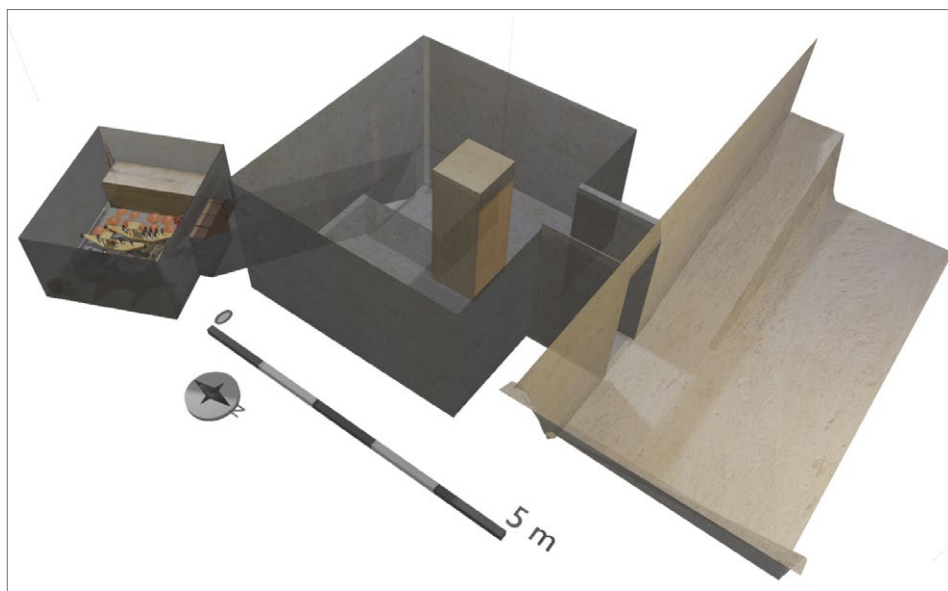


Fig. 7. Oblique projection of the tomb including the entrance (Processing J. Stępnik)

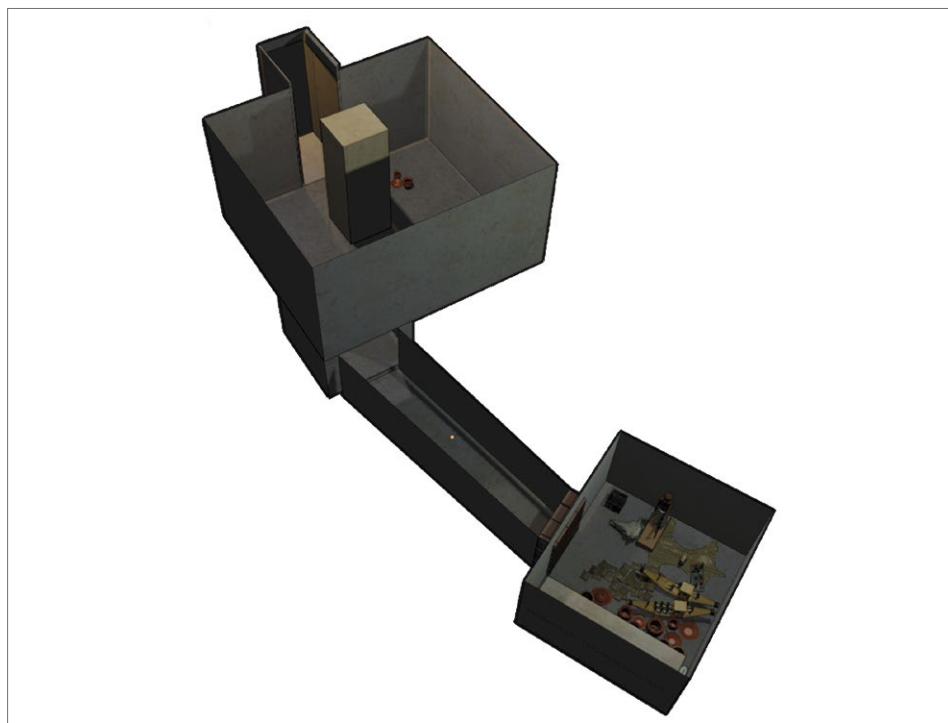


Fig. 8. Oblique projection of the tomb presenting the relation between the grave chamber– corridor– entrance chamber (Processing J. Stępnik)

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TOMB

The initial objective was to draw a simplified plan of the tomb [Fig. 5] based on Rosa's description of its general shape and size and dimensions of the entrance, the first chamber with the central pillar, the corridor, and the burial chamber. The text also mentioned the locations of artifacts in various parts of the tomb. With this basic illustration as the starting point, the plan of the structure was created. However, this representation did not encompass all the data provided in the journal, notably the heights. Consequently, it was used to create a 3D model, which would offer a complete visual representation of the comprehensive information provided by Rosa.

Virtual reconstructions in archaeology, especially the photorealistic ones, were initially approached with skepticism (cf. Sims 1997; Barceló 2000; Sanders 2014). It was emphasized that they did not contribute new knowledge but rather served as a novel means of presenting existing information to a broader audience. The reconstruction presented herein, generated solely to visualize data given in textual form, may be evaluated likewise. Another argument against virtual reconstructions is that the level of certainty implied by these recreations of the past can be misleading, as we cannot be sure that the historical reality has been rendered correctly (Miller and Richards 1995: 19). In response to these

concerns, principles related to the process of creating virtual reconstructions were formulated, initially outlined in the 2009 London Charter,⁷ and subsequently refined for archaeological purposes in the 2017 Seville Principles⁸ (López-Menchero Bendicho 2013). Despite criticism, the intrinsic value of three-dimensional visualizations has been generally accepted (for a comprehensive discussion see e.g. Lanjouw 2016). Researchers who have employed the 3D imagery in their studies have become advocates of this approach, emphasizing its advantages, which include offering a better understanding of archaeological sites and a conducive space for critical thinking and analysis (e.g. Calieri et al. 2011; Doneus et al. 2011; Dell'Unto 2014; Katsianis, Kotsakis, and Stefanou 2021).

The reconstruction of the tomb of Ini I was initially limited to a three-dimensional visualization of its layout as described in Rosa's journal. An open-source software (Blender⁹) designed for three-dimensional modeling was employed for this purpose (it also proved useful in various other archaeological projects, see e.g. Hermon and Nikodem 2008; Huurdeman and Piccoli 2021; Karmowski 2023). Though relatively precise, the measurements provided by Rosa allowed only for a schematic representation of the individual chambers showing their dimensions and spatial relations. The first challenge was to determine the

7 <https://www.londoncharter.org/> (accessed: 5.05.2024).

8 <https://sevilleprinciples.com/> (accessed: 5.05.2024).

9 <https://www.blender.org> (accessed: 5.05.2024).

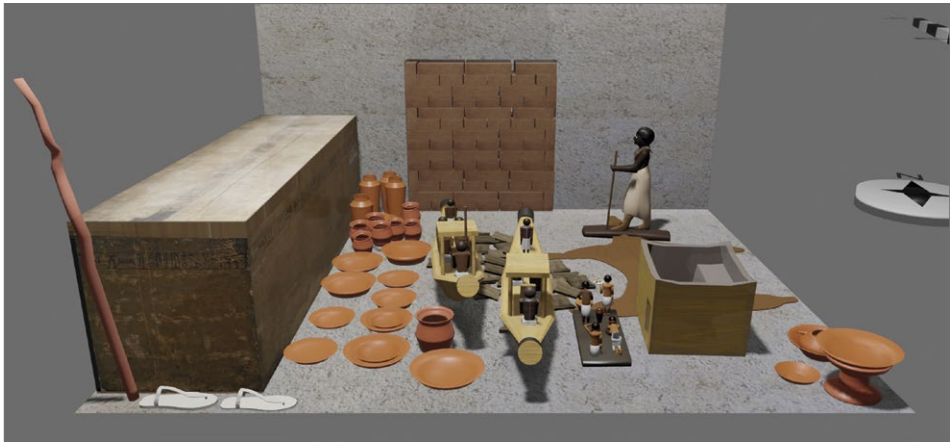


Fig. 9. Oblique projection of grave chamber including reconstructed grave goods (Processing J. Stępnik)

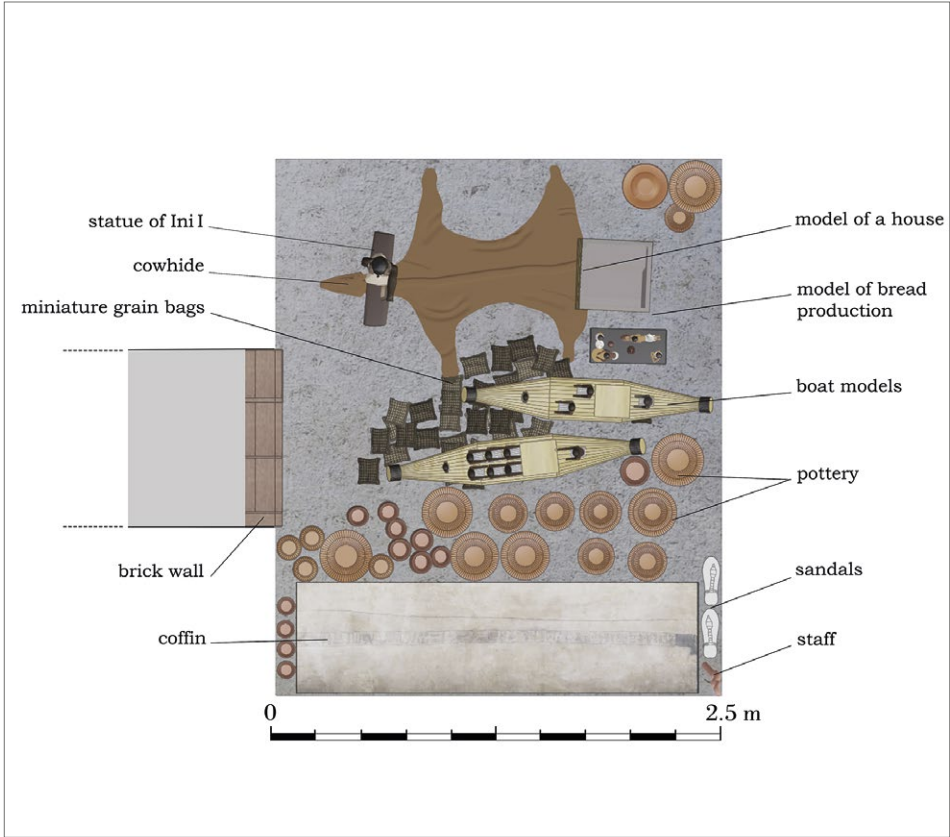


Fig. 10. Location of the artifacts inside the grave chamber based on Rosa’s journal (Processing J. Stępnik)

slope of the passage descending from the chapel to the burial chamber and the deviation of the corridor leading to the latter. Rosa recorded two measurements of the corridor's length, 3.9 m and 3.5 m, which provokes the question of the order in which they had been taken — whether from left to right or vice versa. The corridor that descended to the tomb chamber had been bricked in, thus necessitating a decision on how the brick bond should be reconstructed. Since the brickwork had not been described by Rosa, an arrangement known from elsewhere at the site, i.e. from Mastaba 1920, was used (Ejsmond, Skalec, and Chyla 2020: Pl. 8). The reconstruction of the burial chamber and the arrangement of the artifacts found within followed the detailed description provided by the discoverer. The individual artifacts had

to be rendered in digital form relying on photographic documentation and dimensions provided by the Archivio Museo Egizio.¹⁰ The Blender software facilitated the creation of simple models and their placement within the chamber. In comparison to a reconstruction of the tomb created for an exhibition at the Museo Egizio (see e.g. images at Middle Kingdom Tomb Models website¹¹ and Leospo 1994: 54), in the resulting model the burial chamber appears to be much smaller, and the objects are arranged more densely than in the museum display.

This schematic reconstruction has helped to virtually recreate the space of the tomb and the arrangement of the artifacts within the burial chamber. In its simplest form, the reconstruction serves as an example of applying three-dimen-



Fig. 11. Oblique projection of the burial chamber facing the statue of Ini. Hypothetical distribution of the furnishing according to Rosa's description (Processing J. Stępnik)

10 <https://archiviofotografico.museoegizio.it/en/archive/gebelein/northern-hill/grave-goods-of-the-tomb-of-ini/> (accessed: 5.05.2024).

11 https://mk-tomb-models.net/TOMBS/Gebelein_Ini.html (accessed: 5.05.2024).

sional models to present archaeological research results from more than a century ago, which would otherwise remain only in written form, and thus their circulation in academic discussion can be facilitated. In addition, the reconstruction

process provoked a series of questions stemming from ambiguities in Rosa's description.

Rediscovery of this tomb would allow verification of some of the above assumptions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The currently presented hypothetical 3D reconstruction is only merely an idealized model of the tomb design. The sepulcher was hewn into limestone rock of uneven hardness and structure, where the quality of the stone is poor, i.e. there are geological layers of various hardness, compromising the original design and/or intentions of the persons who were tasked with the execution of the construction project. This issue is well attested in other tombs at the site [Fig. 6].

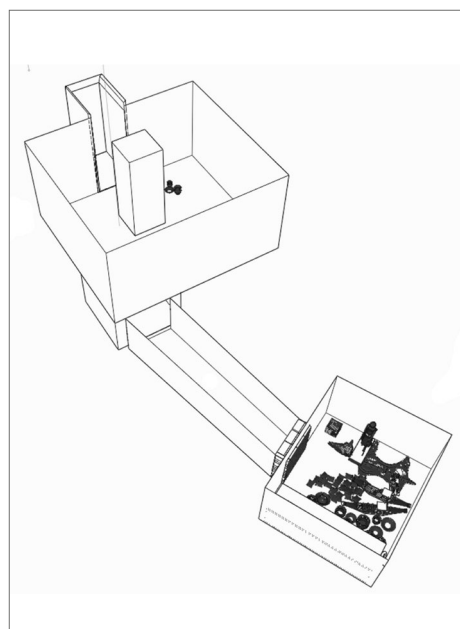


Fig. 12. Schematic drawing of the plan and furnishing (Drawing J. Stępnik)

Nevertheless, as regards its shape, the tomb is fairly typical of the late Old Kingdom elite sepulchers in southern Upper Egypt (Dodson 2008). The tomb included a rock-cut courtyard, and the first room was a chapel dedicated to the cult of the tomb owner [Fig. 7], most probably containing a funerary stela and items related to the funerary cult of Ini. From it, a shaft originally filled with gravel led to the burial chamber [Fig. 8] housing the coffin, which contained an embalmed body with a headrest in the shape of the *s* sign, as well as a wooden staff [Fig. 9]. At the foot of the coffin was a model of a pair of white sandals. Next to it were the grave goods, comprising numerous pottery jars, other pots, about 300 straw models of donkey packsaddles, two funerary boats, and models of a granary and a food production scene [Fig. 10]. By the opposite wall was a cowhide, complete “with tail and limbs”, and a wooden statuette of the deceased placed on it in the area of the animal's neck [Fig. 11].

The hypothetical 3D reconstruction of the tomb of the nomarch Ini I from Gebelein facilitates not only a better understanding of the tomb itself but also a comparison of its design and distribution of artifacts with other burials [Fig. 12]. The tomb of Ini I is a rare ex-

ample, if not the only known instance, of an undisturbed tomb of a nomarch from the First Intermediate Period, and as such it provides insights into the ways of furnishing of burials of the highest provincial elite. What makes this sepulcher additionally unique is the potential Nubian/Early Kerman influence visible

in its furnishing. The placement of the statue of the deceased on a cowhide is unparalleled and requires a separate study, especially since some details of the tomb might hint at the ethnic identity of its owner. The artifacts recovered from the tomb still await study and publication.

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