

Review of the doctoral dissertation of Marta Kaczanowicz – *Old Tombs, New Tenants. Third Intermediate Period and Late Period Reuse of Theban Tombs* (Poznań, Adam Mickiewicz University, 2020)

Reuse of older artefacts and structures – including tombs – is a phenomenon that can be observed throughout the three thousand years of the history of ancient Egypt. In some parts of Egypt, moreover, the reuse of older sepulchres is attested even nowadays, one of such places being, without any doubt, the western outskirts of the Nile valley opposite the modern city of Luxor, traditionally called Western Thebes in Egyptology. In spite of the fact that the reuse of older structures (tombs above all) has been repeatedly mentioned and discussed in excavation reports and various publications dealing with ancient Egyptian archaeology and history, no synthesis of the phenomenon of the reuse of Egyptian sepulchres has ever been produced, as Marta Kaczanowicz rightly noted – perhaps to her own surprise – during her participation in the activities of the Polish mission working in Western Thebes. Because of that, she started to study this phenomenon herself, choosing it as subject of her doctoral thesis.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the strategies of the reuse of the Theban tombs in the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period. In view of the long tradition of the reuse of the sepulchres in that area and the enormous amount of material and data connected to this phenomenon, she rightly decided to limit her study to the above mentioned periods that, moreover, represent one of the crucial eras in the long development of ancient Egyptian civilization, when this country has already lost its previous imperial position but, on the other hand, has not yet been more or less incorporated in the multinational and multicultural entities of the Hellenistic world and Roman empire.

Doctoral thesis of Marta Kaczanowicz is composed of two volumes – Part I: Text and Part II: Catalogue of Tombs. The first volume consists of a short Introduction (pp. 17–20), presenting the aim of the study and followed by eight chapters including one excursus, as well as four appendixes. In the first chapter, *Historical Background* (pp. 23–33), the history of the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period is briefly summarized. Among other things, the long disputed subject of the reign of Dynasty 25 kings Shabaka and Shebitku or, as the author admits – Shebitku and Shabaka – is discussed here. In Chapter 2 (pp. 34–42), methods of research are discussed, as well as the way of presentation of the data in Part II: Catalogue of Tombs. At the same time, various limitations pertaining to the methods used or to the collected data are analysed here. Chapter 3 (pp. 43–92), the longest in the work, summarizes the criteria and methods of dating the burials found in reused tombs.

Chapter 4 (pp. 93–134) deals with the topography of the reused tombs in the Theban area in general and in its various parts. Here, the author tries – in my opinion successfully – to find the possible links between the reused tombs and other monuments in the Theban necropolis, suggesting a number of reasons for choosing a special tomb. In chapter 5 (*Architecture of late dynastic reuse of Theban tombs*, pp. 135–167) the burials in reused tombs are divided in five types according to the space (original or remodelled) and part of the tomb in which they were deposited. Chapter 6 (*Sacred space and its reuse*, pp. 168–193) tries to determine the thought of those who reused the tombs during the period in question. Here, the author discusses and, more or less, refuses to equate the reuse of a tomb with its usurpation, clearly showing that the relation between the old and new ‘owners’ of one and the same sepulchre might be quite different and needs to be studied individually. Chapter 7 (*Who was buried in reused tombs*, pp. 194–220) deals with the identity of persons buried in the reused tombs, as well as with various activities related to their funerary cult. In this chapter, a relatively long *Excursus* examines burials in the so-called ‘caches’, rather numerous in Western Thebes especially at the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period; the discussion of the difference between ‘caches’ and reburials is quite interesting from the point of view of methodology as well.

In the final chapter 8 (*Tomb reuse in context*, pp. 221–230), M. Kaczanowicz methodically analyses the two often repeated assumptions, namely that the popularity of tomb reuse was a result of economic crisis and that burials in reused tombs reflect economic ineptitude of the deceased and their families. In an interesting, certainly thought-provoking way she concludes that the overwhelming popularity of the tomb reuse coincides with the phenomenon of archaism, much discussed in Egyptology since many years. In my opinion, she has clearly proven that at least some of the reused monuments functioned as ‘holy places’, perhaps even by association with their original owners, and the popularity of tomb reuse is to be connected with the general shift in funerary values during the epoch in question. One cannot but agree that quite often ‘the decision to reuse an older tomb rather than to build a new one could be a conscious choice, motivated by contemporary religious trends rather than economic status’ (p. 225).

After the *Conclusions* (pp. 231–235) suggesting, among others, the possible ways of future research (e.g. a comparative analysis between the interments on reused tombs and reused temples), the first volume finishes with four appendixes, listing in a well-arranged and highly informative form all Theban tombs (TT) with information on their reuse during the epoch under question (*Appendix A*), suggested dates of burials in reused tombs (*Appendix B*)

and of the original burials (*Appendix C*), as well as the sex of the deceased in the reused tombs (*Appendix D*).

The voluminous second part of the dissertation contains a complete list of the 414 Theban tombs included in the TT list, as well as a selection of other Theban tombs numbered in another way. In all cases, the basic data concerning each of the structures are briefly summarized (including the basic bibliographical references, much useful for anybody who is not so well acquainted with this area as Marta Kaczanowicz certainly is) and a discussion of finds related to the studied topic, growing sometimes to small separate studies. This part concludes with a quite impressive bibliography (pp. 769–826), clearly and persuasively showing the broad scope of Marta Kaczanowicz's research and knowledge and her ability to find and consider every possible piece of information pertaining to the topic of her dissertation.

The language of the dissertation is clear and correct. All the relevant primary and secondary sources are addressed and discussed in a methodologically correct manner. As a result, an original, organically formulated contribution to the field is proposed.

According to the words of Marta Kaczanowicz, the purpose of this study was 'to investigate the strategies of the reuse of Theban tombs in the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period', aiming 'to analyse the available data on the reuse of Theban tombs, offer some observations regarding the patterns and developments, examine previous scientific hypotheses, and try to better understand the phenomenon of the popularity of the reuse of tombs by the population in Thebes in the first millennium BCE.' In my opinion, she has achieved this goal with full success and substantially contributed to our understanding of the phenomenon of tomb reuse.

The treatise of Marta Kaczanowicz gives an excellent overview on the state of research on this topic. It is not merely a compilation of information but makes original, organically formulated contributions to the field. As such, it is an excellent piece of scientific work that surely meets all standards for a doctoral dissertation.

I highly recommend the submitted dissertation with a clear pass for the public defence.

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Prof. PhDr. Ladislav Bareš

Czech Institute of Egyptology

Faculty of Arts

Charles University, Prague

DZIEKAN
Wydziatu Archeologii
prof. dr hab. Andrzej Michałowski

VIDI DECANUS