

# Probable Senenmut's mummy

by Antonio CRASTO

## Story

In the nineteenth century they discovered two tombs in the King's Valley (KV 20 and KV 38) containing both a sarcophagus inscribed with the cartouches of Thutmose I (1531-1518 BC) <sup>1</sup>, third king of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

It is possible, however, that his original grave was dug in a different location, outside of the King's Valley, or that it was formed by the first part of the KV 20.

In the latter case, it is likely that his daughter Hatshepsut (1515-1493 BC), once crowned king of Egypt in co-regency with stepson Thutmose III (1515-1460 BC), has decided to usurp the grave of him, extending it, so as to position the burial chamber, of her and her father, below the *Sancta Sanctorum* of the temple of his millions of years at the nearby Deir el-Bahari.

Whether KV 20 has been excavated from scratch or has been a change in the tomb of her father, it seems certain that Hatshepsut took place in the burial chamber, in addition to her sarcophagus, even that of her father, so as to be close to him for eternity .

The other tomb in which was found a sarcophagus of Thutmose I (KV 38) has a more difficult explanation. It seems to have been excavated by Thutmose III, perhaps as a new tomb of Thutmose I, but it is not clear why the nephew had decided to shift the mummy of his grandfather.

Several Egyptologists have speculated that Thutmose III had decreed, after the death of Hatshepsut and to take revenge of his awkward co-regency a damnatio memoriae for his stepmother, taking away the honor to host in her tomb the mummy of her father, Thutmose I.

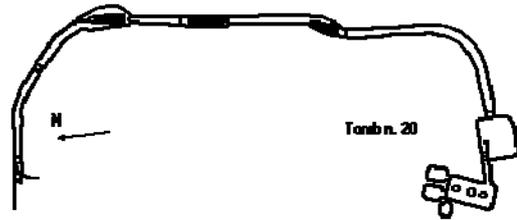
## The mummy

Until recently it was believed that the mummy of Thutmose I was the one found in cachette of Deir el-Bahari (DB 320), one preserved in the Cairo Museum with the number of repertoire CG61065 or JE26217. This finding was not made, however, on the basis of archaeological valid evidence, but only in the light of some its resemblance to the mummies of Thutmose II (1518-1515 BC) and III, respectively son and grandson <sup>2</sup>.

The mummy is in excellent condition, but has the characteristic of not having his arms crossed over his chest as an Osiris, like all the mummies of the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

This fact suggests that it is not the mummy of the king and that it can be, however, that the alleged father, Ahmose-Sipairi, or that of one of his sons.

In the last century the famous Egyptologist G. Maspero noticed that the teeth of the mummy were ruined and thought, therefore, of having to assume an age at death of more than fifty years. The Egyptologist G. E. Smith believed, however, that the mummy belonged to a young man and Egyptologists JE Harris and F. Hussein, observed that the X-rays even suggested an age of less than twenty years.



King's Valley - Tomb of Hatshepsut (KV 20)



Mummy of Thutmose I ?

Then this supposed young age it would seem to deny further identification with Thutmose I, who certainly died in old age. This time too, as for the KV 55 mummy of Smenkhkara or Akhenaten, Egyptologists seem to give the numbers, ranging between 50 and 20 years, so one must assume that there isn't a safe method or anatomical methods have not been considered in a correct way.



Head of the mummy of Thutmose I ?

## Considerations

The decree of *damnatio memoriae* of Hatshepsut by Thutmose III seems currently implausible and seems possible that it has been decreed, for reasons almost certainly related to the religious innovations desired by the pharaoh woman, by one of the last pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty or even by one of the pharaohs of the following dynasty.

In the article "Senenmut" I assumed that this personage was actually Moses "saved from the water" right from the daughters of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut and Neferubity, which was adopted to satisfy the princess, he would be given the Egyptian name Amenhotep, he studied at the School of the Palace "*kep*" <sup>3</sup>. He was distinguished for remarkable intelligence, as a brilliant strategist and valiant soldier during the military campaigns of Thutmose I, receiving the highest honor, that of cuff *menefert*.

He became increasingly important, resulting in positions of great prestige during the reign of Thutmose I and Thutmose II, ultimately attaining the position of tutor to the daughter of Thutmose II and Hatshepsut, Neferura.

With the assumption of power of Hatshepsut, first as the Chief Wife of Thutmose II, then as a stepmother and guardian of Thutmose III and, finally, how effective sovereign co-regent of the young pharaoh, Senenmut got more and more prestigious positions, becoming, in effect, the gray eminence of the royal house.

It seems highly probable that Hatshepsut is in love with her talented co-worker, and that, after the death of Thutmose II, the two have become lovers, without going to

a wedding, that, perhaps due to problems of nobility, was not considered appropriate by the royal house and the powerful clergy of Waset / Thebes.

His descendants would occupy prominent positions, such as project managers or even vizier. One of his great-grandson, Ramose was vizier of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV and, as the Bible says, he quarreled with the latter pharaoh, then fled to the east, the land of Midian, for fear of being punished by the king.

Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten would remember that Ramose and his ancestors were brought to court by Hatshepsut and would have decreed the her and her lover, Senenmut, *damnatio memoriae*.

This possibility invalidates the hypothesis that Thutmose III had hated his stepmother, he has decreed *damnatio memoriae* and, finally, would have removed from her tomb the mummy of his grandfather, to bury it in a new tomb more worthy of his rank and still far from 'culprit' daughter.

It is very likely that Senenmut survived his beloved queen, so would leave think some of his statues in the temple of Deir el-Bahari engraved with only the name of Thutmose III, <sup>4</sup>, and thus seems conceivable that Senenmut has continued some collaboration with Thutmose III and that this have buried him in the tomb of his beloved Hatshepsut, in KV 20 in the King's



Statua cubo di Senenmut con Neferura

Valley, after having traversed the mummy of his grandfather Thutmose I in the new tomb that he cut out in King's Valley (KV 38).

Thutmose III would not use the two or three tombs made dig by Senenmut, at Deir el Bahari (TT 353), at Sheikh Ab-Qurna (TT 71) and perhaps at Gebel el Silsila (tomb of Amenhotep), and, as the final tribute to the great man, he would take the sarcophagus of Thutmose I, his adoptive father, who was unused in KV 20.

In support of this hypothesis, it is noted that there is an exceptional resemblance to the profile of the mummy with representations of Senenmut, such a resemblance to suggest a good overlap of the two profiles.



Comparison between a representation and the possible mummy of Senenmut

## Conclusion

This identification, however, it is opposed by the uncertainty of the age of the personage. The more than fifty years, assumed by Maspero, based on the state of the teeth, would be in perfect agreement with the age at death of Senenmut, while the ages assumed by other researchers: 40, 30 or 20 years would oppose to my identification.

It has, however, the impression that, once again, certain assumptions are made by Egyptologists and scholars bearing in mind the result to be obtained. Indeed, it seems strange that, with the methods of analysis available today, you can't be able to define, with greater precision, the age of a personage mummified.

It is believed, however, that the only scientific reason has been advanced according to the state of the teeth and that, therefore, the identification of the mummy with Senenmut is fully justified.

The recent X-ray analysis (TAC) have identified in the mummy a broken rib and the presence of a metal arrowhead in the right region of thoracic <sup>5</sup>. This fact suggests that the death of Senenmut was not caused by a disease, but may have occurred for an injury he suffered on the battlefield.

A death in battle could justify, in addition, two mysterious aspects of the mummy. It is, in fact, devoid of hands and most likely without the penis.

Egyptologists can't give a justification for this anomaly, but it seems possible that the enemies have sought to imitate the Egyptian generals, ordering the cutting of hands and penis of the corpse of Senenmut.

It is known that Thutmose III performed eighteen military campaigns from his first year of his reign in solitary. Therefore it seems possible that Senenmut, because of his reputation as a gifted military strategist, has accompanied the young pharaoh in his military campaigns in Asia and in one of them has died. His body was mutilated by the enemy and then recovered by Thutmose III, which would have brought home him like a hero and would have buried in the King's Valley, in the tomb of his beloved Hatshepsut.

With the recent opening of Dr. Zahi Hawass, former Superintendent of the Superior Council

of Egyptian Antiquities, to the DNA testing of mummies and given the results obtained by analyzing the DNA of various mummies of the XVIIIth dynasty, it would be desirable a comparison of the DNA the possible mummy of Senenmut with those available of the father, Ramose, and mother, Hatnefer.

Given the recent identification of the mummy of Hatshepsut <sup>6</sup> may also occur if the mummy of the young Maiherpri, buried by the pharaoh women in the King's Valley (KV 36), is indeed that, as many Egyptologists and scholars believe, of the son or one of the sons of the two real lovers, Hatshepsut and Senenmut.



Maiherpri's mummy

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DENDERA – La sacra terra della dea

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