

The Tomb of Senneferi

The tombs of ancient Egyptians were decorated with many objects and had symbols written on the walls which may appear to show their status, but actually had significance to them. Still, the amount of material and the architecture does reflect the status and the meanings behind them held great significance to the life the person had led while they were alive. There were many different types of tombs depending on the time period, the one discussed in this paper was the tomb of Senneferi, a Theban tomb more commonly known as TT99 which can be dated back to the 18th dynasty and which has been extensively researched.

The layout of this tomb is very common among other 18th dynasty tombs. It consists of a facade with a niche or a superstructure at the upper level. In the middle level there is a courtway with three shafts and a doorway into the front room where there may have potentially been another shaft and two loom related emplacements. In the front room there were also emplacements cut into the walls for false doors and stelae, unfortunately most of the original decorations for this room has been lost. Between the front room and the rear room there is a long passage which was completely rectangular with the ceiling being curved or vaulted. At the end of the hall is the doorway to the shrine which leads into the rear room. In the rear room there are two pillars with decorative traces at the top of each face and in the center of the rear wall there is an offering or statue niche. Five shafts are also located in the rear room as well as some of the original decorations. The majority of the wall paintings were lost and the ones that had survived are at the top of the walls.

The upper layer of the tomb above the niche was composed of chips of white limestone compacted together and below that it was composed of limestone chippings and limestone dust. A bit further below the surface, about 7cm there was a layer of bedrock which spans to about 33cm below. There were 130 funerary cones that belonged to TT99 were found throughout the tomb which were all the same type, DM 154 which when translated read "he *imakhu* in the sight of Osiris, the *iry pat HAty-a*, seal-bearer of the *bity*, sole companion, overseer of seal-bearers Sennefer, justified." Another cone, DM 93, was also found in the tomb but it belonged to someone else. Examples of DM 154 were found throughout other tombs, such as TT87 and TT29. The prevalence of Senneferi's cones shows his importance in Egyptian society. These cones ensured that Senneferi's tomb would be identified and his identity would not be lost after death.

The decorations of the chapel some damage done so certain elements are not known, such as the size and composition of the main registers on the wall. Some materials found in the chapel indicate that it was used as a dumping ground at some period with a lot of stuff being placed there for safe keeping. Much of the colour on the fragments found in the front room on the east wall is unidentifiable or is white, likely due to decay. Though there is plaster found inside the chapel, it is unclear what decorations they were. Other tombs of this time had a scene of the dead standing and making an offering to a deity, but all that remains in this tomb is lines of hieroglyphs above a figure of the deceased that has been destroyed and the surviving offerings. While they were able to use a colourimeter, they were only able to discover that the colours on the painting were consistent, not which colours were used. What this data does show is that the colours used were more consistent compared with those used in the earlier 18th dynasty than those near the end. Some of the surviving offerings are presumable green mats considering the traces of green found, which would align with the usual mats left in tombs. There were also three large red jars with pointed sealings. There was also an offering table with two loaves on it that were white with red on

the top, a red leg of meat, a white tray with bread or cake, and the remains of grapes. These offerings would have been used to allow the deceased to have meals after he had passed. These offerings indicate he was well regarded. There also appeared to be a decoration on the south wall that depicted Senneferi giving offerings to Anubis.

There were three different types of coffins that were used during this dynasty for non-royals. Coffins with a flat or vaulted lid with feathered pattering called *rishi* coffins or coffins made with wooden planks with exteriors adorned with bands were used. During the reign of Thutmose III the coffin style was changed into a rectangular shape and were black, the *rishi* coffins were no longer used. The coffins found in TT99 belonging to Senneferi and his family utilized this rectangular shape. Most of the coffins found in Shaft I of the tombs were smashed in, it is unclear when that damage had occurred and it is not possible to figure out which coffin the planks belonged to except for those with Senneferi's name inscribed on them. At least two of the coffins within TT99 were made with a hard, finely-grained wood that was of a reddish colour that had a black varnish on it either directly on the wood or applied on a substrate of linen or yellow plaster. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the coffins to determine their precise shape, it is clear that they were of an anthropoid shape including a face, ears, and portions of wigs and were crafted to avoid wasting space and had pieces used to fill in gaps. On one piece of wood there appears to be red wing feathers potentially showing a figure of Nut or a vulture. There are also many single lines of hieroglyphs instead of blocks of texts and no other names were found inscribed on pieces of wood besides Senneferi and his title. Much care would have been put into the construction of the coffins of Senneferi and his family as well as ensuring his name last after death.

There were many ceramics that were present in the shaft I, though it is unclear whether they originated in TT99 or if they were placed there after the fact. There were many different types of pottery in there including marl clay vessels, marl clay amphorae and Nile silt jars that would have been used during the original burial. There were also sherds that lay in the shaft which were not able to be reassembled. The marl clay vessels appeared to be manufactured in Upper Egypt and though it is not clear what the marl clay vessels contained it had been marked as corrosive and there were remains of brown residue that remained inside. The marl clay amphorae appear to have come from Lower Egypt and would have been used to hold dry goods instead of liquids such as wine and are thought to be royal gifts considering the cartouches in the clay. The Nile silt jars that were found in the shaft were likely to be produced locally and are thought to have contained embalming debris, although there is no proof of this conclusion. Many of these jars remain a mystery of what they originally contained.

There were many items found in the tomb that appear to have been used for the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. Some of these objects were identified as being elephant ivory adzes which had hieroglyphs on it bearing a formula on behalf of the deceased. There was also a long wooden stick found with a flat base that is thought to be the 'finger of electrum' for the ritual. There are many other wooden objects which have not been identified as an object known, but are suggested to be items like incense burners and a handle of a model chisel. There were small fragments of a box with carved hieroglyphs on it. It is a thinner box than others found and may have been used for jewelry but it is uncertain, still it was certainly used for the ceremony either by a priest or by a son. Seven fragments of an ostrakon that were found show the scene of the opening of the mouth ceremony using black paint over clay. There are multiple scenes shown on these fragments which depict the ceremony and were meant to be displayed along with the other objects used in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. Jewelry was also found in the tomb including many beads that

were found throughout the tomb, probably originating from Shaft I, and would have been worn around the neck. Some fragments of faience from bracelets were also found in the burial shaft of Senneferi. Some of the fragments make an almost complete deep blue bracelet, while the others make less than half of a greenish blue bracelet. It is likely that these bracelets were accompanied by gold bracelets which were potentially stolen or removed.

The remains found in Shaft I included around a dozen disarticulated bones that were in mummy bundles and about 336 bone were examined. After calculations of the bones, there appeared to be a minimum of five adults present in the shaft and the recovery of one juvenile bone indicate a potential child or coming from another source. At minimum there were three females buried there and a minimum of two males, though it is impossible to determine it is likely that one of them was Senneferi himself. Only about 62% of the expected amount of teeth for five adults. Along with the skeletal remains there was also some mummified remains including a foot and a female mummy that was nearly complete once reassembled. Also present was a left arm and hand where only the middle finger was intact. There were also two torsos, one smaller than the other, among other remains. In Shaft H there was a total of 2007 disarticulated bones, 1923 of which came from adults and 84 came from children. There were two skulls that came from children, one who had died around the age of 4 or 5 and the other who had died between the ages of 10 or 12. At a minimum 21 adults, one sub-adult who would have died between the ages of 15 to 25, three children, and one neonate. There were at least nine males and eight females. Around 91% of the expected number of about 672 teeth were found and many of the lost teeth were potentially lost due to advanced dental caries, gum disease, or potentially systematic diseases such as leprosy or scurvy. The only mummified remains found in Shaft H was a blackened head, neck, torso, and pelvis belonging to the same female which were badly damaged.

Considering the immense amount of objects that were found in the tomb even after grave robbers and decaying it appears that Senneferi and his family were of a high status in Egypt during the 18th dynasty. The tomb was not very well preserved and had been used as a dumping ground for a period of time. Though they were a non royal family, they were still among the elites who had been built of tomb and had Senneferi's written down to be carried on to his next life.