

A Funerary Cone of Ray on the Upper Terrace of TT 209

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During the excavations on the upper terrace of the superstructure of TT 209, located on the northern slope of Wadi Hatasun, a stamped funerary cone appeared among other objects from different chronological contexts. Based on its inscription, the cone appears to have been part of the tomb of a high-ranking official identified as Ray, a scribe, overseer of the treasury, and overseer of the double granary of Montu in Iwny (Armant). This study aims to publish the object and present the results of the research conducted on its materiality, its inscription, and the owner of the tomb where it was used. Evidence has been analyzed, including the uncommon shape of the imprint and the locations where other examples mentioning the same individual have been found. The study also examines statues from a similar chronological period depicting individuals with the same name, in case they refer to the same person. It also addresses the presence of officials in the necropolis who held titles corresponding to those belonging to Ray. Using this information, efforts have been made to clarify the chronology of the cone, determine the original location of the tomb, and reconstruct the administrative career of its owner.

Un cono funerario de Ray en la terraza superior de la TT 209

En el transcurso de las excavaciones en la terraza superior de la superestructura de la TT 209, en la ladera septentrional del wadi Hatasun, ha salido a la luz un cono funerario estampillado entre otros objetos de cronologías diversas. Por su inscripción, debió de formar parte de la tumba de un alto funcionario identificado como Ray, escriba, supervisor del tesoro y supervisor del doble granero de Montu en Iwny (Armant). Este estudio tiene como objetivo la publicación del documento y presentar el resultado de la investigación realizada sobre la materialidad del objeto, su texto y el propietario de la tumba donde se usó. Se han analizado evidencias como la forma poco frecuente de la impronta y el lugar de hallazgo de otros ejemplares que mencionan al mismo personaje. También estatuas de cronología semejante de individuos con el mismo nombre por si se tratara de la misma persona y la presencia en la necrópolis de funcionarios que detentaban títulos coincidentes con los de Ray. Con esta información se ha intentado esclarecer la cronología del cono, el emplazamiento original de la tumba y una reconstrucción de la carrera administrativa de su propietario.

Keywords: Iwny, Waset/Luxor, dos cero nueve Project, Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, Theban West Bank, Wadi Hatasun.

Palabras clave: Iwny, Waset/Luxor, Proyecto dos cero nueve, Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, orilla oeste tebana, wadi Hatasun.

In this article, the term funerary cone will be used for convenience, referring to these types of decorative elements conceived for the facades of private tombs, primarily in the Theban necropolis as well as in other locations in Upper Egypt and Nubia.¹ Stamped inscriptions of the names and titles of tomb owners and, in some cases, those of

their family members typically feature on the flat surface of funerary cones. The positions documented on these cones span all levels of the administration, making their study a key tool for reconstructing the social hierarchy that would have existed during a specific period, as the dating of a significant number of them is relatively precise.² The number of

1 Smith 2007: 4. Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. https://sites.google.com/view/funerarycones/geographical-distribution#h.p_GA5YfWivTwN. Accessed December 2023.

2 Eigner 1984: 108–112; Vivó 2002; Manniche 1988; Kondo 1992; Kampp 1996; Zenihiro 2009; Dibley and Lipkin 2009: 1–17; Vivó 2022: 215–332.

fired clay cones—such as the one analyzed in this study—discovered in the Theban necropolis is estimated in the thousands. Currently, approximately 680 distinct cone impressions have been recorded, including those documented on different types of bricks and others where the stamp itself is known but not the material on which it was impressed.

Little is known about how they were arranged in the context of the tombs. In one Middle Kingdom tomb, rows of uninscribed cones have been documented, embedded along the upper edge of the facade, forming a sort of frieze.³ It seems likely that the inscribed examples were used in a similar manner, identifying a tomb's owner by their name and title (fig. 1).⁴ The vast majority of known funerary cones have been found scattered across a wide area of the Theban necropolis, far from their original locations, with only a few discovered in the vicinity of their owners' tombs. This dispersion has complicated the understanding of their function. In the reports on the work conducted by Robert Mond in the Waset/Thebes necropolis (modern Luxor) in the early Twentieth century, it was noted with regret that most of the numerous examples discovered had not been found in their original context, which is still true.⁵ Harry M. Stewart, who published the funerary cones from the Petrie Collection housed at University College London, noted that only 50 specimens—out of the 161 distinct impressions preserved in this institution, corresponding to 142 individuals—could be attributed to 39 known tombs. The remainder (approximately 70%) could not be associated



Figure 1. Copy of Ch.K. Wilkinson of the wall decoration from the tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181) showing funerary cones as architectural elements. Photograph: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545140?searchField=All&>

with any specific structures.⁶ In a recent study, Jaume Vivó has indicated that only 43% of the known Theban impressions have been successfully associated with specific structures. The remaining percentage corresponds to individuals whose tombs have yet to be identified.⁷ Moreover, it is relatively common to find several types of cones belonging to the same individual, each providing different biographical information. Kento Zenihiro has used this unique situation to study the professional career of Nakhtmin with the six distinct examples attributed to the owner of TT 87.⁸

³ Wilkinson and Hill 1983: 17. Two rows of uninscribed funerary cones were found by Winlock in the superstructure and above the doorway of an Eleventh Dynasty tomb at Asasif (tomb MMA 110).

⁴ Davies (1938: 27–29) shows the representation of four facades of Theban tombs in the chambers of Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181), Ramose (TT 55) and Neferhotep (TT 49) and Neferrenpet (TT 178), in which the arrangement of the funerary cones in rows can be seen.

⁵ Mond 1905: 91–96.

⁶ Stewart 1986: 23.

⁷ Vivó 2022: 375–410.

⁸ Zenihiro 2017: 686–692. Vivó (2019: 33–34) states the non-existence of one of the six cones attributed to Nakhtmin's TT 87.

Although there is no consensus on the meaning of funerary cones, it is currently being suggested that their origin lies in the imitation of a structural element from domestic architecture. They are thought to represent the roof beams protruding from the wall of a house, adapted as decorative objects on the facades of private tombs. Reaching this academic consensus was a lengthy process, beginning when Jean-François Champollion debated the most appropriate term for them, rejecting the earlier designation of “seal” in 1827. Numerous hypotheses have been proposed, and Zenihiro has provided a detailed overview of these on his website. Several hypotheses taken from Zenihiro's comprehensive review will be highlighted here. In 1874, Auguste F. Mariette suggested that funerary cones might have been used to demarcate the land occupied by a tomb. In 1893, Georges Daressy interpreted them as reminders of visits made by the deceased's relatives. Bernard Bruyère, in 1926, proposed that they could be imitations of offerings. Two years later, Herbert E. Winlock—who discovered some examples in situ at Deir el-Bahari—suggested that they imitated the posts used to construct the roofs of houses. Ludwig Borchardt, in 1934, posited that they were purely ornamental elements for decorating tomb facades. Arne Eggebrecht, in 1977, introduced the idea that the cones symbolized the Sun, which provided light and life to the inside of the tomb where they are present; a theory K. Zenihiro questions, arguing that the inscriptions on the cones show very few solar connotations.⁹ More recently, Andreas Dorn has emphasized that the name and titles stamped on the flat surface of funerary cones, which were probably barely visible when standing in front of a facade, represented another means of ensuring the eternal survival of tomb owners' name and status.¹⁰

⁹ Zenihiro 2023: 690.

¹⁰ Dorn 2020: 118.

¹¹ Molinero Polo 2016: 111–115.

This study aims to shed light on a funerary cone discovered during the excavations of TT 209 in South Asasif. A drawing of its impression is presented, along with information gathered from other documents referencing the same owner. Given its uncommon oval silhouette and other features that may be linked to the diachronic evolution of cone impressions, parallels have been sought to provide clues about the chronology of the specimen. Finally, the study traces the find spots of impressions belonging to the same owner, as well as documentation of individuals holding titles matching those of the owner, to propose a hypothesis regarding the location of their tomb in the Theban necropolis.

1 | The Provenance of the Cone

The funerary cone at the center of this study (Inventory No.: TT 209_645_1) was discovered on the upper part of the northern slope of Wadi Hatasun, where TT 209 was constructed. The find occurred during excavations conducted by members of the University of La Laguna (hereafter: ULL) archaeological project during their ninth season in the autumn of 2021.¹¹ It was specifically located in the sector that archaeologists designated as Area 7, corresponding to the upper terrace, one of three leveled sections of terrain carved into the slope to construct the superstructure of the tomb. The object was found on the surface of stratigraphic unit 645 (hereafter: SU 645, fig. 2), an accumulation of mudbrick fragments that had clearly originated from the collapse of the superstructure walls. This unit appeared to have been significantly affected by erosion and disturbances following its formation, as its volume was relatively small compared to the wall from which it derived. Both SU 645 and the remains of the external enclo-

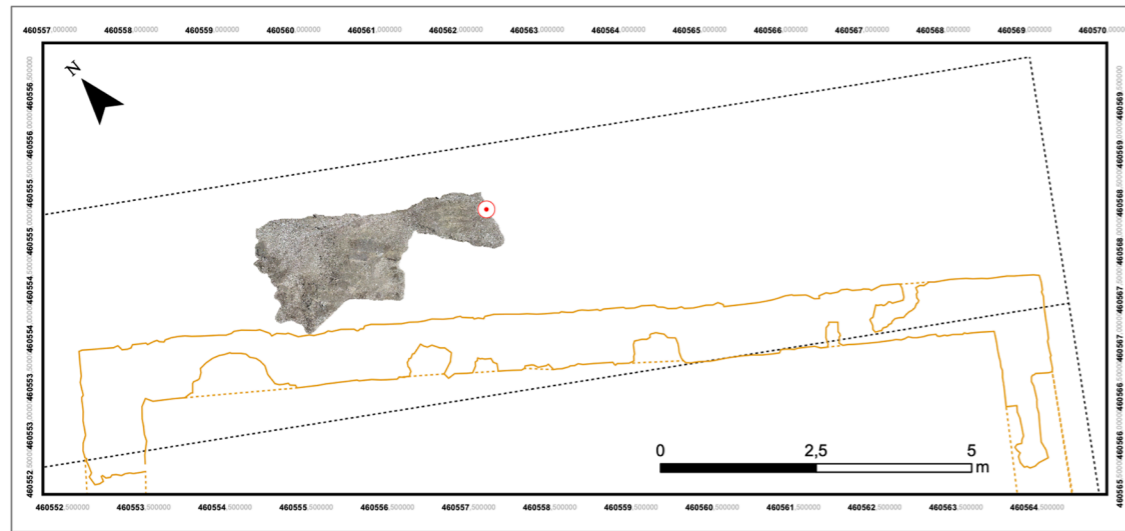


Figure 2. SU 645, in Area 7, and walls of the upper terrace of TT 209 where the cone of Ray was found. Author: Proyecto dos cero nueve / Sergio Pou Hernández.

sure were covered by sediments containing a mix of materials with different provenances, originating from both the ancient tombs of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna and the modern village of the Hurubats, which was located near to the north of the wadi until the early Twenty-first century.

The remains of the wall and the fallen mudbricks were intersected by a channel that drained rainwater from the hill, which probably displaced most of these remnants. Based on the stratigraphic context of the find and the information provided by the stamp, the cone bears no relation to the construction or use of TT 209. It was found above SU 645, suggesting that its arrival at this location could have occurred at any chronological point, possibly during the collapse of the superstructure walls, a process that began in the courtyard, on the lower terrace of the slope, prior to the

5th century BCE and continued into at least the early centuries of Roman domination.¹² This process also continued in subsequent centuries, when successive floods reshaped the upper part of the slope. This lengthy process combined the removal of remnants from the superstructure, displaced downhill by water and other erosive agents, with the deposition of new materials originating from the hill and the nearby modern village.¹³

2 | The Cone of Ray and Related Objects

Cone TT 209_645_1 was hand-modeled using a mixed paste composition, which contains medium-sized grains of sand and quartz, as well as small white tempering agents—presumably limestone—and vegetal material. This combination contributes to the heterogeneous nature of the paste used. Regarding



Figure 3. The cone of Ray (TT 209_645_1). Photograph and drawing: Proyecto dos cero nueve / José M. Barrios Mufrege and Daniel M. Méndez Rodríguez.

the firing process, the clay exhibits notable compactness, resulting in a very dense piece. This density led to an oxidizing firing on the exterior surface of the cone, giving it a light tone. However, the inside reveals gray and black hues, a phenomenon attributable to limited oxygen penetration due to the thickness of the cone, suggesting a reducing firing process. The cone is fragmented, with much of its length missing, only the flat end where the incomplete seal impression is located remains. Its current dimensions are: length: 87 mm; maximum diameter of the stamped side: 76 mm. There are no traces of slip or any type of whitewash that might have originally covered the facade and remained visible on the inscribed surface.

The existence of identical specimens belonging to the same owner (Davies and Macadam #345)¹⁴ enables the original text and silhouette, which have been worn away, to be reconstructed, facilitating a more detailed

description. The hieroglyphic signs are written from left to right in four horizontal lines, with no separation between them, surrounded by a single oval demarcation line. Comparison with the published examples makes it possible to complete the reading of the owner's name and titles (fig. 3).

Transliteration of the text: *sh3 imy-r3 pr-ḥd | imy-r3 šnwty n mnṯ|w m iwny | r3y*

Translation: Scribe, overseer of the treasury, | overseer of the double granary of Montu | in Iwny, | Ray.

The owner's name appears in the last line of signs: Ray (𓂏𓂏𓂏). He was a prominent official in Iwny (Hermonthis, modern Armant), as evidenced by one of his titles.¹⁵ However, it is possible that the roles mentioned in the rest of his titulary were carried out in other unspecified centers. It is worth noting that Iwny, located about 12 km southwest of Thebes on the west bank of the Nile, housed the

¹² Molinero Polo *et alii* 2017: 245–269.

¹³ I am grateful to Miguel Á. Molinero Polo, who was responsible for the excavation of Area 7 at the time of the discovery, for the archaeological information provided in this paragraph.

¹⁴ Davies and Macadam 1957: #345.

¹⁵ Regarding the titles and their importance, the following works can be consulted: Hasitzka and Satzinger 1988; Al-Ayedi 2006.

primordial sanctuary of Montu. The significance of this temple became evident as early as the Middle Kingdom. Several interventions during this period are recognized as inscribed blocks bearing the names of Senusret I, Amenemhat II, and Senusret II are present. The largest constructions are dated to the reign of Thutmose III, with expansions and renovations continuing into the Greco-Roman period. Unfortunately, little of the structure remains today, as it was used as a quarry for the construction of a sugar factory in the Nineteenth century.¹⁶

Alongside the specimen found in TT 209, four other cones and a stamped brick attributed to this Ray are known. Two cones were discovered in TT 106. A third cone with the same impression is cataloged under inventory number AN1972.557 in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. A fourth identical specimen was found in a shaft of TT 309 and published by Jiro Kondo.¹⁷ Finally, Davies and Macadam recorded a different impression attributed to the same individual under number 122 (fig. 4). Davies' handwritten notes mention that this impression was found on a brick discovered at an unspecified location by R. Mond.¹⁸ Of this impression, only the drawing made by Davies exists, as the whereabouts of the mentioned brick are unknown. In the literature after Davies and Macadam, no further references to cones belonging to Ray have been found.¹⁹ As a summary, Table 1 provides an overview of the known impressions associated with Ray, the owner of cone TT 209_645_1.

The impressions of the two types of stampings attributed to Ray are completely different

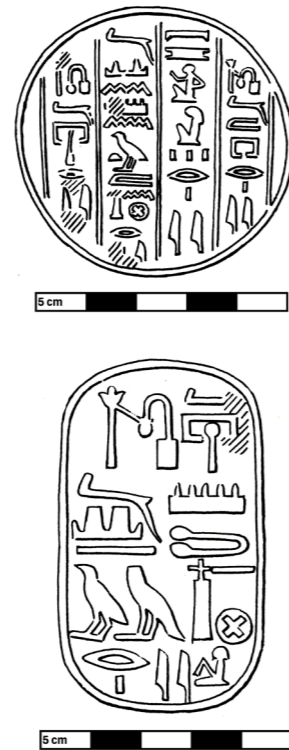







Figure 4. Facsimile representation of the known imprints of Ray (*rꜥy*) published in Davies and Macadam 1957 with inventory numbers #122 (up) and #345 (down).

from each other. The imprint of #122, known only from the brick, has a circular silhouette, organizes the text into four columns, and provides a higher number of titles. The script of the signs and the spelling of the words differ significantly in the titles shared by both stampings (see figs. 3 and 4).

• *shꜥ*: is different in the two instances it is written in #122 and it is more slender in #345.

	Brick	Cones			
Bibliographical reference / museum	Davies and Macadam 1957	Davies and Macadam 1957. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 56175 and JE 58289	Ashmolean Museum (AN1972.557)	Kondo 1987: 74	Present article
Number	#122	#345	#345	#345	#345
Measurements	Stamp: unknown Brick: over 170 x 75 x 107.5 mm	Unpublished	Unpublished	Stamp: 72 x 42 mm	Stamp (partly lost): 52 x 42 mm
Translation	Scribe, overseer of the treasury(?), Ray overseer of the (double) granary of Montu in Iwny, Ray chief of the servants, Ray scribe, overseer of the <i>gs-pr</i> , Ray.	Scribe, overseer of the treasury overseer of the double granary of Montu in Iwny, Ray.			
Find spot	Unknown	Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, TT 106, Paser	Unknown. Probably found in TT 106, Paser	Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, TT 309, no name	South Asasif, TT 209, Nisemro

Table 1. Brick and cones attributed to Ray, overseer of the treasury.

- *šnwty*: the two granaries are larger in #345.
- *n*: is written as — in #345 and  in #122, applicable both to the genitive *n* and the writing of Iwny.
- *mntw*: it shows a very different spelling in #345  from #122 .
- *m*:  in #345 and — in #122.
- The name Ray has a determinative in #345 , which does not appear in #122.

The first conclusion is that the master drawings from which the seal matrices were carved were not created by the same scribe, but rather by two individuals with differing orthographic habits.

The shape of impression #345, which is only found on cones, is unusual, prompting a search for parallels to gather additional information regarding both production and chronology. Only 33 of the nearly seven hundred impressions compiled by Zenihiro,²⁰ exhibit this oval shape,²¹ 4.87% of the known specimens. Among these, most present the text without dividing lines, as in the specimen found in TT 209. Unfortunately, most of these cones remain undated. Only four can be attributed to the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty, between the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep III (#266 and #350 without dividing strips, like Ray's, although the latter

¹⁶ Soliman 2017: 154; IFAO: www.ifao.egnet.net/recherche/archeologie/ermant/. Accessed November 2023.

¹⁷ Kondo 1987: 70, fig. 5(7) and 74.

¹⁸ For a high-resolution picture and transcribed text of Davies's notebook page, see: Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. <https://sites.google.com/view/macadam/01-daviess-red-notebook/01-048-049>. Accessed November 2023.

¹⁹ Dibley and Lipkin (2009), who updated the work of Davies and Macadam, have not provided any new references, and neither has Zenihiro in the publication of his thesis, revised and expanded in 2009, which compiles a comprehensive catalogue of the known cones, or the recent general analysis of these objects published by Vivó (2022).

²⁰ For the latest data, see: Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. Statistics, <https://tinyurl.com/gp8vp29c>. Accessed December 2023.

²¹ #146, #157, #161, #170, #179, #254, #266, #295, #308, #311, #330, #331, #332, #333, #334, #338, #339, #340, #342, #343, #345, #347, #348, #349, #350, #569, #572, #578, #606, #620/A.09. Oval shaped, only in bricks: #654/B.27, #680/B.53 y #681/B.54, using the numbering assigned by Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. <https://sites.google.com/view/funerarycones/catalogue?authuser=0>. Accessed December 2023.

is horizontal, and #157 and #179 with dividing strips). Additionally, efforts have been made to determine whether arguments can be found to assign an approximate date to it by following the diachronic evolution of stamp impressions established by Zenihiro. This author has suggested using funerary cones as dating tools for the Theban tombs with which they are associated.²² Cone TT 209_645_1 lacks dividing lines, a feature more commonly observed in phases I and II of Zenihiro's classification, although examples without such lines can be found in all six phases.

- The oval-shaped outline of this cone is more frequent in the first three phases, though it does not entirely disappear in later phases, coexisting with impressions featuring angular outlines.
- The text of both stamps related to Ray does not contain any religious references (*hṯp di-nsw, dd-mdw in...*) an issue which is more commonly associated with the earlier phases, though examples without religious references can be found in all six phases.
- One of the six specimens bearing impression of the name of Ray is on a brick. The presence of the same individual on both cones and bricks occurs in all six phases of Zenihiro's classification, making it chronologically insignificant.

Based on the above, it would seem more appropriate to date the impressions related to Ray to the earlier phases of Zenihiro's classi-

fication,²³ but the possibility of dating it to the later phases cannot be ruled out.

Two statuettes bearing the name of a Ray (*r3y*) are also known.

- The owner of one of them (Egyptian Collection at Norwich Castle Museum) holds the titles of: *iry-p^ct h3ty-^c imy-r3 gs-pr imy-r3 šnwty n mntw m iwny hnty-r3 šm^cw mh^w* (fig. 5) and, in one side: *sh3 iq(r) n wn-m3^c*.²⁴ Some of these titles coincide with those of the Ray from cone TT 209_645_1: *imy-r3 gs-pr* (documented only in impression #122) and *imy-r3 šnwty n mntw m iwny* (found in both #122 and #345). However, in this figure, the title of scribe, which begins the titularies of the impressions, does not appear and is instead replaced with the designation *iry-p^ct h3ty-^c*. The statuette may date to the reign of Thutmose I or shortly thereafter as the brother of the owner is named Aakheperkare, the king's praenomen.²⁵
- The second statuette, housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,²⁶ presents a title different from the others documented, except for the very common of scribe (*sh3*): *imy-r3 gs-pr n hmt-nsw wrt* (overseer of the storeroom of the great royal wife) and is stylistically dated to the reign of Amenhotep II (fig. 6).²⁷

Almost a century separates the reign of Thutmose I from that of Amenhotep II, making it unlikely that the Ray mentioned in these two statuettes is the same individual,

²² Zenihiro 2023: 688–690.

²³ Zenihiro 2023: 688, n. 6: Phase I: Iahmose I – Amenhotpe I / Phase II: Thutmose I – Hatshepsut / Phase III: Thutmose III / Phase IV: Amenhotep II – Thutmose IV / Phase V: Amenhotep III / Phase VI: Akhenaton – Horemheb.

²⁴ Editor of the JEA [Alan Gardiner at the time] 1920. Kalloniatis 2019: 62-72.

²⁵ Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. <https://tinyurl.com/9p8vp29c>. Accessed December 2023.

²⁶ Inv. Nr.: 17.190.1960. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544813>. Accessed December 2023. Winlock 1920.

²⁷ Hayes 1990: 160, figs. 88 and 161.



Figure 5. Rear of the statue of Ray in the Egyptian Collection at Norwich Castle Museum. Author not specified (Editor of JEA 1920: plate XXII).



Figure 6. Statue of Ray in the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York. Inv. No.: 17.190.1960. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544813>.

not only because of the difference in titles but also because of the chronology.²⁸ If either of the two statuettes could be attributed to the same Ray mentioned in the analyzed impressions, the first one seems more likely. This is because of the overlap in some of their titles and the possible chronology of the statue, which aligns with Zenihiro's first phase—also favored for the cones and the brick. However, it

is suspicious that the title of scribe (*sh3*) disappeared, replaced by *iry-p^ct h3ty-^c*, which could be explained by social ascent upon becoming *hnty-r3 šm^cw mh^w* (chief of Upper and Lower Egypt). Nevertheless, it is more difficult to account for the absence of the title *imy-r3 pr-ḥd*, one of the highest-ranking positions in the career of a high official of the New Kingdom (Table 2). The likelihood that they are not

²⁸ The person responsible for the publication of the piece in the Rider Haggard collection (now in the Norwich Castle Museum, inv. no. 93.925) also pointed out how unlikely it was that they were the same person because of the strangeness of two statues with identical gesture belonging to the same individual. Editor of the JEA 1920: 212.

	#122	#345	Norwich Castle Museum	Metropolitan Museum of Arts
<i>iry-p^ct</i>			✓	
<i>h3ty-^c</i>			✓	
<i>sh3</i>	✓	✓		✓
<i>imy-r3 gs-pr</i>	✓		✓	
<i>imy-r3 gs-pr n hmt-nsw wrt</i>				✓
<i>hry mrwt</i>	✓			
<i>imy-r3 šnwty n mntw m iwny</i>	✓	✓	✓	

Table 2. Titles attributed to Ray, overseer of the treasury, in the two stamps and titles attributed to Ray on the two statues, whose identification with the preceding Ray is uncertain.

the same person is greater than the possibility of identifying them as being one and the same.

An initial question about the analysis of the titles belonging to Ray in the impressions—excluding, therefore, the two statues—is the order in which these titles should be arranged in this official’s *cursus honorum*. Following the title of scribe, a title of state-level importance, *imy-r3 pr-hd* (overseer of the treasury), followed by another title specific to a city, *iwny*, appears, and finally, two unspecified titles that refer to responsibilities over domains of lesser significance (Table 2). The order of presentation thus seems to be from greater to lesser importance. In the prosopographical analysis published by G. Dibley and B. Lipkin on more than six hundred impressions, the positions of scribe, overseer of the double granary, and overseer of the treasury are explicitly noted as being the most common ones.²⁹ This could infer that Ray must have reached this level in the administrative hierarchy to be eligible for a tomb in Waset. The cone found in TT 209 would have been created during this phase of Ray’s career.

3 | Location of the Tomb of Ray

The author of this article considers that, at present, no single location can be definitively attributed to this individual’s tomb. Vincent Chollier has linked the impressions attributed to Ray to the owner of TT 234 in Dra Abu el-Naga, as well as to the statuette housed at the Norwich Castle Museum.³⁰ However, Friederike Kampp—referenced by this author—does not attribute any titles to the owner of the tomb, while Porter and Moss mention only the title of Major, without transliterating it.³¹ To arrive at this identification, it has to be assumed that Chollier attributed the title *h3ty-^c* from the statuette to the owner of the impressions, even though it does not appear on either #122 or #345. Davies and Macadam, in 1957, did not document the provenance of the brick or the funerary cones they cataloged under numbers 122 and 345, as this type of information was intended for a second volume that was never published.³² However, Zenihiro, on his website, has mentioned that in the preparatory notebook for this unpublished volume, Davies noted that

the specimens of #345 were collected in TT 106 (Paser, Sheikh Abd el-Gurna).³³ More recently, Kondo has revealed the discovery of a fragmentary cone belonging to Ray in a burial shaft which he assigns to TT 309, in the necropolis of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. This tomb did not contain inscriptions on its walls, and no other evidence bearing the name of the owner for whom it was constructed has been preserved (figs. 7 and 8).³⁴ In Vivó’s recent publication on Egyptian funerary cones, which provides a detailed list of Theban tombs that have been linked to their corresponding cones, there is also no reference to any tomb that can be attributed to this Ray.³⁵

In an attempt to find a more precise clue about the location of the tomb of Ray, the possibility that it might correspond to one described by Mond in Sheikh Abd-el-Qurna was considered.³⁶ This tomb was discovered during his 1903–1904 excavations, and he attributed it to a man called Ray, without providing a transliteration or presenting the inscriptions that formed the basis of his identification. It was in the courtyard of the tomb of Amenemhat (current TT 123),³⁷ relatively close, therefore, to two of the tombs where the previously mentioned cones were found. Kampp assigned the number TT 124

to the tomb identified by Mond as belonging to Ray and noted that it had been severely damaged by the later construction of TT 331, which would have destroyed its facade and courtyard.³⁸ However, even earlier, Rosalind Porter and Bertha Moss had recorded the script of the owner of TT 124,³⁹ whose name was probably written with an *c* (*r^cy*),⁴⁰ and whose titles do not correspond to those of the owner of the cone studied here, rendering this line of inquiry baseless.

During the research conducted on the cone from TT 209, the existence of other specimens attributed to individuals with similar titles were identified. There are 18 impressions corresponding to 15 overseers of the treasury, originating from various areas of the necropolis, making them of limited use as comparative elements. The title overseer of the double granary of Montu, also appears on #237 and #238, attributed to an individual named Amenhotep, whose tomb location is unknown, while #446 and #447,⁴¹ belonging to *iry-p^ct* Senemiah (TT 127, located in the lower part of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna), include the titulary of overseer of Montu in Armant, overseer of the treasury, and overseer of the *gs-pr*. His tomb is situated very close to TT 309, where one of the specimens belonging to Ray (*r3y*) was discovered.

29 Dibley and Lipkin 2009: 9–11.

30 Chollier 2023: cap. 2, §39.

31 Kampp 1996: 512–513; PM I, 1: 329.

32 Davies and Macadam 1957 #122, #345; Dibley and Lipkin 2009: 62, 118; Zenihiro 2009: 85, 149.

33 For TT 106, see PM I, 1: 221–224; Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. <https://sites.google.com/view/funerarycones/catalogue/345>. Apparently, two cones: C 56175 and 58289. Accessed November 2023.

34 Kondo 1987: 74 (the tomb is called: W-2, Waseda 2, to the east of the forecourt of TT 128 and TT 129); Kondo and Ishibashi 2003, in Japanese (the tomb is identified as TT 309), reference taken from: Zenihiro, *The World of Funerary Cones*. <https://sites.google.com/view/funerarycones/catalogue/345>. Accessed November 2023. For TT 309, see: PM I, 1: 386.

35 Vivó 2022: 375–410.

36 Mond 1905: 71–72.

37 PM I, 1: 123–124.

38 Kampp 1996: 414–415.

39 PM I, 1: 237. See also: Piccione and Levine, OLGIS-TN - Online Geographical Information System for the Theban Necropolis: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=cff7333a8b61461eb9d438d91c93ff61>. Accessed November 2023. These authors confirm the information provided by the first reference.

40 This is how it is written in Kampp 1996: 414.

41 Davies and Macadam 1957: #122, #345; Dibley and Lipkin 2009: 91, 143; Zenihiro 2009: 119, 180, 181.

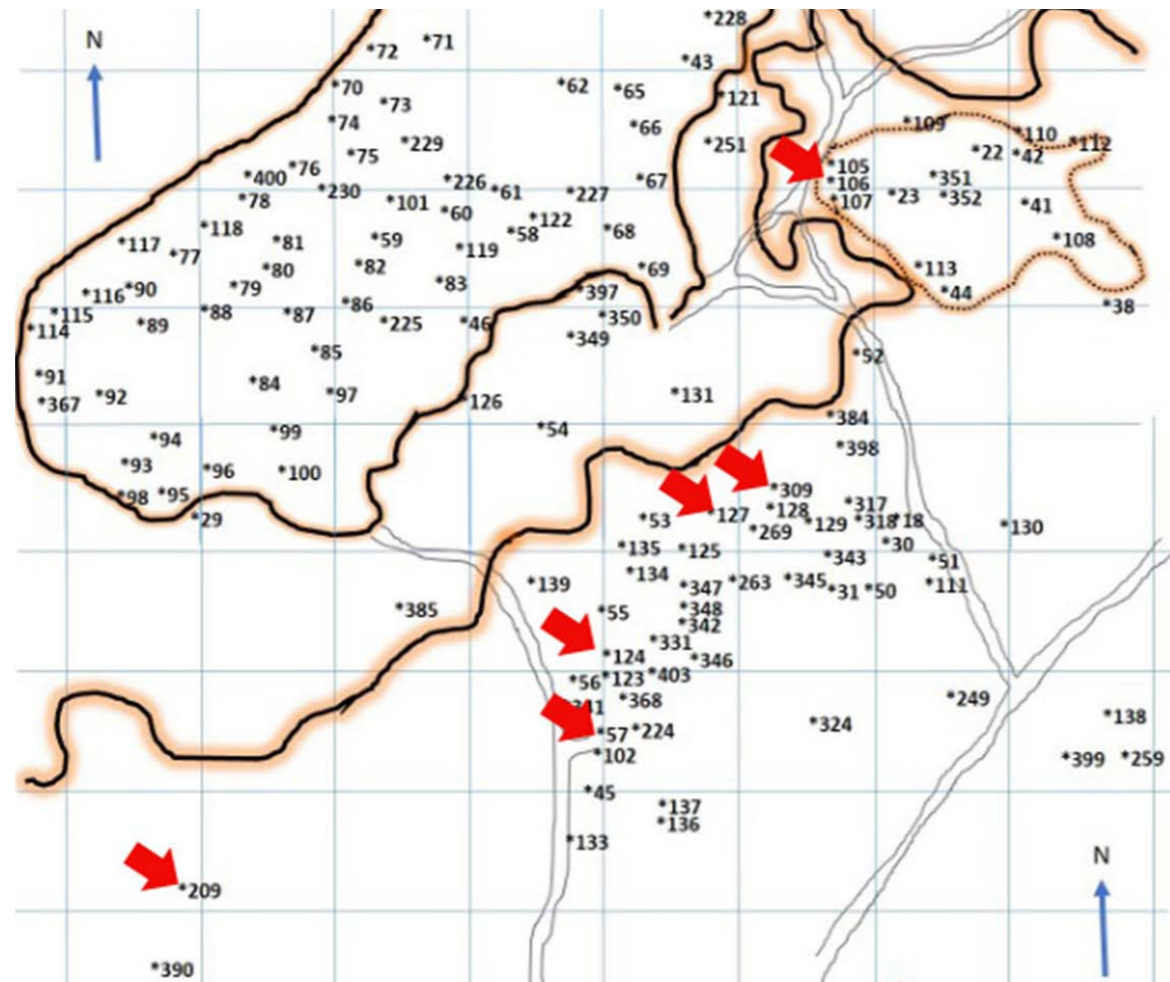


Figure 7. Plan of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna with the location of tombs TT 209, TT 106 and TT 309, finding places of cones of Ray (*rꜥy*); TT 124, tomb of Ray (*rꜥy*); and TT 127, tomb of Senemiah, TT 57 tomb of Amenhotep, individuals with identical titles to those of Ray (*rꜥy*). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SheikhAbdQurna_plan.jpg.

Conclusions

The recent discovery of funerary cone TT 209_645_1 on the upper terrace of TT 209 in South Asasif has provided an opportunity to assess the available documentation on Ray, a high-ranking official in Iwny and, judging by his titles, in other centers as well. Identified by the inscriptions on this artifact as a scribe, overseer of the treasury, and overseer of the double granary of Montu, this find has enabled the publication of the pres-

ent study. The aim of this work was to clarify the chronology of the cone, explore whether the discovery contributed to identifying the original location of the tomb of Ray, and determine whether it bore any relationship to TT 209. The identification of another impression from the same individual on a different medium enabled a comparison of the orthography of the signs used in both impressions to be made, and it also facilitated a hypothetical reconstruction of the *cursus honorum*—the administrative career—of the owner.



Figure 8. Necropolis of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. Location of tombs TT 209, TT 57, TT 124, TT 127, TT 309, and TT 106. Photograph: José M. Barrios Mufrege. References added by author.

The comparison of the formal characteristics of TT 209_645_1 with the chronological criteria established by Zenihiro has enabled an approximate dating to be made. The combination of the oval shape, the arrangement of the hieroglyphs, and the absence of dividing lines suggests that it could have been produced in the early stages of funerary cone usage in the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The existence of two impressions of Ray on different mediums (cone and brick), with varying lengths and sequences of titles, suggests the possibility of different contexts of use at the tomb. This observation could contribute to a better understanding of the ornamental function of these objects.

The prosopography of Ray, developed through the comparison of the titles recorded

in the impressions, indicates a notable administrative career. The identification of two statues attributed to an individual with the same name has raised questions about the possibility that they belonged to the same person. However, discrepancies in the titles and the dating of the statues make it impossible for both to have belonged to the same individual. Similar doubts arise when comparing the statues with the impressions.

The identification of the tomb belonging to Ray remains unresolved. If TT 234 in Dra Abu el-Naga is excluded, as previously proved, the dispersion of funerary cones bearing the name of Ray (*rꜥy*) enables a hypothesis regarding its location to be made. The four specimens were found within a specific area of the necropolis, as TT 106, TT 209, and TT 309 are all situ-

ated in the lower part of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna. This suggests that his tomb could have been located on the hill itself, from which the cones might have fallen, or more specifically, at its base. This comes as no surprise, as Zenihiro noted that Sheikh Abd el-Gurna houses most of the tombs corresponding to Phase I of the Eighteenth Dynasty cones. Similarly, Vivó observed that this hill is the site where cones have most frequently appeared. Furthermore, the only tomb belonging to an individual with titles similar to those found on the impressions of Ray (overseer of the double granary of Montu in Iwny and overseer of the *gs-pr*) is adjacent to TT 309. Iwny is located only 12 km from Waset/Thebes, making the fact that high-ranking officials from this city to be buried in its necropolis a reasonable assumption. It is tempting to think that this area might hold some connection to individuals holding these titles, although the evidence, at least for now, remains very tenuous.

The stratigraphic context of the discovery of cone TT 209_645_1, its fragmentary condition, and the hypothesis regarding the location of the tomb to which it belonged all demonstrate that its presence in TT 209 is unrelated to the construction or use of this tomb. Instead, this cone serves as yet another example of the dispersion of funerary cones from their original locations.

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