



**The last New Kingdom tomb at Thebes:
The end of a great tradition?**

Tamás A Bács

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Theban Tomb 65 is considered here as the last New Kingdom tomb at Thebes in the same manner as the tomb of Ramesses IX is the last completed royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings (Abitz 1992, 184). Indeed, later tombs are known in both the royal wadi and elsewhere in the Theban necropoleis, but these were never completed (in the case of the royal ones), or are private tombs later in date but only in a strict chronological sense. I will clarify the latter point below. This paper will elucidate how TT 65 represents the end of the great tradition of the New Kingdom elite tomb complexes.

The perception of the early reign of Ramesses IX,¹ when TT 65 was decorated, and late Dynasty 20 in general, is still dominated by the theory that Egypt stagnated under the descendants of Ramesses III, due to titanic bureaucracy and, above all, priesthoods. Content in a perfumed listlessness, the late Ramesside world atrophied as it trod the path to socio-political and economic collapse. All excerpts from the Third Book of Manetho emphasise that this period, the last dynasty of the New Kingdom, consisted of twelve Theban kings who reigned for 135 (or 178) years.² Most modern evaluations, however, diverge little from the view of Diodorus, who wrote that after the death of Ramesses III

kings succeeded to the throne for seven generations who were confirmed sluggards and devoted only to indulgence and luxury. Consequently in the priestly record neither costly building of theirs nor any deed worthy of historical record is handed down in connection with them (Diodorus I, 63.1).

This opinion is echoed in modern literature, when late Ramesside Egypt is lamented as a time when

it was Egypt's misfortune to have the throne occupied by a succession of seven pious nonentities (Hayes 1959, 374).

Admittedly, our sources for the period are either fragmentary or present very specific perspectives, and are rarely used effectively. The present paper seeks to understand the character of one set of these sources, as embodied by an elite monument of the period.

The passing of an era, however definitive it may appear to contemporaries or later observers, seldom occurs without the beginnings of its successor era being already apparent. In this respect, it may be interesting to note that Manetho himself chose to end his Book II

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¹ A completion date in Year 9 of Ramesses IX is based on a graffito of the chief draughtsman Amenhotep in the tomb of Ramesses VI, see Spiegelberg 1921, 92–93; *KRI* VI, 658, A.24; Keller 1984, 124 with nn. 65–68; also Bács 1995.

² The figure of 135 years is that of Africanus, while Eusebius gives 178 years for the same period, see Waddell 1948, 152–55; see also Černý 1965, 3–4.

with Dynasty 19 and, significantly, commence Book III with Dynasty 20 (Waddell 1948, 152–55). In terms of foreign relations, Egypt of Dynasty 20 is traditionally seen, within a context of decline and collapse, to have been affected by three major historical developments. Firstly, the loss of imperial holdings in the Levant occurred during the middle years of Dynasty 20,³ despite the efforts of Ramesses III. This pharaoh is frequently cast as the last great Pharaoh of the New Kingdom, in a ‘heroic’ role within the historiography of the era. The second development, occurring later under the last ruler of the dynasty Ramesses XI, was the secession of the Nubian territories under the Egyptian Viceroy Panehsy, more usually interpreted, however, as a withdrawal on Egypt’s part.⁴ The third is less of an event than a long-term effect and can be defined, even if used elsewhere for the ensuing period, as the ‘Libyan dimension.’⁵ Although these developments, and to a lesser degree their results, are hardly debatable, the precise course or causal chain of events is impossible to reconstruct, but only a hypothetical picture of their materialisation.

In a society where large-scale public building activity was a royal monopoly, the construction activity of any monarch is a primary indication of his control over available resources, and his ability to mobilise them. That this method of evaluation was also applied by ancient societies is a common assumption, as is the observation that, as architecture was an important vehicle for display, it falls into the category of competitive consumption. For any kind of accuracy in this field, however, the available data should provide an accurate cross-section of architectural activity. Considering the 18-year long reign of Ramesses IX, for example, the evidence for his building activity is usually considered far from impressive. It should be remembered, however, that this value judgement, which typically uses Amenhotep III or Ramesses II as a yardstick, stems from a comparison that may ultimately be unfair. Significantly, lacking adequate knowledge of the precise historical circumstances prevailing in Ramesses IX’s reign, it cannot simply be stated that the surviving material attests to underachievement; the opposite may in fact be true. The following section reviews the sacred landscape of the Theban West Bank under the last Ramesside kings, providing context for the construction and decoration of TT 65.

³ It is generally assumed, as for Nubia later, that some form of Egyptian withdrawal from Canaan took place during or shortly after the reign of Ramesses VI, at the very latest. This dateline, however, is more conventional than real, since it is primarily based on a very small number of archaeological and epigraphic evidence, see e.g., Weinstein 1981; Weinstein 1992; Zuhdi 2001/2002; Morris 2005, 691–773.

⁴ See Török 1997, 101–7.

⁵ Although the definition was created to describe the specific socio-political and cultural features of the Third Intermediate Period, it nevertheless applies, if not in all respects, to the period under discussion as well (see Leahy 1985, 51). As the available evidence from the late Ramesside period indicates, the situation during the reign of Ramesses IX, for example, was more critical and complex than previously thought. This evidence should be considered now as showing the Libyans in a double role, namely both as migratory nomads and as significant elements of the Egyptian military establishment settled within Egypt, see Jansen-Winkel 1994.

The sacred landscape of the West Bank under the last Ramesside kings

The royal memorial temples

What little is known of the memorial temples or ‘Mansions of Million Years’ of the kings following Ramesses III is consistent with the general pattern of evidence for their respective reigns. For some rulers there exists an extremely limited set of archaeological remains relating to temples, together with some brief textual references; for others no evidence survives.

Ramesses IV embarked on grandiose projects at the beginning of his reign, perhaps motivated by the assassination of his father.⁶ The ambitious plan was not restricted to a memorial temple, but rather the wider reshaping of the cult topography of the Western Bank. The slim archaeological evidence suggests that a mortuary complex, consisting of two structures, was laid out in the Assasif, a site undoubtedly chosen to front Deir el-Bahari as well as to serve as a northern counterpoint to Medinet Habu.⁷ Several motives must have prompted Ramesses IV to select this arrangement, the most important being the integration of his funerary cult with the ‘Festival of the Valley,’ by redirecting the processional route through his own temple. A second consideration was more prosaic: the proximity of the site to other structures, which could thus be used as open quarries. These temples, the larger intended as a grander version of Medinet Habu, were not completed during the king’s lifetime. Eventually, a more humble chapel near Medinet Habu came to serve his mortuary cult (Fig. 1).⁸

The Assasif temple was probably continued by Ramesses V,⁹ and is identical to his memorial temple referred to in P. Wilbour (Helck 1961, 114). Subsequently, parallel to his appropriation of the royal tomb, Ramesses VI took over the memorial temple of Ramesses V. It is not clear, however, whether construction was ever completed, as the temple was systematically quarried away in later periods.¹⁰ Further emphasising the ‘Festival of the Valley’ at this period, it provided the setting for the installation ceremonies of the God’s Wife and Divine Adoratrice Isis, sometime early in her father’s (Ramesses VI) reign. Although the exact date of her investiture remains unknown, it is likely to have taken place in 2 *šmw* of either year 2 or 3,¹¹ attended in person by the king, the queen-mother Iset-Tahemdjeret, and the vizier Nehy.¹²

⁶ In general, Peden 1994a, 78–81; for the involvement of the High Priest of Amun, Ramessesnakht, in the construction of the temple, see Polz 1998, 279–81.

⁷ This is supported by the numerous reused blocks found on the site, see Keller 1994, 148–50; Peden 1994a, 48–51; Bietak 1972, 19; Ullmann 2002, 524–26; Budka 2008.

⁸ For the funerary chapel near Medinet Habu, see Robichon and Varille 1938.

⁹ As indicated by decorated blocks with his name found at the site (Peden 1994a, 50).

¹⁰ Ramesses VI’s mortuary temple, identical to the Assasif temple, is referred to in the biographical inscription of the High Priest Amenhotep, Wentz 1966, 78–79; Helck 1961, 115. A further reference might be in P. Louvre AF 6345, probably dating to the reign of either Ramesses IX or more likely to that of Ramesses XI: Gasse 1988, 17, 34 n. 57, 44 n. 125.

¹¹ Year 1 is a possibility, but since Neferrenpet was still the vizier, implying a change of viziers in the months between the accession of Ramesses VI (1 *prt* 28 to 2 *prt* 11, probably 2 *prt* 8) and 2 *šmw* of his reign. For the accession date of Ramesses VI, see von Beckerath 1984, 7; Demarée 1993b, 52; and Janssen 1997, 137.

¹² For a proposed date of Year 2, see Amer 1985, 68; see also Kitchen 1972, 189–91; for the Deir el-Bakhit in-

No evidence survives of the mortuary establishments of Ramesses VII and VIII, although it is reasonable to assume such foundations existed. In the case of Ramesses IX, despite his length of reign, only one unreliable source for the presence of a mortuary temple in western Thebes can be cited: among the officials sitting in the ‘Great Court’ (*knbt ʿ3t* on 3 Akhet 21) of P. Abbott, the third listed is a Nesamun bearing the title ‘prophet of Amun-Re, King of the Gods’ and ‘*sem*-priest of the Mansion of Millions of Years of the King of Upper and Lower, Neferkare Setepenre, l.p.h.’ While the royal prenomen is that of Ramesses IX,¹³ the priest is probably to be equated with the well-known Second Prophet Nesamun (Fig. 2), repeatedly referred to in P. Leopold II/P. Amherst as ‘*sem*-priest of the Mansion of Usermaatre Meriamun,’ i.e., the temple of Medinet Habu.¹⁴ Accepting the P. Abbott reference as evidence for a memorial temple of Ramses IX, rather than a scribal mistake, does not explain the curious absence of other evidence from the relatively abundant Theban data known from his reign. Furthermore, there is indication of construction activity at Medinet Habu under Ramesses IX: during the excavation of the Western Fortified Gate, which remained unfinished at the death of Ramesses III, several blocks were recovered, one bearing the painted cartouches of Ramesses IX (Fig. 3).¹⁵ The block, together with several unpublished ones of late Ramesside date, testifies to an attempt by Ramesses IX to complete his grandfather’s edifice, unsurprising in view of Medinet Habu’s prominent role in the Theban religious landscape. In this context, it is interesting to note the otherwise puzzling number of ostraca found in KV 6, that depict details of triumphal scenes associated with Ramesses IX. Among these are, examples showing Syrian captives (CGC 25042), bound Nubians and Asiatics (CGC 25141), Amun presenting the king with the sickle-sword (CGC 25121; Fig. 4) or the famous reward scene of the British Museum (EA 5620).¹⁶ It is tempting, therefore, to relate these trial pieces and sketches to the decoration of the Western Fortified Gate, a memorial temple, or both, as thematically they would fit well within such an architectural contexts. No matter how modest the resources available for this project, it is inconceivable that no provision was made for the funerary cult of Ramesses IX.

Valley of the Kings

From the emerging evidence produced by recent excavation work in the Valley it transpires that a specific change occurred in the use of the royal necropolis under Ramesses IX. Besides continuing the practice of Ramesses III, by providing a tomb (KV 19) for his heir apparent Prince Montuhirkhopshef (II), Ramesses IX went one step further and also supplied burial places in the Valley for his mother Takhat and his queen Baketwerel. Moreover, if

scription the origin of which is still obscure, see Seele’s redrawing of the blocks after Lepsius, in Seele 1960, 193 fig. 11; also *KRI* VI, 321–22, with translations in Sander-Hansen 1940, 29 and Černý 1958, 32.

¹³ P. BM EA 10221, rt. 7, 3–4; *KRI* VI, 480, 2–3; Peet 1930, pl. 4.

¹⁴ Thus amending the simple prophet title in P. Abbott to ‘Second Prophet,’ Peet 1930, 45 n. 24; also accepted in Helck 1961, 115; Peden 1994b, 241. For the P. Leopold II - Amherst references, see *KRI* VI, 483, 5–6; 486, 11; 486, 13; 488, 10–11; 489, 9–10.

¹⁵ For the building history of the Western Fortified Gate, Hölscher 1951, 8–11; for the Ramesses IX block, pl. 26D.

¹⁶ See Daressy 1901, pls. 9, 27–28, 32; for the latter, see James 1985, 43 fig. 46; also Peck and Ross 1978, no. 44.

our understanding of the king's filiation is correct, he might also be credited with moving his father, Prince Montuirkhopshef (I), from an unknown original resting place to KV 13.¹⁷ Ramesses IX transformed the Valley into a family necropolis,¹⁸ though the underlying motivation escapes explanation. One possibility is that the security situation on the West Bank prompted this decision, but at present there is no evidence to elucidate the dating of these burials. Without knowing when the burials took place, whether relative to each other or within the reign, a direct correlation with events such as the tomb-robberies cannot be established. An alternative explanation, also difficult to substantiate, is that Ramesses IX consciously chose to refashion the Valley in a way resembling the practices of early Dynasty 18. In this case, he was again using Thutmose III as his model.¹⁹

Either way, the manner in which Ramesses IX provided for the burial places of his family is reflective of several developments pertinent to our discussion. Firstly, neither of the tombs (except his own) was newly cut; instead, earlier tombs in different states of preservation were chosen, although all of them were of the corridor type and not earlier pit tombs. The resemblance of older tombs to those of queenly and princely tombs of Dynasty 20 may have dictated their selection.²⁰ Thus, he chose for his (supposed) father Prince Montuirkhopshef (I) the tomb of Bay already reused once under Ramesses VI; the two queens were placed in the tomb of Amenmesses (KV 10), and his son Montuirkhopshef (II) was buried in the barely started tomb of Ramesses VIII/Sethirkhopshef.²¹ Secondly, although the tombs themselves were re-appropriated and their architecture left mainly unaltered, they were nevertheless furnished with new decoration, a procedure also found in contemporary non-royal burial custom.²²

Non-royal elite tombs

One of the topoi related to late Ramesside mortuary architecture is that very few new tombs were created; re-use or usurpation of older structures is envisaged as the norm. This, however, may be more of a modern misconception than ancient reality, a misunderstanding

¹⁷ The sarcophagus of Montuirkhopshef, a princely type analogous to that of Prince Khaemwaset from QV 44, was deposited with other items of his burial assemblage in the corridor (H) before Amunirkhopshef's burial chamber (Altenmüller 1994). Therefore, the reburial could not have happened before the reign of Ramesses VI, though the motivation for that king moving his brother to the Valley is hard to envisage. More recently, however, Altenmüller has argued for regarding this Montuirkhopshef as a prematurely deceased son of Ramesses VI, rather than the son of Ramesses III (Leblanc 2001–2002, 212 n. 54; Altenmüller 2009).

¹⁸ This possibility was also raised by Dodson (1987, 226).

¹⁹ On Thutmose III's rearrangement of the Valley of the Kings, see Romer 1981, 253; on the early Dynasty 18 tombs in the Valley, also Dorman 1995. Due to their layout KV 12, 27 and 30 are usually treated as family tombs broadly datable to Dynasty 18, see Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 109.

²⁰ Their ground plans, designated as type III, are conveniently assembled in Leblanc 1989, 244 fig. 6.

²¹ For KV 10, see Dodson 1985; Dodson 1987; also now Schaden and Ertman 1998, 137–51. For the intended owner of KV 19, see Brock 1995, 65 n. 13; also referred to in Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 170; for the tomb otherwise, Ayrton 1908; *PM* II, I, 546; Thomas 1966, 151–52; Reeves 1984, 233–34; Reeves 1990, 134–35. The titles of the prince occurring in the tomb are in *KRI* VI, 463–65.

²² The most notable example of course is TT 65, but several less precisely datable tombs such as TT 68 also display this late Dynasty 20 phenomenon. For the latter tomb, see Seyfried 1991.

stemming mostly from our inadequate perception of the tombs of this era. Despite the intensive archaeological exploration of the Theban necropolis in general, the non-royal mortuary landscape of the late Ramesside period is still poorly understood, partly because scholarly preferences have tended to filter out the monuments or features of the period. It is overlooked how late Ramesside architects sought to ‘overwrite’ the landscape of the West Bank. Of course, the past, and to a certain extent ongoing, priorities of scholarship in this area has been somewhat dictated by the state of preservation of the majority of the tombs and, more importantly, the lack of secure dates for many monuments.

In numerical terms, approximately sixty tombs can be attributed to Dynasty 20, on account of royal names present in their decoration, or on stylistic grounds.²³ Further tombs will undoubtedly be added to this corpus: those yet undiscovered but also others currently merely designated as ‘Ramesside.’

The distribution pattern of the loosely datable tombs shows that their scatter extends across the entire area of the elite necropolis (Fig. 5), with a preference for the site of Dra Abu el-Naga. In interpreting these patterns, one obvious but often forgotten aspect should be noted: notwithstanding the royal cemeteries, the West Bank necropolis in Dynasty 20 is the necropolis of the city of Thebes. It was no longer a court cemetery, the end result of a process of change that started immediately after the Amarna period. In social terms, this means that the elite, and other groups shaping its mortuary landscape, belonged to a single community centred around Karnak temple and the wide-ranging estate of Amun (Fig. 6). Significantly, amongst the sixty identifiable tomb-owners only the mayor of Thebes under Ramesses III, Paser (I), belonged to the civil administration. All other tomb owners were members of the priesthoods of various Theban cults, or officials attached to different branches of the bureaucratic or economic infrastructure of these cults.²⁴ Although we must be wary of treating all the tomb-owners as a single class or overemphasising their homogeneity, it signals that, at least at the level of elite behaviour and decision-making, an increased social and cultural integration might be expected. Different strategies of self-presentation no doubt existed and may have been articulated, but only within constraints defined by the social standing and financial means of the individual or family.

On a more detailed level, choice of tomb site depended on a variety of factors, as effectively exemplified by Dra Abu el-Naga. Besides its close proximity to the contemporary royal memorial temple (under construction) and the route of the Festival of the Valley, it was also an ancient royal cemetery. More importantly, however, it was the traditional burial ground of the high priests of Amun from early Dynasty 19 onwards, but also with tombs of such predecessors as the second New Kingdom High Priest of Amun, Minmonthu (TT 232; Polz 2009, 337–38; also Kampp 1996, 507–12) or the post-Amarna high priest Parennefer/Wennefer (TT -162-; Kampp 1996, 713–16; also Kampp and Seyfried 1995). The former tomb complex is important here in the way that it provides a telling example of how the late Ramessides related to such earlier structures (Fig. 7). Whether its new owner, Tjerwas,

²³ See the list compiled in Kampp 1996, 146–48; for the purpose of stylistic analysis a smaller dataset of tombs are available, Hoffman 2004, 49–50. For the dating and brief description of TT -59- and TT -61-, see now Bács et al. 2009, 71–72.

²⁴ On Paser (I), see Helck 1958, 529 no. 14; for the remains of his tomb chapel found reused at Medinet Habu, Schott 1957.

a treasury scribe of Amun, knew that he was appropriating the tomb of an erstwhile high priest is doubtful. Even if he did recognise this fact, it has left no visible trace. Instead, a complete architectural refashioning is undertaken, transforming a *saff*-tomb into a Dynasty 19 tomb type, in particular into a tomb-complex closely imitating the high priest Nebwenenef's tomb (TT 157), of early Dynasty 19.²⁵ Although a further understanding of the individual motivation behind this particular choice goes beyond our sources, the conscious stress laid on continuity with the Ramesside and local past is unmistakable.

Continuity with the past and emphasis of locality were also defined and bounded by strong familial interests and ancestry, as shown by one of the last tombs to be constructed at Dra Abu el-Naga, that of the Third Prophet of Amun, Paser (TT 303).²⁶ Scion of one of the elite, if not indeed the dominant, priestly families, he was the son of Penpare, Third Prophet of Amun under Ramesses IX, and brother of Amenemope, who served as Third Prophet before him in the reigns of Ramesses III, IV and V, as well as being the owner of TT 148.²⁷ Both Penpare and Amenemope were sons of Tjanefer (I), the well-known Third Prophet; Paser chose to have his tomb cut next to that of his grandfather (TT 158). This latter tomb clearly served as a model for both TT 303 and the earlier TT 148 (Fig. 8). The lineage of Paser's tomb-type, however, does not end here, since it can be traced back further to the most illustrious ancestor's tomb, that of the High Priest Bakenkhonsu (TT 35).²⁸

Intensive archaeological work at the site of Dra Abu el-Naga has recently revealed evidence for an alternative method for dominant members of the community to maintain control and monopolise sacred places and institutions. This solution involved the anchoring of private mortuary cults to a kind of place previously inaccessible to non-royal individuals. Its most unequivocal display is found in the double burial place K93.11/12, where the high priest Ramessesnakht, followed by his son and successor Amenhotep, reshaped and 'modernised' what were most probably the tombs of Amenhotep I and his mother Queen Ahmose-Nefertari (Fig. 9).²⁹ This intrusion into the sacred spaces of two of the principal local deities of the necropolis was, for Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep, a novel and ultimate way of merging their mortuary cults within a divine temple context. It may also not be out of place to note here that in one of the tomb robbery depositions the area is referred to as 'the quarter of Nefer[tari]' (*t3-sp3t Nfr[tiry]*),³⁰ indicating that the particular identity of the place was common knowledge. It shows that Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep were not only altering the semantics of private tomb-complexes but also reconfiguring sacred space. Incidentally this may also account, in part, for the scale of the purposeful destruction of their architectural modifications, supposedly at the hands of the viceroy Panehsy's troops.³¹ As a phenomenon,

²⁵ For TT 157, see PM² I, 1, 266–68; Kampp 1996, 445–47 and fig. 341; Kákósy et al. 2004, 9 n. 13.

²⁶ PM² I, 1, 381–83; Kampp 1996, 570, 571 fig. 465.

²⁷ For the genealogy of the family, see Bierbrier 1975, 6, chart II. On TT 148, see Ockinga 1993; Ockinga 1996; Ockinga 2007, 142–46.

²⁸ Kákósy et al. 2004, 9–10 with n. 12; for the plan, see Kampp 1996, 226 fig. 127.

²⁹ Polz 1998, 291; Rummel 2009.

³⁰ P. BM EA 10054 rt. 1, 8; Peet 1930, 61 and n. 9, pl. 6. That the northern slope of el-Khokhah was also understood as lying within the area may be indicated by a textual reference in TT 373 that places the tomb here also into the 'district of Ahmose-Nefertari,' see Seyfried 1990, 50 text 22.

³¹ As proposed in Rummel 2009, 352.

however, it should be understood as a precursor to the widespread use of temples and temple precincts as cemeteries from Dynasty 21 onwards.³² Imiseba's own tomb-complex of TT 65 attempted to achieve this same goal in a different manner, as outlined below.

Tomb construction in the proximity of a royal memorial temple is known in earlier periods, and explains the clustering of tombs on the southernmost hill of Qurnet Murei necropolis. It is clear that for contemporaries of any king, the royal memorial temple served as a 'nucleus' for commemorative activity, and their tombs represent a form of semi-court cemetery. This could be further nuanced by professional association as the two Qurnet Murei burials of Heqamaatenakht (TT 222)³³ and Userhat (TT 235),³⁴ both high priests of Monthu from early Dynasty 20, illustrate. These two burials also indicate that loyalty to a ruler could overwrite professional association, when and if ties of ancestry did not exist, since the burial ground of the Dynasty 19 high priests of Monthu seems to have been in the Assasif. For later tomb-owners, like Amenemone, a god's father of the memorial temple of Amenophis III (TT 277)³⁵ or Khaemopet, another god's father and lector-priest in the temple of Sokar (TT 272),³⁶ the memorial temple represented their erstwhile place of employment, in this case the still operational parts of the temple of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Heitan. Although numerous additional examples could be cited, the question of reuse alluded to above requires further consideration. When evaluating the practice of reusing earlier tombs by late Ramesside individuals, one practical circumstance must be emphasised before others: the lack of adequate space for tomb construction within the necropolis. As a problem, this already surfaced as early as the reign of Amenhotep III, and was further exacerbated in Dynasty 19, giving rise to solutions still employed in Dynasty 20. One of the most widespread methods was to cut new tombs into the side walls of existing sunken courts of earlier tomb-complexes, in the flatter parts of the necropolis.³⁷ In cases where an earlier tomb was situated on steeper terrain, its façade could be exploited in this manner, as shown for example by TT 377 on Dra Abu el-Naga, where the new tomb also availed of part of the transverse hall (Fig. 10).³⁸ Besides the ingenuity observable in how the most difficult of circumstances and conditions were negotiated by late Ramesside architects, one conclusion seems inescapable: no matter the topographical or architectural situation, these architects wished to create new tomb-complexes corresponding in layout and decorative programme to the Ramesside concept of a private tomb. First appearing in the aftermath of the Amarna period, this tomb-type imitated the architecture of contemporary divine (and royal memorial)

³² For the phenomenon in general, see Stadelmann 1971; for a review of its development, Lull 2002; the textual evidence relating to its conceptual origins in Dynasty 18 is discussed in Bommas 2005.

³³ PM² I, 1, 323–24; Kampp 1996, 496–98, fig. 389.

³⁴ For TT 235, Fakhry 1934; PM² I, 1, 329; Kampp 1996, 514–15, fig. 408.

³⁵ For TT 277, PM² I, 1, 353–55; Kampp 1996, 548–50, fig. 444; Hofmann 2004, 50–54.

³⁶ For TT 272, Gautier 1920; Foucart 1928–1935; Vandier d'Abbadie 1954, 1–39, pls. 1–22; PM² I, 1, 350; Kampp 1996, 545, fig. 441.

³⁷ For example, TT 134 and 135 are both cut into the southern court wall of the earlier TT 53 (Amenemhat). For the former Chermette 2000, Chermette 2002; for the latter, see Doulat 2002.

³⁸ This was apparently achieved by walling off the northern aisle of the transverse hall of TT -NN-197- with a mud brick wall and cutting a new entrance through the façade accordingly, see PM² I, 1, 434; Kampp 1996, 598–99, fig. 494.

temples, with the Theban variant basically adopting the form of a hemispeos temple.³⁹ As illustrated aptly by the tomb of Khonsumose (TT 30, Fig. 11), the transfiguration of older architectural spaces, in this case an unfinished tomb from the reign of Amenhotep III, was achieved by a combination of cutting new features and adding elements built from mud brick.⁴⁰ Abandoned, unfinished or dilapidated older tombs were therefore seen mostly as neutral spaces to be used and to be given new meaning in the architectural and decorative idiom of the day. Due to the frailty of mud brick architecture, and obscured by the later history of these tombs, this aspect of late Ramesside tombs is typically overlooked. The scale of work and amount of labour involved in TT 30 and other enterprises underline that it is vital not to confuse reuse with impoverishment. It is important to note that earlier burial apartments, usually in shafts located in forecourts, were not disturbed unless absolutely necessary. Instead, so-called 'sloping passages' with burial chambers at their ends were cut, or if circumstances did not permit such an approach, new shafts were sunk from separate side-chambers within tomb-chapels (Fig. 12).⁴¹

The same applies to tomb decoration (Polz 1990), with a few exceptions, mainly dating to Dynasty 19, where the original (mostly Dynasty 18) decoration was left intact and only supplemented by new elements and scenes (Polz 1990). With an overwhelming preference for painted rather than relief decoration, Dynasty 20 tombs generally remained, both in form and content, within the parameters of the fairly standardised decorative scheme created simultaneously with the new architectural form that is the 'temple-tomb.' The textual and pictorial programme of Ramesside tombs, the subject of welcome attention in recent years, both in regards of overall meaning and in many of its details, here provides context for the tomb of Imiseba (TT 65).

The tomb-complex of Imiseba

If, as mentioned above, the mortuary complexes (K93.11/12) of the high priests Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep transcended the Ramesside temple-tomb in their use of space, and therefore form a link to subsequent burials in actual temple precincts, then the mortuary establishment of Imiseba represents an alternative approach, apparently unique. As is now widely recognised, the Ramesside temple-tomb created a temple for its deceased owner(s), where he could directly worship and offer to the gods. That it could also be conceived as a virtual temple of Osiris is well illustrated by several instances, where statues, half-statues or painted figures of the Osirian triad or Osiris alone (Fig. 13) were

³⁹ See in general Assmann 2003; Bács in Kákósy et al. 2004; and Kampp-Seyfried 2003.

⁴⁰ PM² I, 1, 46–47; Kampp 1996, 215–19, figs. 116–21; Collins 1976, pl. 7.

⁴¹ E.g., TT 58 or TT 174, Kampp 1996, 271 fig. 158 (TT 58), 462 fig. 357 (TT 174). Kampp, while citing further examples takes a more cautious position and reserves judgement on assigning these to Dynasty 20, Kampp 1996, 272 n. 1. Other tombs displaying this feature include TT 150 (Kampp 1996, 439 fig. 334), TT -45- (Kampp 1996, 646 fig. 541). Probably TT -154- (Kampp 1996, 705 fig. 622) and TT -159- (Kampp 1996, 711, fig. 635) should be differentiated from these tombs, since their chambers open from the end of the axial corridor and may belong to the tomb-chapel's original plan.

placed into a niche representing a naos, cut into the western wall of chapels.⁴² Even in the most elaborate Ramesside temple-tombs, a clear distinction from divine temples still existed, perhaps reflecting a desire on the part of the two high priests and Imiseba not to impinge upon royal prerogatives. As an illustration of this point, and pending further results from the work in K93.11/12, brief reference should be made here to the well-known, though widely misunderstood, work of Amenhotep within Karnak temple. Between the Eastern Postern Gate and Thutmose III's peripteral shrine, on the exterior of the 8th pylon's court wall, Amenhotep executed a tripartite composition including his famous twin reward scenes dating to year 10 of of Ramesses IX (Fig. 14).⁴³ The focal point of this composition is recognisably a double false door cut deep into the wall surface, today missing its upper trellised supraporte. The two door-leaves separated by a column or standard bear the formal figures of the pontiff, with a conventional niched pattern decorating the base. The widely held assumption about these scenes is that they were not intended for wide public consumption, but were located within the high priest's residence.⁴⁴ How this area would have been incorporated into such a building or building complex, however, remains entirely conjectural. On the other hand, the locational and decorative context of the tripartite composition clearly defines it as a cult site and a border between spaces with different accessibility.⁴⁵ Indeed, the textual and pictorial evidence actually suggests that Amenhotep designed and built a structure, now lost, devoted to the cult of the king, Ramesses IX, and housing his cult statue.⁴⁶ It is not by accident that his equally famous autobiographical inscription, and further scenes, were later engraved on the refashioned peripteral shrine of Thutmose III.

The combination of false door, reward scene, and biographical inscription are cult features which typically appear in a private mortuary context. As relief fragments unearthed at K93.12 show, the reward scene was also duplicated in the decoration programme of Amenhotep's edifice at Dra Abu el-Naga,⁴⁷ further underlining the common conceptual background behind the two monuments. In this way, Amenhotep successfully provided for and integrated his own cult into an existing one of the highest esteem at Karnak.

Lacking access to such genuine sacred spaces, Imiseba followed the model provided by the royal memorial temple and tomb. It is this background that sets the decoration and architecture of TT 65 apart from other tomb-complexes of the period (Fig. 15). In appropriating a 350-year old edifice, unfinished in terms of architecture and decoration, and presumably abandoned by late Dynasty 20, Imiseba was merely following contemporary practice.⁴⁸ In the same vein, he proceeded to include a vaulted axial corridor and 'sloping passage,' though the latter was never completed in its planned form (Fig. 16). The resulting interior layout conformed to

⁴² Bács in Kákósy et al. 2004. As a variant in one instance, the owner T'jaunany was inserted into the Osirian triad in place of Horus in TT 134's niche, see Chermette 2000, 185, pl. 39B; Chermette 2002, 28, 3b.

⁴³ See Lefèvre 1929, 63–64; Helck 1956, 163–78; *KRI* VI, 455–58; for a more recent translation of the texts, Froot 2007, 68–77.

⁴⁴ See Lefèvre 1929, 187; Wentz 1966, 86–87; cited also in Niwinski 1995, 332 with n. 16.

⁴⁵ On the well known such a function of false doors, see Arnold 1994, 227; Ullmann 1998.

⁴⁶ See also Loeben 1999, 190–201; for the association of this type of false doors with royal statue cults, see Ullmann 1998.

⁴⁷ Rummel 2009, 351, 359 fig. 7, 360 fig. 8; on reward scenes now in general, see Binder 2008.

⁴⁸ For the history of the tomb, see Bács 1998.

the normative plan of a Ramesside temple-tomb, but the decorative programme overwrote the conventional function of its parts through many intentional details. The monumental transverse hall with its polygonal columns was designed to evoke a royal-style memorial temple, while integrating and articulating the mortuary and funerary cult of Imiseba. The recess, a vestige of the intended Dynasty 18 axial corridor that was abandoned in an early stage of cutting, took on the chapel function, providing the indispensable venue for the statue and offering cult. The newly cut axial corridor, then, no longer retaining its original function of connecting the transverse hall with the chapel proper, was reinterpreted as a spatial unit belonging to the tomb's substructure. Intriguingly, however, the decorative content of the axial corridor, together with the short passage, accommodates two different concepts, namely that of a contemporary royal tomb, on the one hand, and that of a Deir el-Medina-style burial chamber, on the other. The latter is all the more unexpected, as the actual burial chamber would have been located at the end of the 'sloping passage.'

The desire to create a royal memorial temple in the transverse hall was achieved by the transposition of royal temple scenes to a non-royal context.⁴⁹ Perceiving this as an attempt by Imiseba to create a royal monument for himself would be a misunderstanding of his intentions. Rather, what emerges is that his aim was to create a royal memorial temple context for the purpose of integrating his own mortuary cult within it. Conceptually, therefore, he was doing the same as Amenhotep at Dra Abu el-Naga and Karnak, but here Imiseba had to create a sacred space rather than use one already extant.

The highly delicate matter of employing the visual idiom of royal monuments, and indeed for the decoration to be genuinely effective, required that Imiseba was portrayed in a manner consistent with his actual socio-cultural position (Fig. 17). Major scenes, therefore, that depict the festivals of Opet, the Valley and the New Year all show him as a relatively minor figure, in a peripheral position relative to the king or the high priests. Moreover, in the scene on the Southern End Wall, where pharaoh offers to the bark of Amun resting in a shrine here during the Festival of the Valley, Imiseba does not even appear, thus adhering to the decorum dictated by the particular ritual context. Any further doubts about the intention of Imiseba, however, are dispelled by a ceiling inscription containing an offering-formula to which an 'Appeal to the Living' text was appended (Fig. 18). In this Imiseba turns to an informed audience:

He says: O, scribes, lector-priests, those of knowledgeable speech, (and) wise (ones) in every respect, who shall enter this temple of Amun-Re, your (sic) King of Gods

In terms of design, visually conveying the sense of a temple wall and lending it the sensation of monumentality was achieved by iconography, but also by breaking with the prevailing form of decoration, the 'film-reel style' (*Bildstreifenstil*).⁵⁰ Accordingly, instead of partitioning the main wall areas into two or three horizontal segments, these were provided each with one single large-scale scene, the central figures of which were rendered slightly larger than life. The resulting effect of monumentality and grandeur attained by these scenes, which cover most of

⁴⁹ Bács 2001; Bács 2002.

⁵⁰ Assmann 1987, 34–36. The filmstrip style itself is supplanted earlier in Dynasty 20, as demonstrated by the decoration of TT 68 and TT 372 (Ramesses III/IV), see Seyfried 1991. See also the remarks in Hofmann 2004, 55.

the wall surfaces, meant that all other themes had to be featured in the less conspicuous parts of the hall. This included the ceiling, friezes and architraves, column sides, and the base area of walls; all involved texts, with the exception of the central panels on the ceiling.

The central ceiling panel, divided into three units, and the walls of the entrance doorway to the tomb, were dedicated to the imagery of the solar journey, a standard practice in New Kingdom private tombs that ensured the tomb owner eternal participation in the sun cult. The normative arrangement of having parallel scenes showing the tomb owner facing both outwards and inwards, accompanied by sun hymns, sadly only survives as traces in TT 65. Enough has been preserved on the southern reveal of the doorway, however, to show that Imiseba not only had special access to privileged pictorial models and artists who could execute them, but also to sacred writings that did not have wide currency. Thus, despite retaining the conventional arrangement, the extremely fragmentary text does not belong to any of the known hymn types encountered in other private tombs. Obviously of liturgical origin, in its surviving parts the text is made up of lines beginning with the repetitive invocation ‘O, Re come to Imiseba, the justified,’ which are then followed by different qualifying assertions.⁵¹

On entering the transverse hall, the central part of the ceiling designed to convey the path of the sun is divided into three panels, the first and largest of which yet again belongs to the stock repertoire of private tombs (Fig. 19). Depicting the solar cycle or birth of the sun, it is a large-scale variant of the scene often misleadingly referred to as BD 16.⁵² Alternatively called a vignette, after versions appearing on papyri, it can be seen as an introduction or preface to the textual corpus of the hall. As nine of the twenty longer texts inscribed on the hall’s ceiling, friezes and architraves are sun hymns, it is a particularly appropriate introductory image.

A systematic and detailed description of the individual texts lies beyond the scope of this paper, which is concerned with how the autonomous assemblage of texts relates to the creation of the monument as a whole. The length of these texts is particularly striking, varying between 8 and 9m for the bandeaux, encompassing 12 to 18 verses. This aspect deserves emphasis as space restrictions in a tomb can prompt shortening, omission or excerpting of texts, but with lengthier texts, this is less obvious. Space considerations evidently influence the selection of texts, but how it affects text creation is less so. As an intellectual stimulant and challenge, the need to meaningfully fill large surfaces is often overlooked when analysing monumental texts comprising units of disparate origins and genres. In a manner akin to the analytical process of decorating temple walls (defined as ‘wall theology’: Traunecker 1997, 173), this mode of text construction is evidenced by several texts found in TT 65. Thus at least two of the sun hymns had been brought together and compiled from a number of different liturgical and theological hymns (texts 85 and 88; Assmann 1983, 121–22, 124–25), while the *hṯp-di-nsw* offering formulae on the ceiling of the western half of the northern aisle were expanded to include such sections as, for instance, the earlier cited ‘Appeal to the Living.’ The results, pleasing aesthetically, were texts that appealed to an intellect appreciative of innovative variation on themes. Variation and its intellectual enjoyment come into play in another respect as well: the presence of seven sun hymns is in itself a form of variation on

⁵¹ It is all the more unfortunate, then, that its northern counterpart, that would have formed its conceptual pair, has been almost totally lost, other than a few individual signs and word fragments.

⁵² See e.g., Allen 1974, 26; for scenes belonging to this genre, Hornung 1992; for vignette 15 created for BD 15 of the Saitic Recension, see now Budek 2008.

a theme, but so are the two utterances by the goddess Nut placed side by side on the ceiling of the southern aisle that start with the same wording ‘Words spoken by Nut: “I stretched myself upon you,”’ before continuing with divergent texts. The sun hymns also offer another insight, as the seven examples in the transverse hall fall into three distinct categories: (1) three traditional hymns, (2) two representing the new ‘sun theology’ of the Ramesside era, and (3) a further two theological hymns unattested elsewhere. Described as a veritable ‘anthology’ of sun hymns (Assmann 1983, XXXIII), this corpus reveals as much, if not more, about its compiler than of the richness of this particular genre of religious literature. His antiquarianism, no doubt born out of Imiseba being a third generation chief archivist of Karnak temple, however, rose above the horizon of manuscripts kept in his archive. For several of the texts he chose to include have primary sources other than archival papyri.

Researching textual parallels for the hall’s texts yielded an unexpected and intriguing pattern (Fig. 20). At least four of the texts are only attested in one other tomb, all situated in the vicinity of TT 65. These include an utterance of Osiris addressed to the ‘Council in his following’ from the tomb of Sobekhotep (TT 63),⁵³ an utterance of Ha, Lord of the West, from that of Hapuseneb (TT 67),⁵⁴ one of the Nut texts already referred to from Hapu’s tomb (TT 66),⁵⁵ and a sun hymn from the famous Ramesside vizier, Paser’s (TT 106).⁵⁶ While those collected from Dynasty 18 tombs are all mortuary texts, that of Paser is a composition representing the so-called new ‘sun theology,’ which incidentally also explains why it was extracted from a more distant tomb. The phenomenon is instructive in more than one way, and leaves little doubt that on one level, Imiseba implicitly conceived his tomb-chapel as a virtual archive of religious knowledge that, among others, served the discursive construction of identity. On the other hand, by encompassing the sacred landscape, it also highlights the notion that the concept of ‘archive’ was understood in a much wider sense than a collection of manuscripts, an observation that cautions against accepting the transmission of texts as a necessarily straightforward process. Thirdly, as an active force it can be observed how, by feeding off the associations of other mortuary monuments, Imiseba embedded his tomb into a spatial and temporal context that unified the glory of the Thutmose past with a Ramesside present.⁵⁷

When turning to the decoration programme of the axial corridor the emerging picture is no less complex. The recess preceding it, as mentioned beforehand, was allotted the function of a chapel and received further emphasis by two framing elements, the Abydos fetish on the north and the personified *djed*-pillar on the south. Elsewhere, as in both royal tombs (Ramesses VII, KV 1) or private tombs (e.g., that of Kynebu from the reign of Ramesses VIII, TT 113), two *djed*-pillars were the norm.⁵⁸ On the ceiling immediately before the recess is the last unit of

⁵³ The text in TT 63 is understandably shorter, see Dziobek and Abdel Raziq 1990, 51–52 Text 14a.

⁵⁴ The text is only partly preserved on the ceiling of the southern aisle of TT 67’s transverse hall, see *Wb* I, 128, 14 and *Wb* III, 384, 8; and *Wb* Belegstellen I, 8, *Wb* Belegstellen III, 111.

⁵⁵ The text is in the central bandeau of the southern aisle, see Davies 1963, 13.

⁵⁶ See, as Text 86, in Assmann 1983, 122–23, also 33–34.

⁵⁷ For another aspect and expression of this embedding, see also Bács 2004.

⁵⁸ For KV 1, see Hornung 1990, 75, pl. 128; the drawing of the doorway made by the Hay expedition (Hay MSS 29822) is reproduced in Manniche 1987, 111 fig. 87. A compendium of *djed*-pillars in Theban tombs is given in Assem 2009.

the central panel of the transverse hall, depicting the youthful and mature figures of Imiseba in adoration of a large *akhet*-sign (Fig. 22). The scene was unmistakably intended to produce a non-royal equivalent of similar scenes placed on lintels above the entrances of Ramesside royal tombs, which cosmographically marked the transitional zone between netherworld and that of the living.⁵⁹ As with the royal prototypes, the sun-disc contains figures of the goddess Maat and the Horus-falcon, and was painted yellow to represent the daytime sun.⁶⁰ In this case, the daytime sun represented a symbolic exterior location, as opposed to its actual one. Fronting thus the place of rebirth, re-emergence and the entrance to the Netherworld represented by the axial corridor, the scene, it may be added, found its place on the ceiling, simply because there was no lintel here.

The royal tomb theme is carried further on the side walls of the passage leading into the axial corridor. Now extremely fragmentary, the scene on the southern side showed two deities supporting the *djed*-pillar, with the better preserved one on the north depicting the purification of Osiris by Inmutf. The latter scene, absent from private tombs in this form, appears first in the tomb of Ramesses VII (following the entrance scene in the first corridor), but is to be expanded in the tomb of Ramesses IX into a sequence of scenes leading to and culminating in the deification of the king.⁶¹ The main difference between Imiseba's scene and those of the royal tombs, apart from the addition of the protective goddess, is that the royal tomb scenes show pharaoh being purified (Fig. 21).⁶² The Osirian iconography of the royal figure, however, enabled Imiseba to change it into a generic scene of purification without losing its royal associations.

The layout of the following axial corridor, today missing its western wall and doorway, leading to the 'sloping passage' that was originally built from mud brick, displays a curious duality in concept. The basic division of the vaulted ceiling and walls, with panels of equal size divided by text bands, recalls the near identical arrangement found in the burial chambers of the Ramesside tombs at Deir el-Medina. Whereas these were clearly intended to imitate the decorative layout and scheme of sarcophagi that earned them the name of 'sarcophagus vault' or more reflectively 'macro-sarcophagus',⁶³ in the tomb of Imiseba the décor clearly merges this notion with the concept of the royal tomb. Thus the ceiling panels received the usual geometric and textile patterns instead of Book of the Dead or other vignettes and were separated from the wall panels by a frieze of alternating *djed*- and *tjet*-signs. Because of this duality a certain degree of ambiguity contained in the cosmographic orientation of the corridor was nevertheless retained (Fig. 23). Firstly, the text of the central ceiling bandeau is an otherwise unattested sun hymn addressed to Amun-Re-Harakhti-Atum, which praises the journey of the sun from east to west in eulogical form,⁶⁴ and is to be read from the doorway inwards with reference to the true orientation of the hall. In effect, it is the textual

⁵⁹ The placement of the scene on the entrance lintel starts with the tomb of Ramesses II (KV 7): Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 35; Wilkinson 1994, 83.

⁶⁰ Wilkinson 1994, 83.

⁶¹ For KV 1, Hornung 1990, 58–60, pls. 7b, 104; for KV 6, Guilman 1907, pls. 21, 38.

⁶² Abitz 1990, 21–25, 22 fig. 6; and more briefly in Abitz 1992, 16–17 fig. 28.

⁶³ See Gaber 2004, 222.

⁶⁴ Assmann 1983, 128–29, Text 90.

complement of the scenes contained in the upper panels of the walls. In a liminal position at the entrance, the first bandeau, on the other hand, has two short salutations addressed to the holy mountains *M3nw* (W) and *B3hw* (E), but running counter to both the actual and the orientation implied by the said panels. Finally, the two bandeaux texts above the frieze bring into play a third orientation by presenting two long utterances by the tutelary goddesses Neith (E) on the northern and Selket (W) on the southern wall.⁶⁵ But then of course, this orientation in reference to the cardinal points only makes sense in the context of the hall's sarcophagus/burial chamber function that would have included Isis (S) and Nephthys (N) in their respective positions as well. The upper row of panels on the side walls contain a composition that should be understood as an *Underworld Book* specially created for this tomb. The pictorial composition, which in its layout if not subject matter recalls that in the tomb of Prince Montuhirkhopshef, charts the day and night journey of the sun god by repeating the image of the sun bark in consecutive panels, five on the southern wall moving inwards and in five on the northern one moving outwards. Although separated by vertical columns that never received their intended texts, as this part of the tomb-chapel was never finished, a unity and sense of progress was conveyed by painting the bottom border of these panels a continuous blue to represent the waterway on which the night and day bark of the sun god traverses the Netherworld and sky respectively. Despite the overall repetitive character of the scenes, they differ enough from each other in details to express the discrete phases of the solar journey, as to single out only one example, illustrated by the spearing of Apophis in the first and last scenes of the southern, nocturnal phase.

That the now missing western end wall of the hall was conceived of as a second *akhet* is made explicit by the decoration in two ways. In the last scenes facing each other at the western end of the wall and forming an obverse pair, the southern panel shows Atum travelling in the bark in contrast to the four preceding ram-headed depictions of the nocturnal sun god, while opposite to it and now outward facing, the bark carries the scarab-headed Khepri adored by a *Hetet*-baboon (Fig. 24). Although not part of this sequence, the last scene of the lower row of panels presents Isis and Nephthys adoring the rising sun, here again coloured yellow (Fig. 25; e.g., Wilkinson 1995, 76). This appearance of a second *akhet* can be satisfactorily explained only if it is interpreted as a manifestation of the phenomenon known as duplication, a phenomenon yet again characteristic for royal tombs that divided these into an upper and a lower section and where the passages of the latter lower section are referred to as 'the other, first, second, etc. god's passage.'⁶⁶

Reduced to the part of *Underworld Books* technically termed the 'register of action' (Müller-Roth 2008, 8–9) and lacking accompanying texts, in the end it is difficult to pinpoint the specific royal composition or more accurately compositions that served as models. Nevertheless, it seems inherently likely that—like the texts and their construction—it brought together material from disparate sources but with the 'Book of Day' and the 'Book of Night'

⁶⁵ Part of the inscription has been published by Sethe when writing on the orthography of Neith's name here, see Sethe 1906. Interestingly enough, two similar texts by the two goddesses respectively appear on the internal coffin of Butehamun (CGT 10102.a) in Turin, see Niwinski 2004, 155 testo 16b–c, pl. 4.

⁶⁶ See Abitz 1984, 4–17; the last example of this scheme in the Valley of the Kings is found in the tomb of Ramesses VI, Abitz 1989, 77, 79 fig. 17; Černý 1973, 31–32; also Wilkinson 1995, 79.

providing the fundamental inspiration.⁶⁷

The obvious correlation of the hall's basic decorative layout with Deir el-Medina burial chambers, one reinforced further by style and iconography, is made even closer by the scenes contained in the lower panels of its northern wall. A staple of Ramesside private tombs otherwise, it is only here, apart from a few questionable textual fragments in the transverse hall, that material from the Book of the Dead is encountered (in general, Saleh 1984). This seeming neglect or disinterest, while surprising at first, may ultimately derive from the overall programme of Imiseba's mortuary monument and its dependence on royal prototypes. By and large, and considering the space available here, the proportion of the featured Book of the Dead material mirrors that of their usage in the royal tombs of the late Ramesside era.⁶⁸ Visually and thematically, however, the imagery of the Deir el-Medina tombs took precedence, partly attributable no doubt to the interaction of Imiseba and his artist, the chief draughtsman Amenhotep.⁶⁹

Forming a sequence with the aforementioned *akhet*-scene of the last panel, four vignettes from the Book of the Dead were laid out in the order of BD 68, 17, a repeat of BD 17,⁷⁰ and BD 135 (Fig. 26). Rather than perceiving this as a random selection of BD vignettes, a closer scrutiny reveals a thematic coherence that once more has its motive in the exploration and exposition of a theme through variation, in this case in the form akin to taxonomic enumeration. Without denying the influence of Deir el-Medina artists, especially in the case of such a personality as Amenhotep working on the wall paintings, it is nevertheless Imiseba's perspective and intellectual imprint that these reflect.

In the vignette of BD 68 (Fig. 27), with the inconspicuous title of 'Spell for going forth by day by N.,' the double doors of the horizon are pivoted in an *akhet*-shaped desert and another tract of desert in place of the sky. Two symmetrically placed figures of Imiseba, rather than a single figure, are depicted adoring the double doors and not in the more common act of opening them.⁷¹ These details reveal a subtle shift of emphasis which purposefully foregrounds the *akhet*-scene aspect and explains its placement next to the doorway in contrast to most of the Deir el-Medina tombs, where it is featured on ceilings in the inner half of chambers (Saleh 1984, 37). As with all the others, the intended complementary texts never came to be added, but here at least the beginning of the first sentence 'Opened for you' had been put in place.

The presence of the following panel, containing the *akhet*-sign between the double lions Ruty from the various motifs accompanying BD 17, with its explicit symbolism hardly needs explaining (e.g., Milde 1991, 33), especially with a cross linkage provided by the bandeau text mentioning the holy mountains *M3nw* and *B3hw* (Fig. 28). It can be suspected moreover that presaging its later usage on various media, it was exploited in this context more for its concise

⁶⁷ For a similar though not parallel pictorial excerpting from the Book of Day in the later tomb of Ramose (TT 132) from the reign of Taharqo, see Müller-Roth 2008, 29–32, pl. 24.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the Book of the Dead texts in the royal tombs, see Hornung 1990, 79–83; summarised in a tabulated form in Hornung 1982, 219; and Hornung 1990, 33.

⁶⁹ On the career and artistic production of the chief draughtsman Amenhotep, see Keller 1981; Keller 1984; and Bács in press.

⁷⁰ It is less likely to be that of BD 83 or 84.

⁷¹ Saleh 1984, 36–37; for other variants from papyri, Milde 1991, 148–51.

iconic character and as a self-contained image, than as a reference to the spell itself. It is this multi-referential aspect that may also offer an answer to why the pictorial mode of expression was given precedence so forcefully over the textual.

Even without detailed description, the inclusion of next two panels in the sequence becomes self-explanatory once it is realised that they were all expressive of a single core idea, namely rebirth or more specifically the place of rebirth (Fig. 29). And it is this ordering principle that allowed the last panel scene, that is not a BD vignette, to be included among them. The adoration of the *bennu*-bird standing on the primeval mound and wearing an elaborate crown, or the vignette of BD 135 familiar from Deir el-Medina (despite its textual reference to the rebirth of the moon)⁷² are nothing more and nothing less than alternative images of this single, though central, idea. Like glosses in texts or synonyms in language, they intend to provide meaningful understanding by presenting a host of alternative images and readings. Ultimately, this again results in an anthology, this time a pictorial one of *akhet* scenes.

Instead of a conclusion

I have claimed at the outset that the funerary complex of Imiseba stands at the end of a great tradition. At first glance this may have appeared to be a bold proposition considering the existence of later tombs and may even seem more so now having had a glimpse of its idiosyncratic character. It has also become clear, moreover, that it directly neither reflects nor represents the conceptions of a non-royal mortuary monument as understood or followed in practice by his contemporaries and in general by the late Ramesside elite or sub-elite. The question then, is how does indeed TT 65 represent the conclusion of this tradition and what validates its claim? In answering briefly I only wish to reiterate one earlier argument made, namely that besides the other embodied in the Dra Abu el-Naga monuments of the high priests, Imiseba's tomb-complex offered a way of blending continuity and change whereby the limitations of the temple-tomb tradition could be exceeded, indeed transcended. And in light of the prevalent socio-political realities of its time, it also underlines that an intellectual community under pressure is not inevitably a depressed or a depleted one.

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⁷² Heerma van Voss 2000; for its presence in Deir el-Medina tombs, see Saleh 1984, 72–74.

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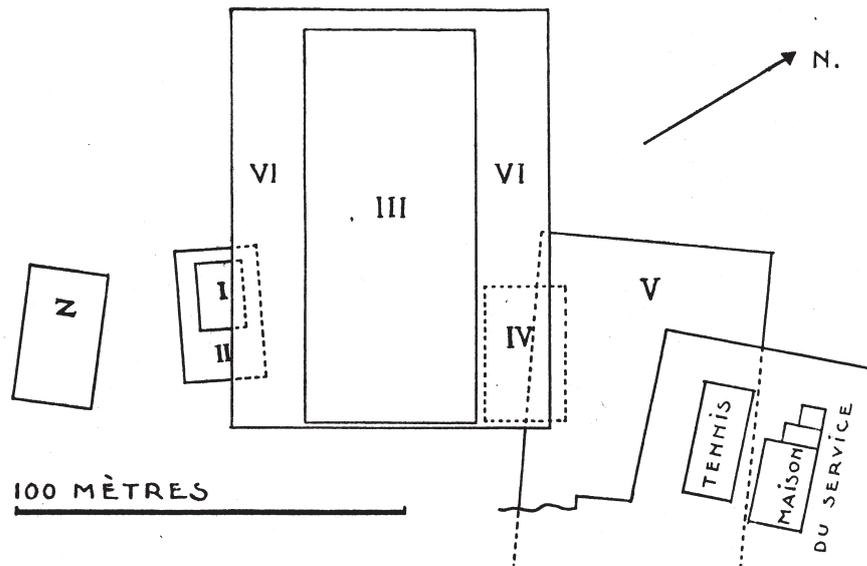


Fig. 1: The temple of Ramesses IV at Medinet Habu (No. V, after Robichon and Varille 1938, 99).



Fig. 2: The figure of the Second Prophet Nesamun (right), in TT 65.

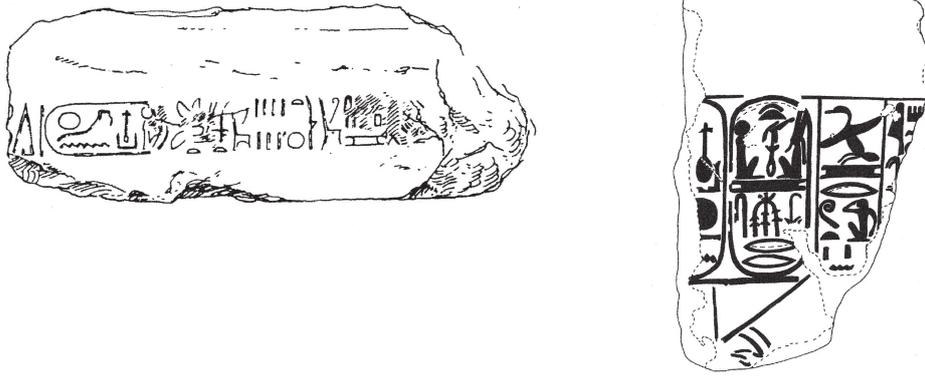


Fig. 3: Blocks with the name of Ramesses IX from Medinet Habu (after Hölscher 1951, 8–11, pl. 26D).



Fig. 4: Amun presenting Ramesses IX with the sickle-sword, upon a limestone ostracon (CGC 25121).

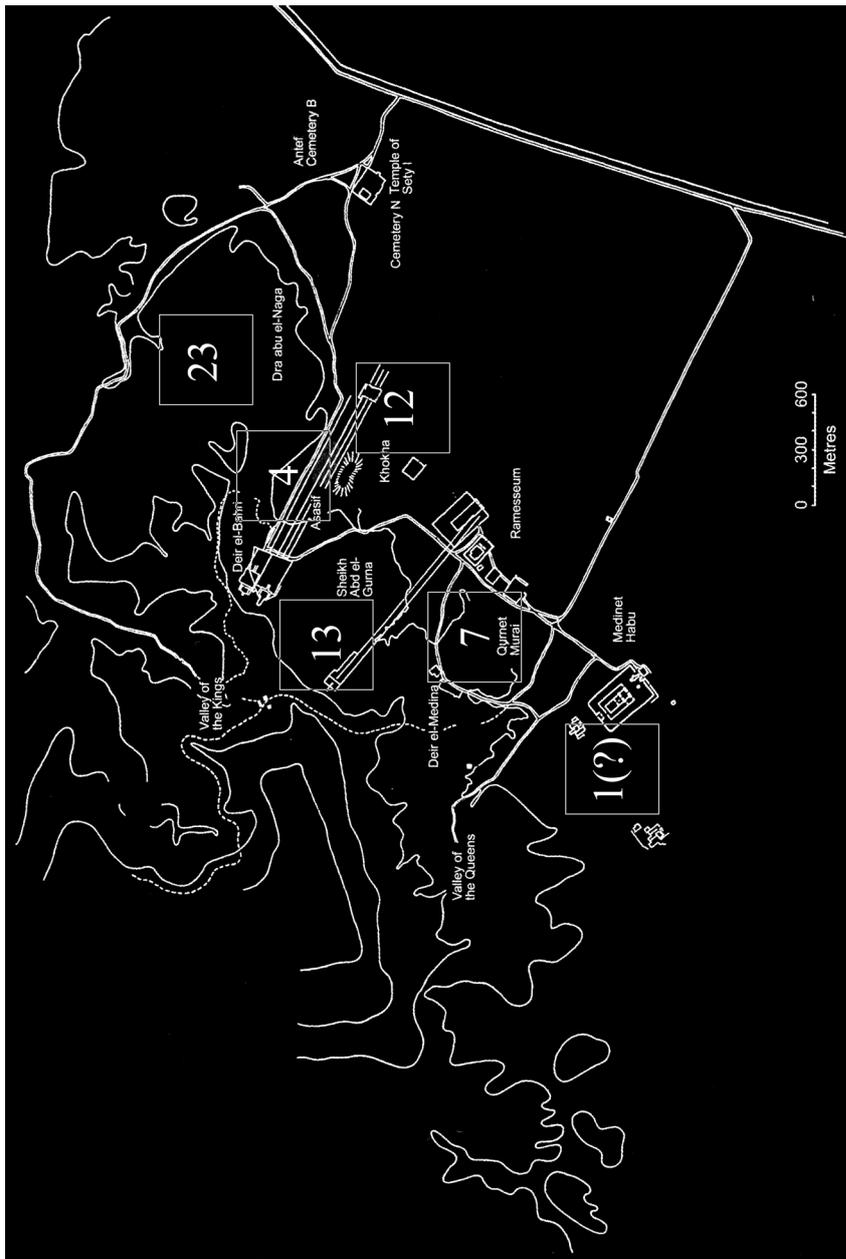


Fig. 5: The distributional patterning of Twentieth Dynasty tombs.

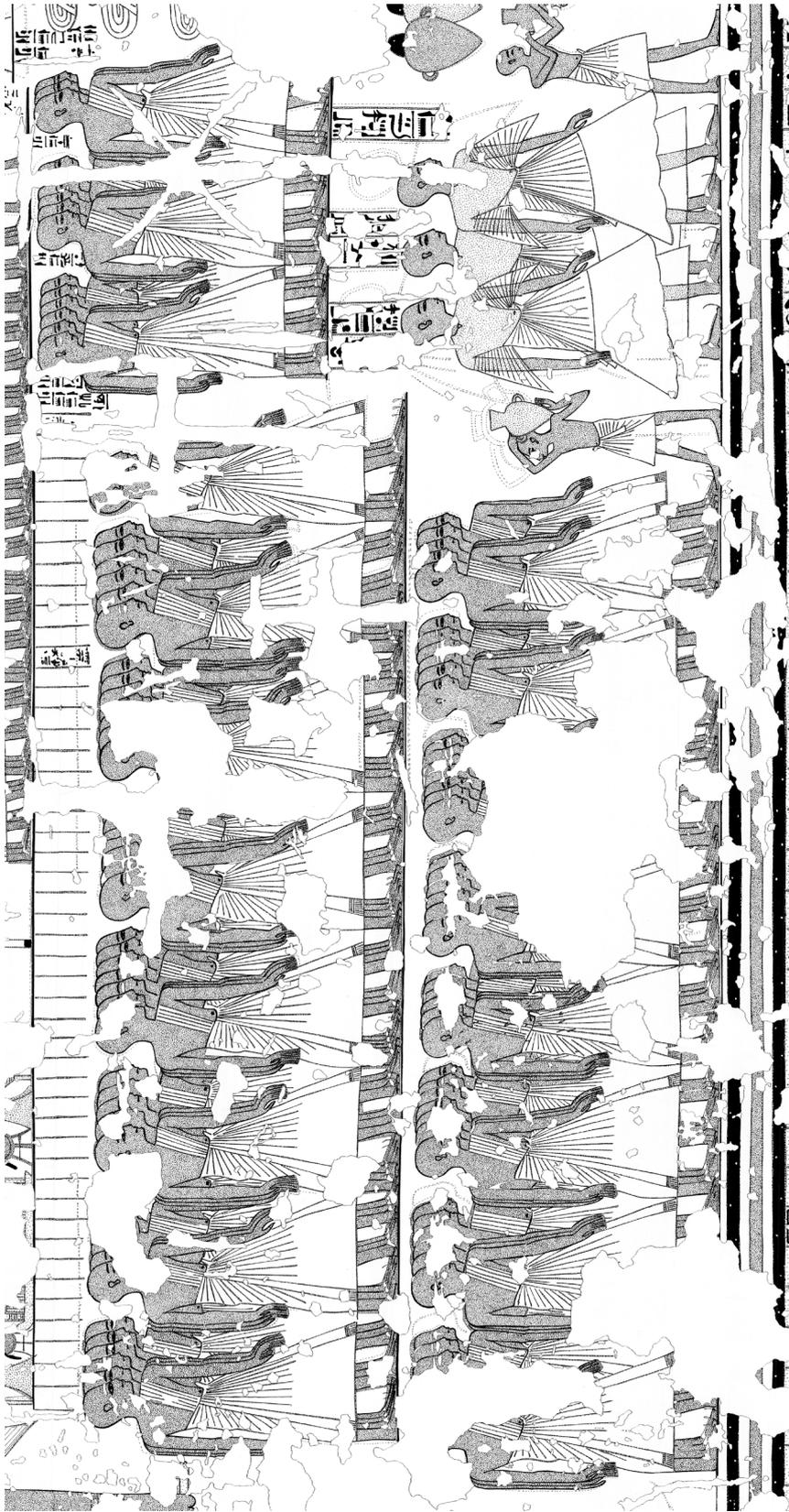


Fig. 6: The clergy of Amun as depicted in TT 65 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

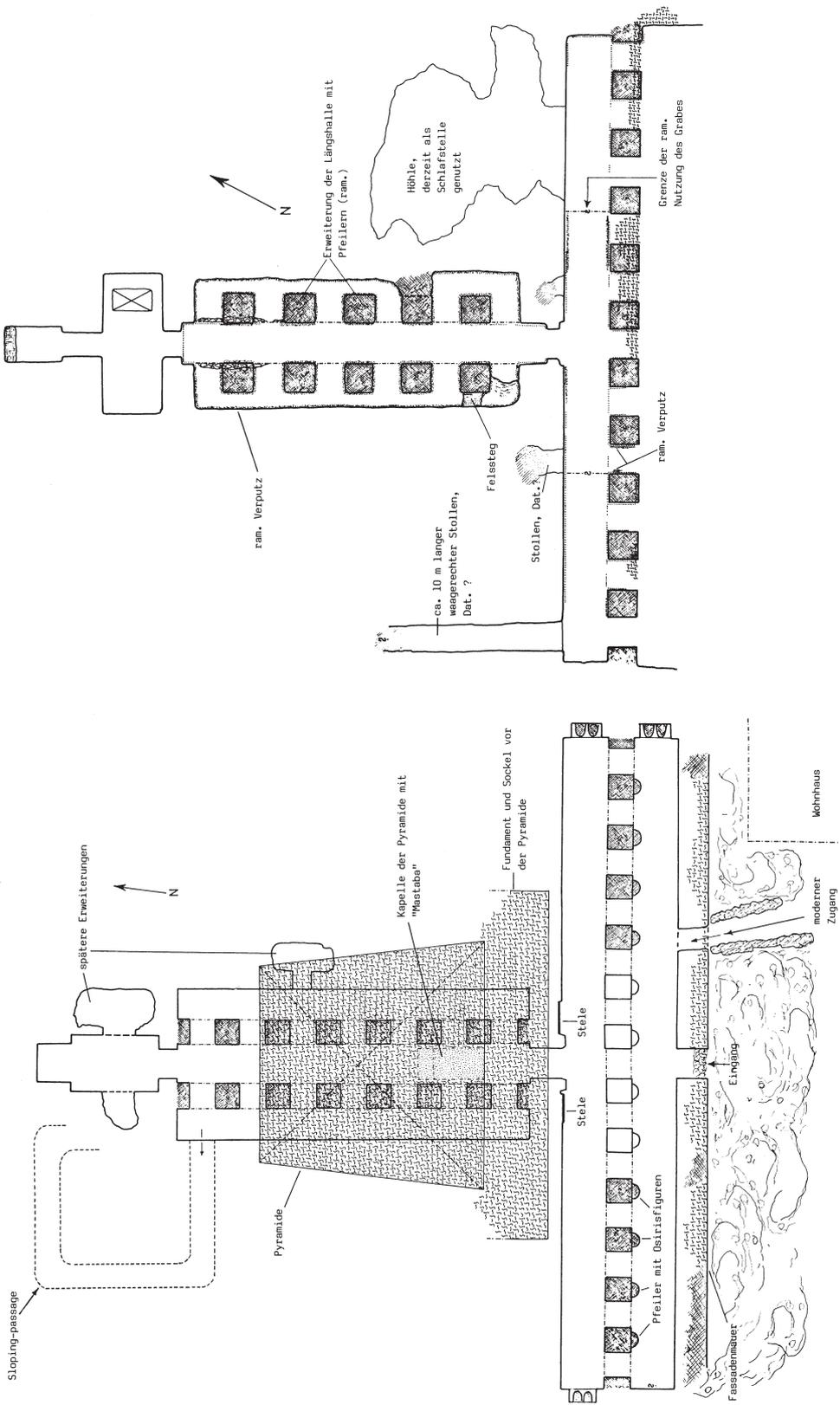


Fig. 7: Tomb-chapels of the High Priests of Amun, Minmonthu (IT 232; left) and Nebwenef (IT 157) (after Kampp 1996, 511, 446).

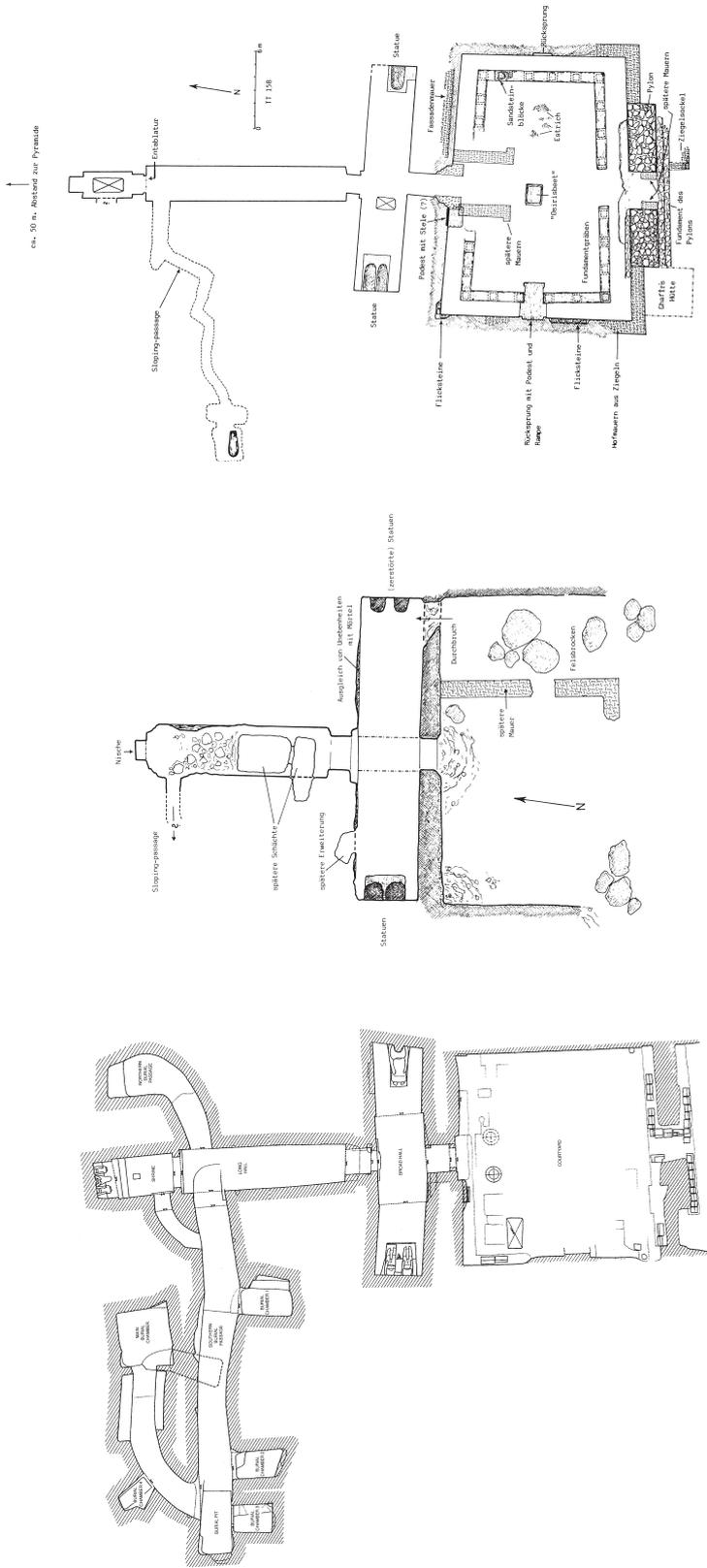


Fig. 8: Tomb-chapels of the Third Prophets of Amun, Paser (TT 303; left), Amenemope (TT 148; centre), and Tjanefer (TT 158) (after Kampp 1996, 571, 449 and Ockinga 2007, 155).

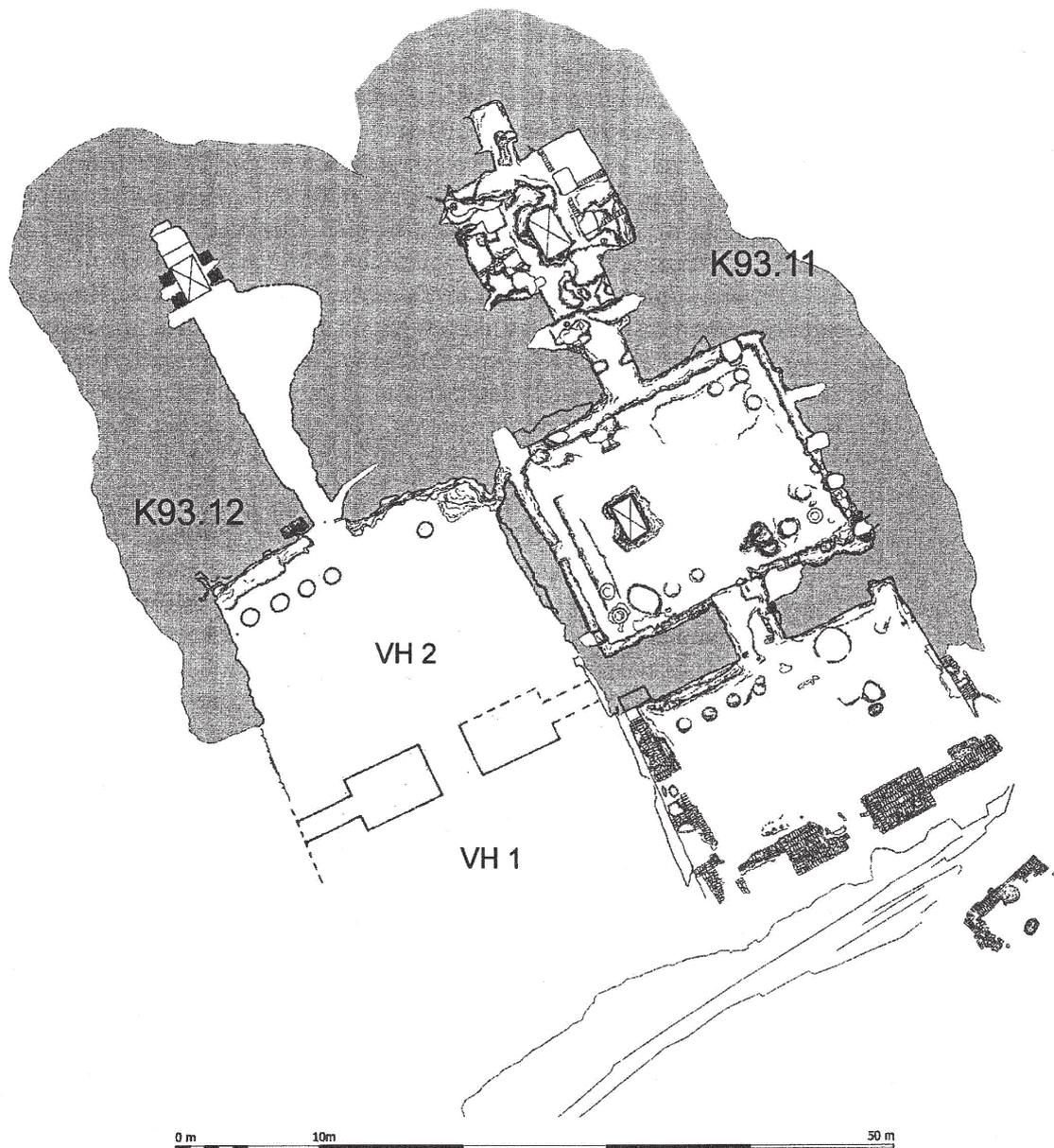


Fig. 9: K93.11/12 at Dra Abu el-Naga (after Rummel 2009, 356).

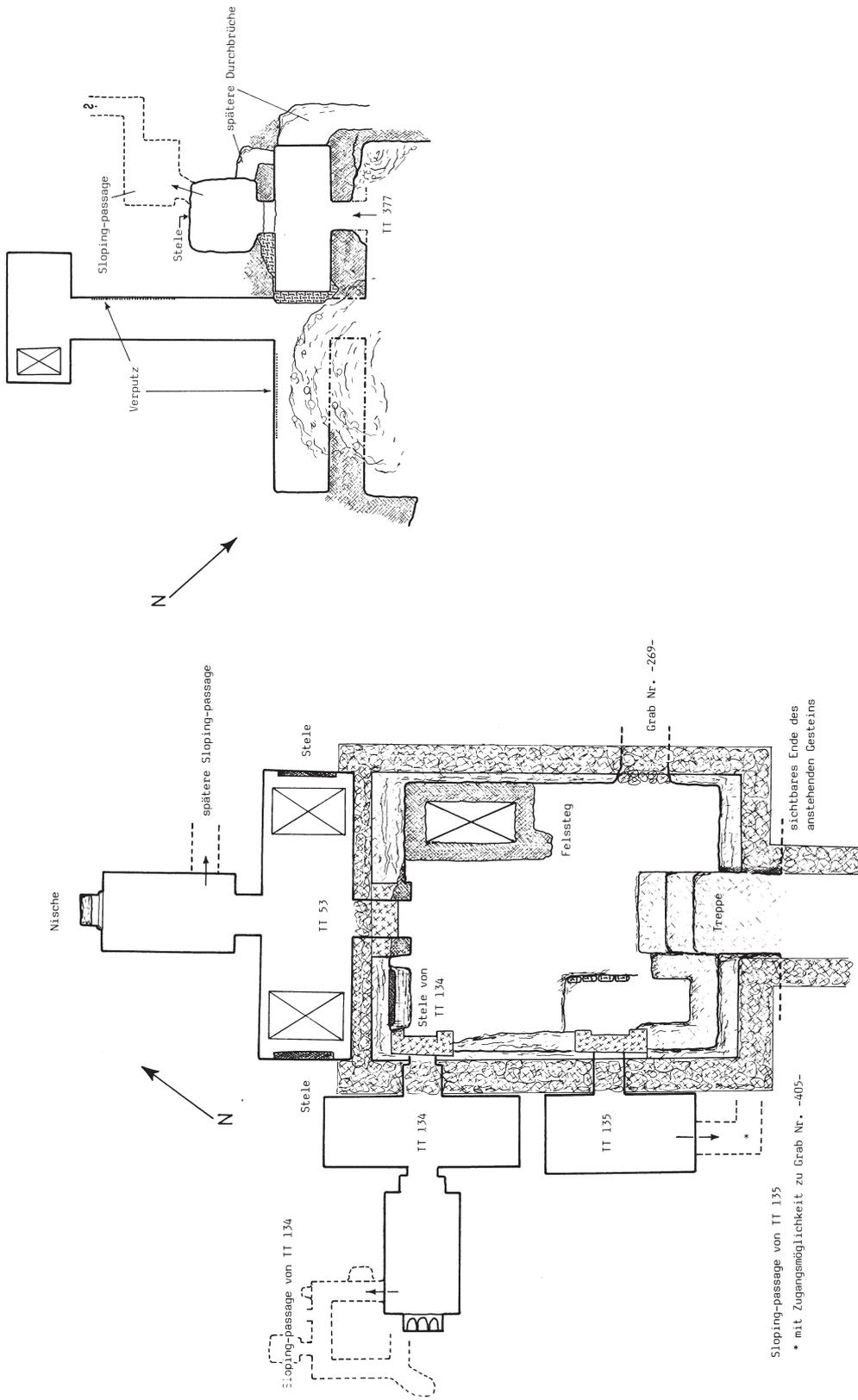


Fig. 10: Tomb-chapels of Tjaueny, Bakenamun (TT 134 and 135; left), and an unknown owner (TT 377) (after Kampp 1996, 259, 599).

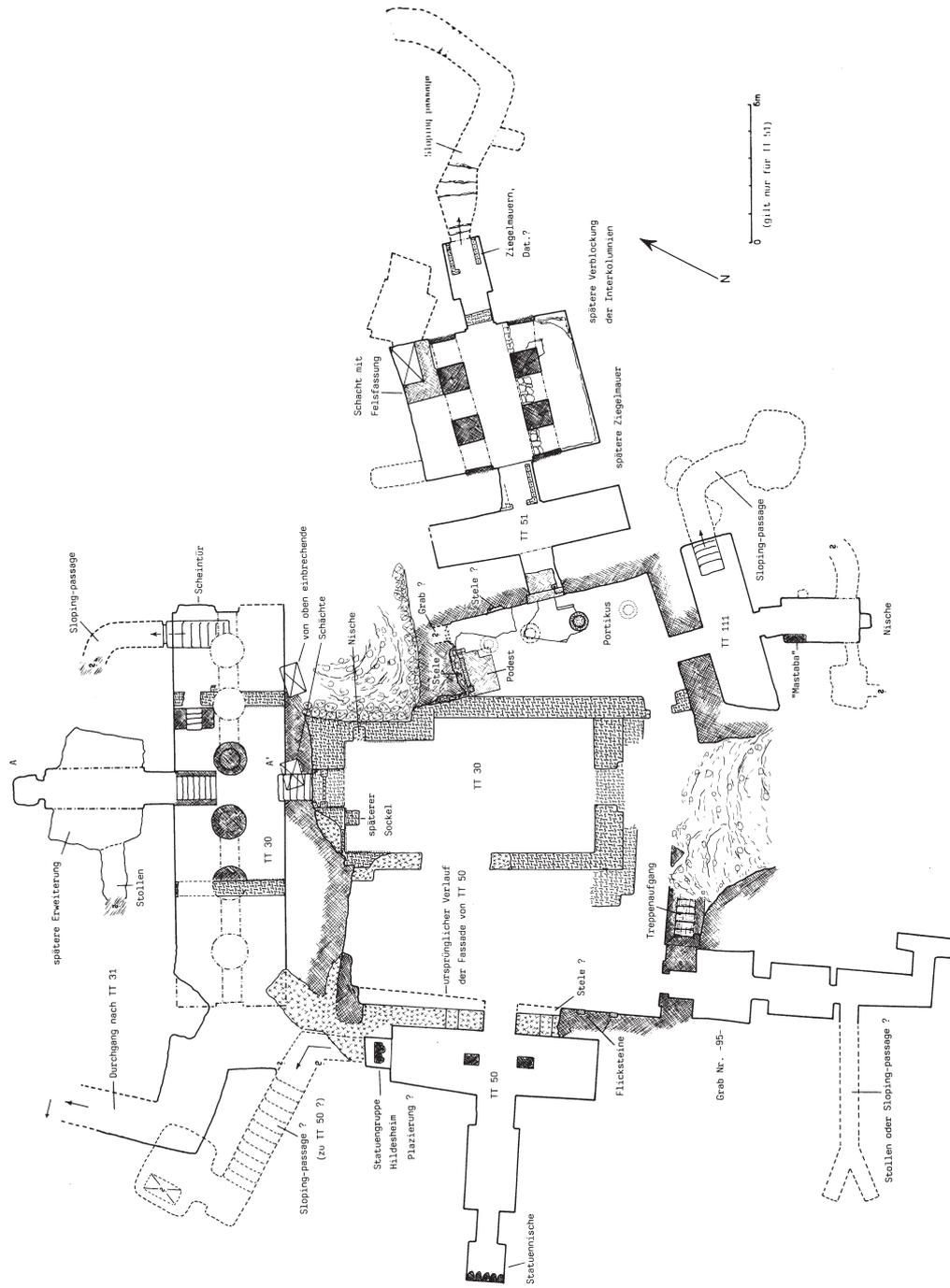


Fig. 11: Tomb-chapel of Khonsumose (TT 30) (after Kampff 1996, 218).

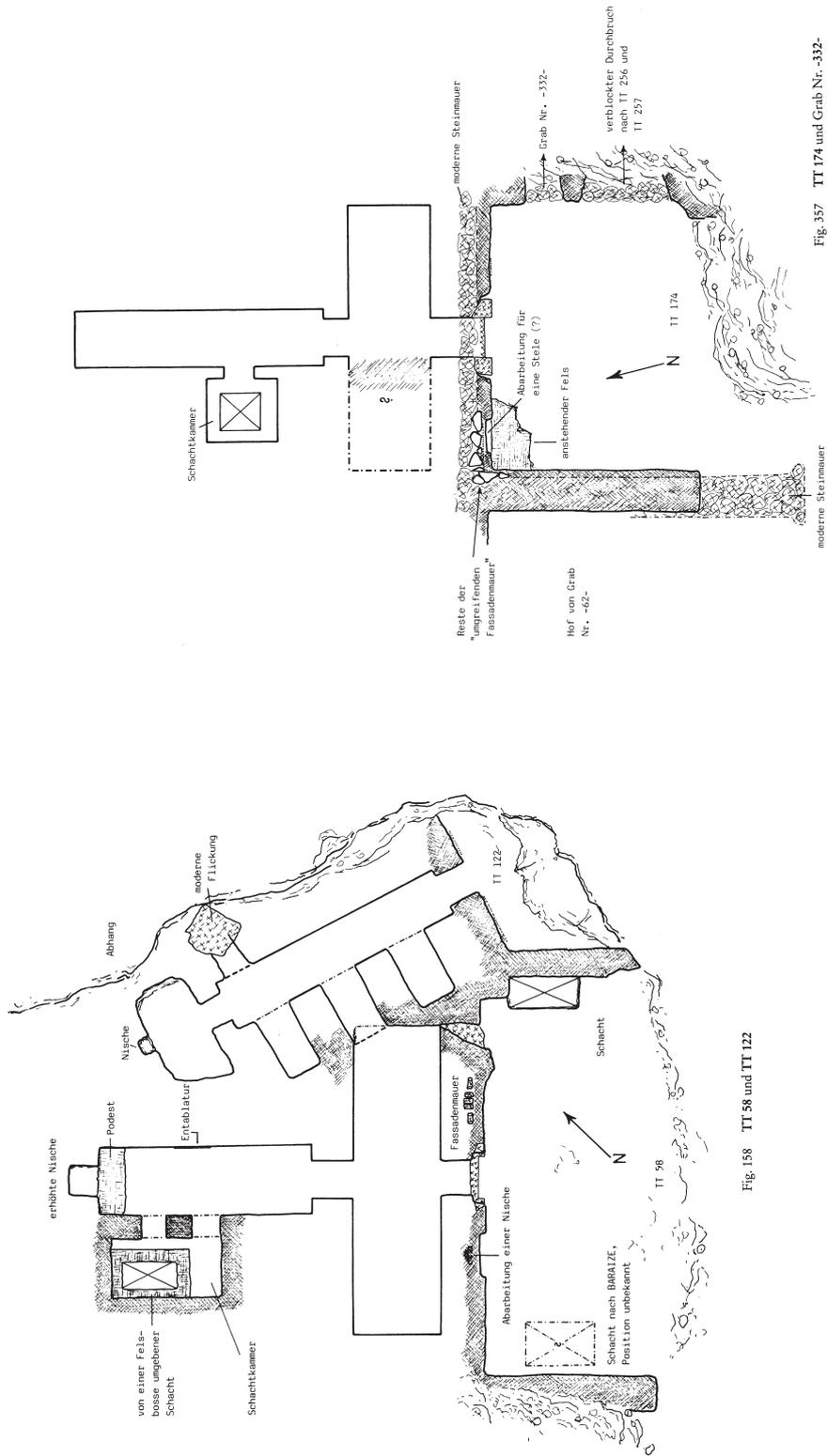


Fig. 158 TT 58 und TT 122

Fig. 357 TT 174 und Grab Nr. -332-

Fig. 12: Tomb-chapels of Amenemone (TT 58; left) and Ashakhet (TT 174) (after Kampp 1996, 271, 462).



Fig. 13: The niche representing a naos in the tomb-chapel of Amenemone (TT 58).



Fig. 14: The 'Reward Scene' of the High Priest Amenhotep, Karnak.



Fig. 15: The façade of TT 65 (photograph by Ferenc Pfeffer).

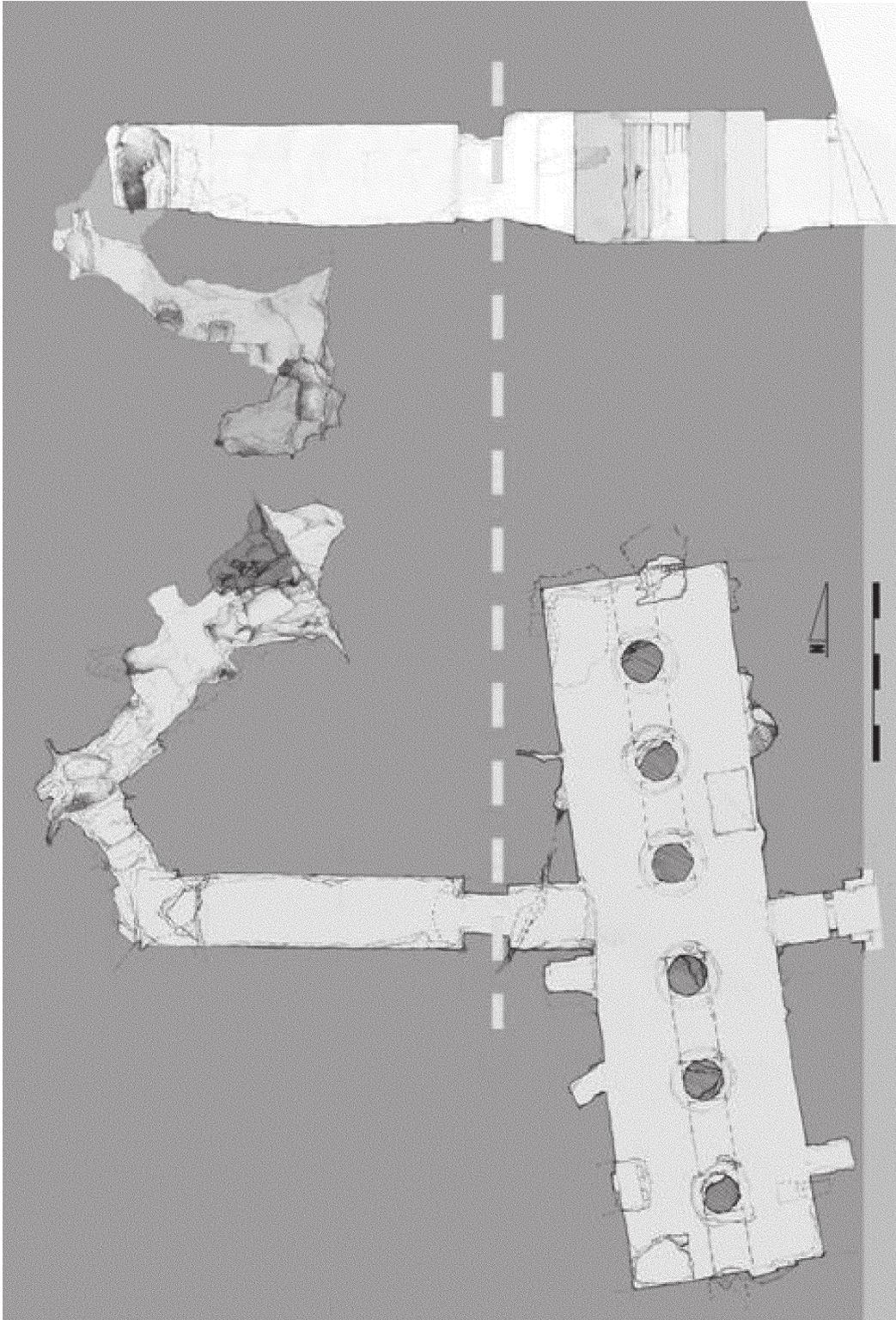


Fig. 16: Ground plan and section of TT 65 (drawing by Marcell Nagy).

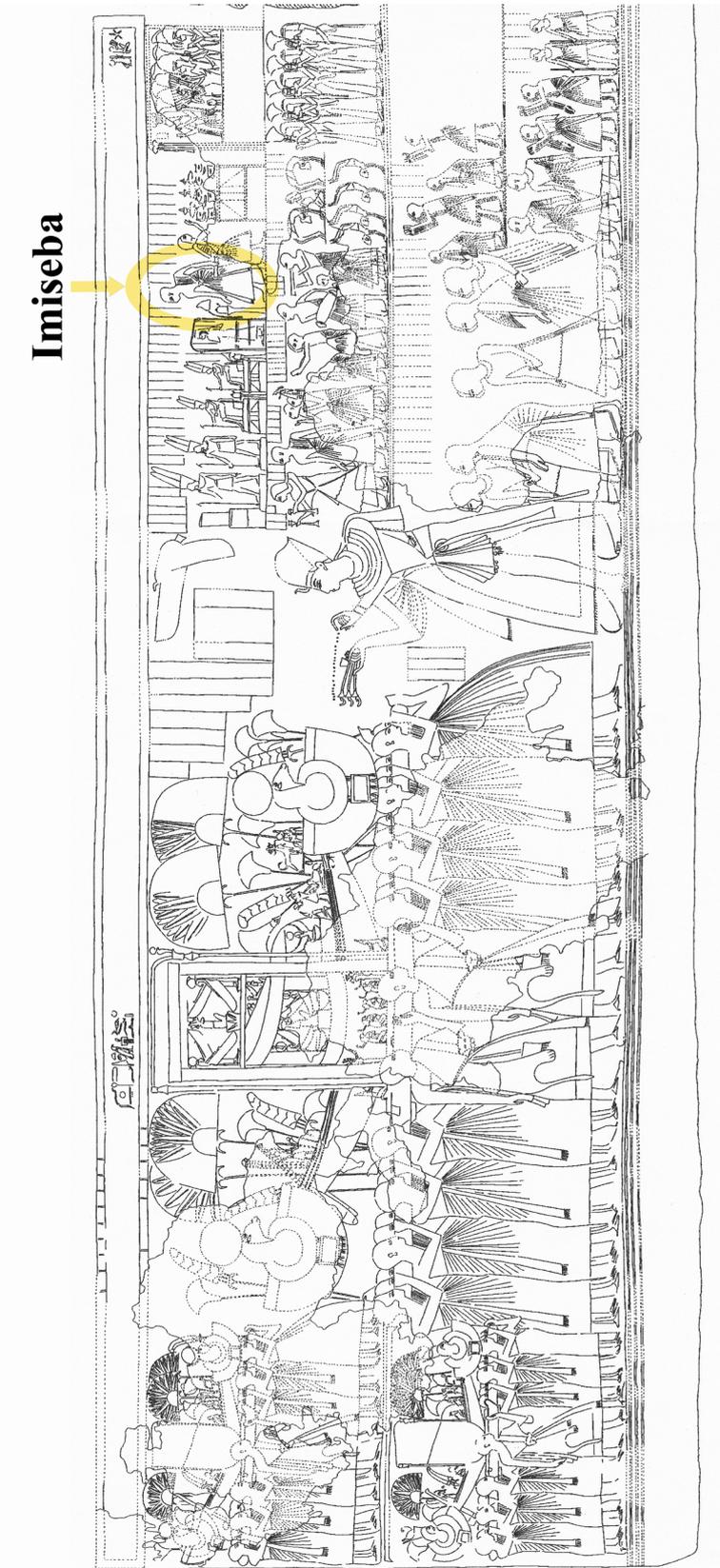


Fig. 17: TT 65, transverse Hall Northern Front Wall (sketch, by Krisztián Vértes). Imyseba is highlighted top right.



Fig. 18: TT 65, ceiling inscription carrying an offering-formula and containing an 'Appeal to the Living' text.



Fig. 19: TT 65, ceiling scene depicting the solar cycle (or BD 16).

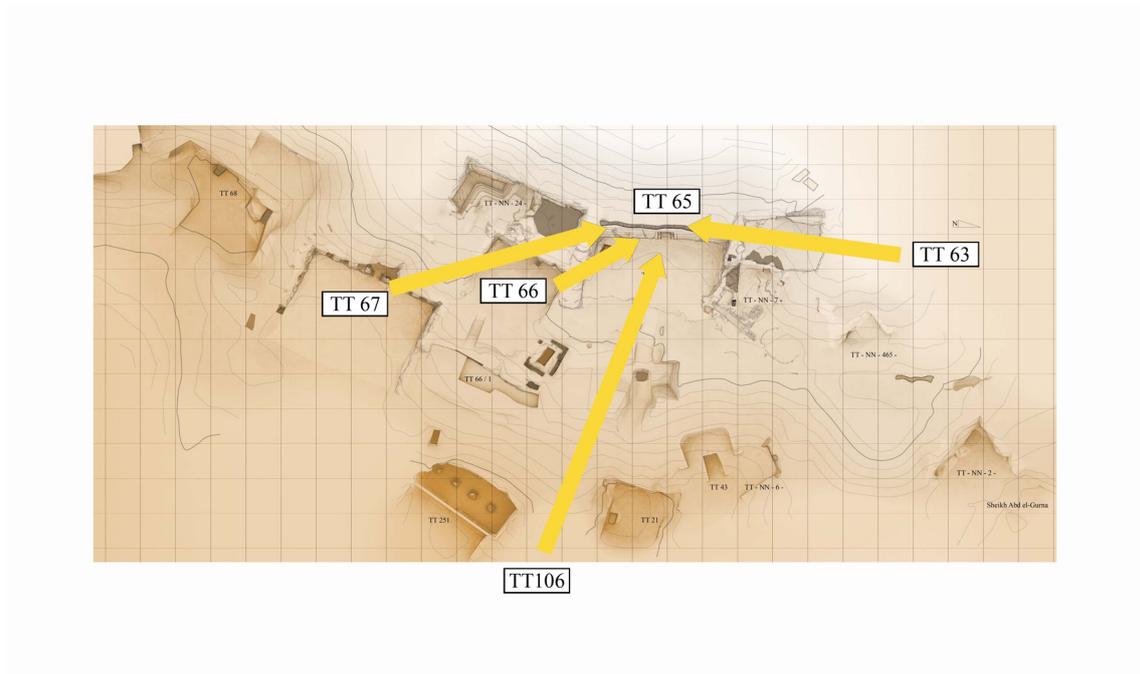


Fig. 20: The origin of certain texts in TT 65.

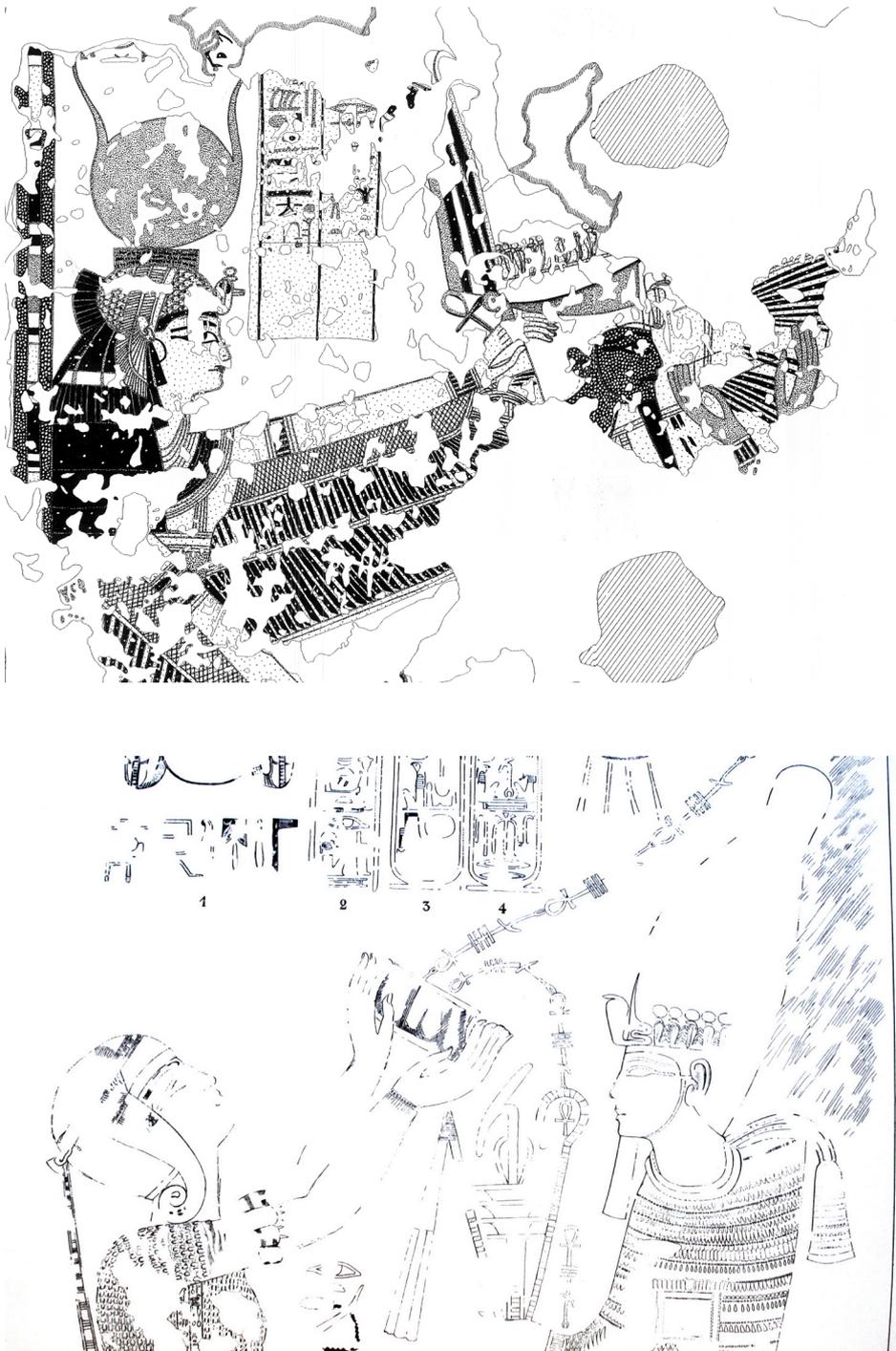


Fig. 21: Detail of purification scenes in TT 65 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés; top) and KV 6 (after Guil mant 1907, pl. 21; bottom).



Fig. 22: TT 65, ceiling scene showing the dual figures of Imiseba in adoration of a large *akhet*-sign.

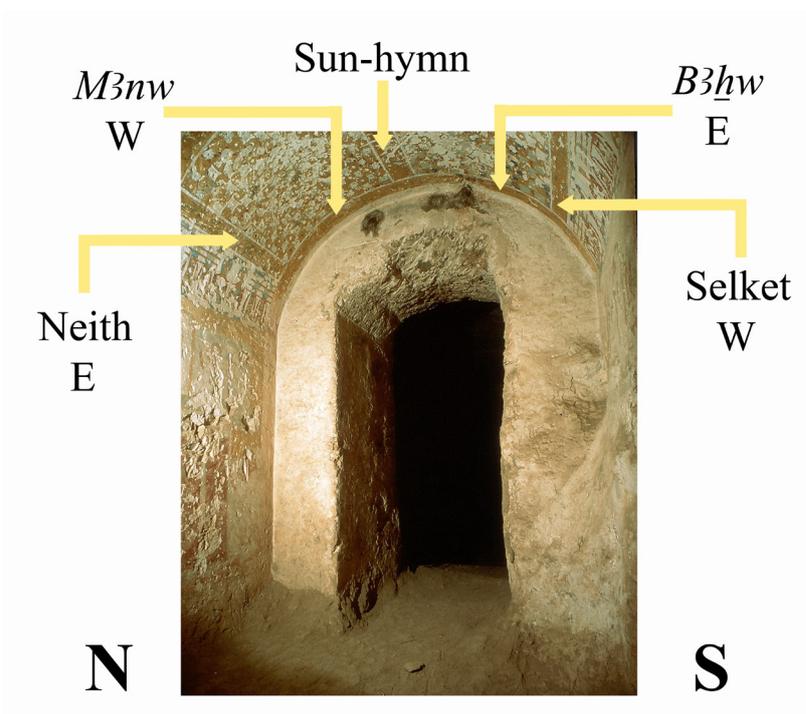


Fig. 23: TT 65, the cosmographic orientation of the axial corridor.



Fig. 24: TT 65, pair of facing scenes at the western end of the axial corridor.

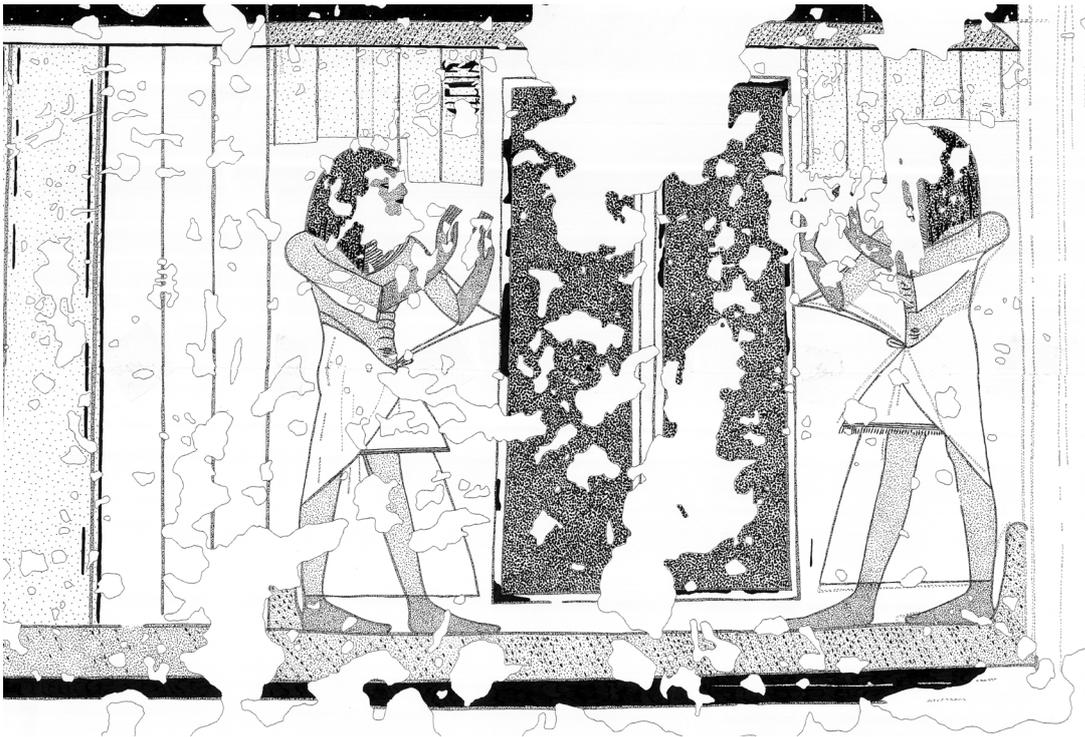


Fig. 27: TT 65, vignette of BD 68 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

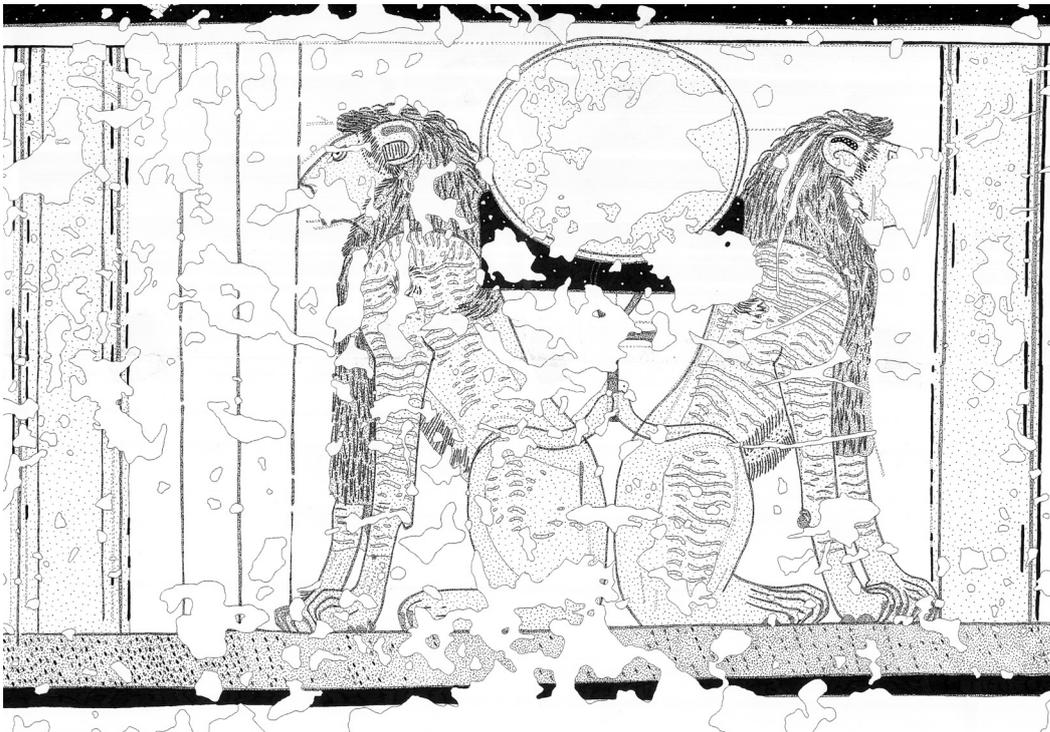


Fig. 28: TT 65, vignette of BD 17 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

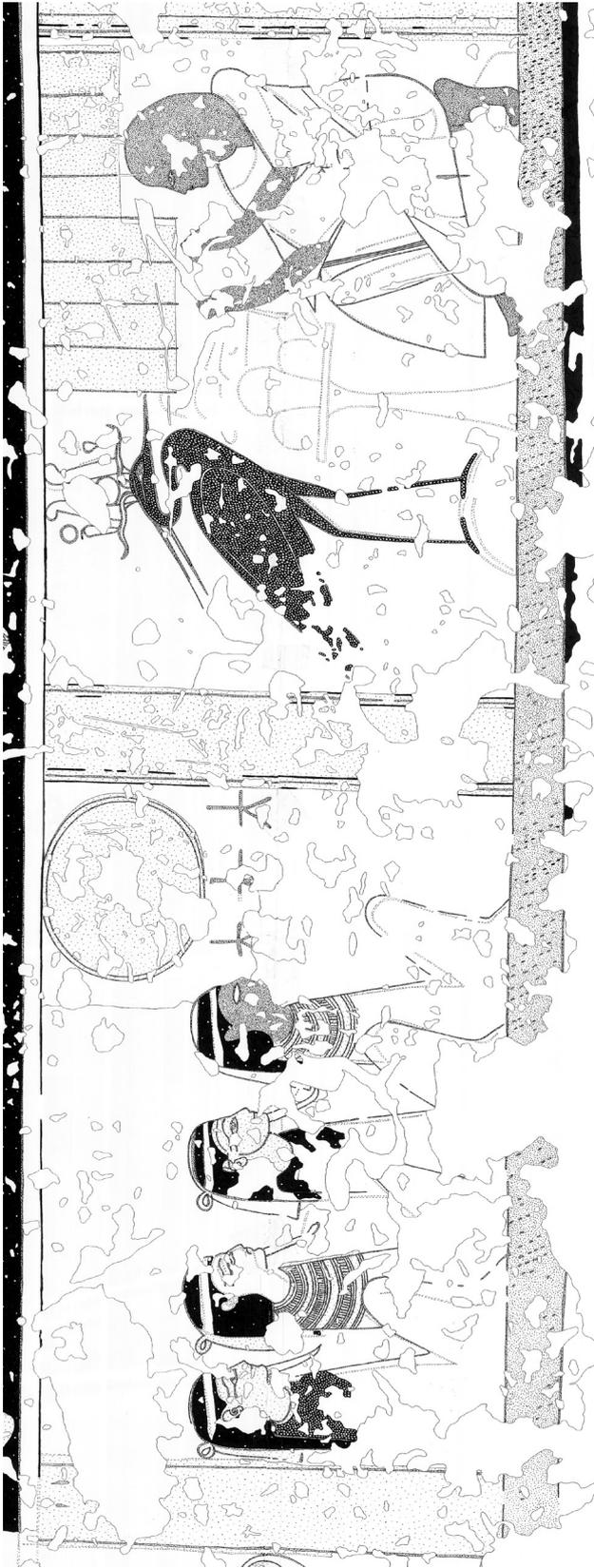


Fig. 29: TT 65. vignettes of BD 17 and 135 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).



Cemetery D at Amara West: the Ramesside Period and its aftermath

Michaela Binder, Neal Spencer and Marie Millet

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Cemetery D at Amara West: the Ramesside Period and its aftermath

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Introduction

Amara West is generally recognised as the administrative centre of Kush, or Upper Nubia, from the reign of Seti I until the collapse of pharaonic control of the area (c. 1294–1069 BC), on the basis of Egypt Exploration Society (EES) excavations in 1938–39 and 1948–50 (Hein 1991, 83; Edwards 2004, 106). At present, there is no evidence for any significant Dynasty 18 activity at the site, and the foundation of the walled town during the reign of Seti I is indicated by cartouches stamped on bricks in the town wall (Spencer 1997, 15–17). Construction and decoration of the sandstone temple were principally undertaken under Ramesses II, with further scenes and inscriptions added in the reigns of Merenptah, Amenmose, Ramesses III, Ramesses VI and Ramesses IX (Spencer 1997, 27–51). A year 6 inscription of Ramesses IX (c. 1120 BC) may represent the completion of the decoration; more importantly, it is the latest attested royal pharaonic inscription in Upper Nubia.

The identification of Amara West as the administrative centre of occupied Kush is based on the discovery of a sizeable building (E13.2) likely to have been the residence of the ‘deputy (*idnw*) of Kush.’ Door lintel and door-jamb fragments were discovered in this large building, some *in situ*, inscribed for a series of individuals who held the title (Spencer 1997, 164, 168–69, pls. 117a–b, 121a–b, 153b, 166a–b). The office of ‘deputy of Kush’ ranked immediately beneath that of the ‘viceroy of Kush,’ and was complemented by a ‘deputy of Wawat [Lower Nubia]’ based at Aniba (Dewachter 1976).

It is reasonable to assume these deputies lived within the area under their control. The burial of a ‘deputy of Wawat’ named Penniut, who held office under Ramesses VI, was found at Aniba (Steindorff 1937, 242–47, pls. 101–4), administrative centre of Lower Nubia (Wawat). A ‘deputy of Kush,’ Amenemope, was buried at Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 98, 227, fig. 435; 233–34, fig. 451; 277, fig. 537) during Dynasty 18, when the town fulfilled the role of administrative centre of Upper Nubia, prior to the existence of Amara West. Thus at least some ‘deputies’ were buried close to their official residences, within the territories they had administered on behalf of the pharaonic state. Some of these individuals may have been Egyptians, but a number are likely to have been indigenous to Nubia. If the acculturation of other elite Nubians of the time is typical (Säve-Söderbergh 1991), these deputies, their families and staff would not only have taken an Egyptian name, but also have chosen to be buried in tombs with Egyptian architecture and burial assemblages. Despite the preference for Egyptian-style burials, few inscribed remains were found. Titles attested include an overseer of workers (*hry-mr.w*), a royal messenger (*wp-nsw*), a scribe (*sš*) and a priest (*hm-ntr*) (for all titles see Schiff Giorgini 1971, 98–99). Given that Amara West seems to have superseded Soleb as seat of the deputy, it is reasonable to assume a similar range of officials would have been buried near that town.

In light of evidence from elsewhere in Nubia, the apparent absence of an elite New Kingdom cemetery at Amara West is rather puzzling, the EES excavations having apparently discovered Napatan (or even X-group) burials. The suggestion that Egyptians were returned to Egypt for interment (Spencer 2002, 2–3) would represent a departure from New Kingdom practises at other sites in Upper Nubia, for example at Sai, Tombos and Aniba, where Egyptians (or Egyptianised Nubians) were buried in pharaonic-style tombs.

Unfortunately, the archives pertaining to the EES excavations contain no detailed plans of the cemetery at Amara West; surveying may not even have been completed due to time pressures (Spencer 2002, 2–3). The result is confusion over the location of the cemetery partly excavated in 1939. In a preliminary report, Fairman described how

on the high ground to the north of the town is the New Kingdom cemetery, partially robbed, and in the intervening dried-up watercourse are a number of small mound graves of X-group type (Fairman 1939, 139).

The description accords well with the location of cemetery D, the subject of this paper, partly re-excavated in 2010 (Fig. 1), though if Fairman was using local ‘north’ (true ‘east/north east’), as elsewhere in the Amara records, it would fit better with post-New Kingdom cemetery C, itself partly re-excavated in 2009 (Spencer 2009, 57–60). A more detailed description by Fairman refers to the following sites (Spencer 2002, 1–2):

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Location</i>
A	New Kingdom cemetery	High ground immediately to the north of the town
B	Cemetery (post-NK?)	550m north west of E
C	Stone enclosures, robbed graves	800m south of the town
D	Cemetery	30 minutes walk west of A
E	X-group mounds	Between town and A

It is implicit in some of Fairman’s notes that site ‘A’ was excavated in 1939, and it was during these excavations that Tombs 101 and 112 were discovered. Now that these tombs have been re-located (see below), it might seem that Fairman was using true compass directions in the above descriptions, but this places ‘C’ south of the town, that is in the Nile. A possible solution, assuming local directions were being used, is that work did commence in a site to the true north east of the town (our cemetery C), but that it later moved to cemetery D, leading to the discovery of Tombs 101 and 112. The relative survey data, in the form of entries on each grave card (EES Archive II.7), provides a distance and azimuth to one of four survey stations (A–D all located within 50m of the kom [town?]). For example, for Tomb 107:

bearing on A: 182° 14’ 12”
bearing on B: 255° 22’ 10”

Plotting the distance and azimuth information allows the positions of individual tombs to be placed in relation to each other. Unfortunately, the resulting relative plan is difficult to reconcile with the known topography of the site. In particular, it is interesting that Tombs

101, 106 and 112 were not surveyed at all, and we propose here that they were in a different area of the site, namely cemetery D, than the majority of simple tombs. The latter group comprises Tombs 102–4, 107–8, 110–111 and 113–21, which all lie within an area of 46x36m. These tombs are likely to be in post-New Kingdom cemetery C, north east of the site proper. Tomb 105 was used as a designation for nine pit-graves, each further designated by a letter. The survey data here shows how the pits were between 4.05m and 545m from the same survey station. It is thus clear that the 1939 excavations sought a sample of graves across the cemeteries around the ancient site, though all of the tombs with a brick super- or substructure were found in our cemetery D (Fairman's cemetery 'A').

The burial grounds of Amara West were also included in the CNRS survey of the area around Abri, with three graves excavated at site 2-R-8 and 2-R-9. These two site designations in reality cover a continuous swathe of graves, designated cemetery C by the current project. These included a rectangular pit with two roughly-cut side chambers (Vila 1977, 28–31) and a pit with a lateral niche blocked with a schist blocking stone. At cemetery 2-R-56, dated to the New Kingdom, identical to our cemetery D, three tombs were excavated: two pit burials, and one with a lateral niche off a deep shaft (Vila 1977, 61–63).

Cemetery D: topography and extent

The cemetery presented here lies on the desert plateau 450m northwest of the town site, on the opposite side of the secondary Nile channel, now a dried up river bed (Figs. 1–2). On the desert plateau, shallow drifts of wind-blown sand have accumulated over Holocene alluvial deposits (2m deep in places) and outcrops of grey-black schist bedrock. This local stone has a tendency to erode into thin slabs, and, with ongoing exposure to the elements, breaks up into even smaller fragments. As a result of this erosion process, some areas of cemetery D are covered with a layer of schist gravel. Given this variety of materials—bedrock, exposed alluvium, schist gravel and wind-blown sand—and the poor preservation of superstructures, defining the extent of the cemetery, or even individual features, is rather difficult.

An initial survey in 2009 identified a stretch of ground visible in archive images from the 1939 excavations, and suggested that two low mounds may actually represent spoil from this work (Fig. 3). Surface cleaning promptly revealed the recognisable remains of the superstructure of G112 ('Tomb 112,' Fig. 8 and cover image), and a previously unknown tomb of similar construction to the north (designated G301). Beyond these tombs, circular patterns of undressed local black stone blocks indicated the possible presence of tumuli, while, in other places, shallow depressions filled with wind-blown sand and accompanied by eroded skeletal material marked the location of further graves.

In a bid to gain a better understanding of the extent of this cemetery, a magnetometry survey was undertaken in 2010. Using a Dual Array Bartington Grad 601-2 Fluxgate Magnetometer, the plotted data shows the presence of between 40 and 50 tombs over an area of 200x120m (Fig. 4). These are likely to include both simple burial pits and shafts providing access to subterranean chambers. The burial chambers themselves do not appear in the data, except where erosion of the alluvium has left the chambers at or near the present day surface level. Several clusters of graves are visible in the dataset, with the larger ones

around the pyramid chapels discussed below. Further grave pits may be obscured by layers of upcast. Additional features are visible beyond the area surveyed in 2010, notably to the north, thus the total extent of the ancient cemetery is not currently known. All tombs, from simple pits to built structures with multiple subterranean chambers, are assigned a G-number, with the tombs excavated by the EES, when rediscovered, being assigned a G-designation that matches the original tomb number (Fig. 5). The descriptions of the tombs below integrate evidence from the EES records.

Pyramid chapels

Only two such tombs provided with chapels and associated pyramids have been identified thus far, and it is possible that deflation will have removed traces of others. Excavation of subterranean features in future seasons, however, may result in the discovery of further burials that were originally provided with this classic New Kingdom form of funerary superstructure.

G112

One of the three large tombs excavated by the EES in 1939, the northern and eastern sides have been entirely eroded away over the past 70 years. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a superstructure consisting of a rectangular chapel aligned on an east-west axis with a small pyramid base (1.5x1.3m) attached to the west side (Figs. 6–8 and cover image). The superstructure was constructed of mud bricks (41x21x9cm), bonded with mud mortar; no traces of an inner or outer plastering, nor any painted surfaces, survived. Though the chapel walls are preserved to two courses in places, the pyramid base is limited to faint traces of the first course of bricks.

The rectangular shaft in the centre of the superstructure (2.3x1.3m; Fig. 6) was once sealed with large schist slabs; one slab was still *in situ* in 2009, and the archive images depict a pile of additional slabs on the surface in front of the structure (Fig. 3; Spencer 2002, pl. 7 [a, b]). Comparable stone coverings are known from the Dynasty 18 elite cemetery at Soleb (e.g., Schiff Giorgini 1971, 84–85, figs. 122–23). Removal of the wind-blown sand, accumulated within the excavated tomb since 1939, revealed a 2.6m-deep vertical shaft, cut through alluvium and a further metre of the underlying schist bedrock (Figs. 7, 10). Two roughly circular burial chambers are cut off the eastern and western sides of the shaft, accessible through well carved rectangular doorways (Fig. 9). No remnants of any blocking remain, but traces of mud plaster visible above the entrance to the eastern chamber suggest that the doors were originally sealed (Fig. 13). The two burial chambers are approximately 80cm in height (Fig. 7) with the western chamber being slightly larger (2.65x2.35m) than the eastern one (2.1x1.7m). It is notable that the walls and floor of both the shaft and chambers were carefully carved and smoothed, a significant undertaking given the nature of the bedrock (Fig. 12). While the western chamber was empty, unsurprising given the 1939 excavations, the eastern chamber still contained human bones; the archives do not refer to the discovery of skeletal remains in either chamber (Spencer 2002, 6). Though fragmentary, the bones clearly derive from more than one adult.

Upon excavation in 1939, G112 had clearly been previously looted, most likely in antiquity.

Only a small number of finds were recovered: two faience scarabs, some amulets, a carnelian earring, a copper-alloy fragment, and a large number of beads. The last group was interpreted as the remains of a bead net used for the covering of a burial. The majority of finds were recorded as coming from the eastern chamber, from the shaft, or their provenance was not specified (Spencer 2002, 6–8); the 17 pottery vessels are discussed further below. A single shallow grave pit (G303) of 1.8x0.6m, cut to a depth of 22cm, was discovered immediately north of G112 (Fig. 6). The size of the cut suggests it was intended for an adult burial, but it contained the burial of an infant aged ~1 year, covered with a heavily deteriorated organic object which may have been a basket (Fig. 16). Dating the grave is not possible, as no finds and only one siltware body sherd were encountered. The child burial may be a reuse of an older grave pit, given the discrepancy in size.

G301

A second pyramid tomb was discovered a short distance to the north of G112 (Figs. 14–15, 17–19). While the chapel (4.1x3m) is well preserved, only a few bricks of the pyramid base survive (Fig. 14). The chapel walls (bricks of 38x20x8–9cm) are preserved to a maximum of three courses (south wall, Fig. 19). While the northern and southern walls have a thickness of 60–65cm, the eastern and western walls are only 38–40cm thick. The coursing of the bricks is not regular, with the lower course on the west wall featuring bricks laid on edge, presumably to level out the uneven terrain.

In the centre of the chapel, a rectangular shaft (2x1.1m) descends to a depth of 2.8m, again cutting through alluvium and bedrock, providing access to two subterranean chambers, to the west and north east (Figs. 14–15, 21). This shaft was filled with wind-blown sand, though a deposit of brick rubble lay at the bottom, presumably from the entrance blocking of the northeastern chamber. A *shabti* made of fired clay (F8004, 18.5cm in height; Fig. 24) was found in this deposit; though of unusual form given the lack of a tripartite wig, the shape of the legs and feet is consistent with late New Kingdom *shabti* types (e.g., Schneider 1977, 43–44 [3.5.1.1, 3.5.2.1, 3.5.2.3]). The *shabti* is partly covered in salt incrustations and no traces of any painted decoration or inscription remain. A siltware bowl was also recovered from the shaft (C8105, Fig. 57).

Both burial chambers had once been sealed, and the rectangular entrance to the western chamber still preserved its mud brick blocking wall (Figs. 20, 22). Despite the largely intact nature of this sealing, the chamber had been violated in antiquity, through a narrow tunnel from the surface. By digging a tunnel, the robbers precluded the need to remove fill material from the shaft, and this method was found in others tombs in the cemetery (G101, G112). In the case of G301, however, the tunnelling seems to have caused much of the ceiling to collapse, covering the interior of the chamber with a 65cm thick layer of schist rubble and alluvial debris (Figs. 25, 28). Although the collapse crushed the burials and accompanying objects, it also seemingly prevented the robbers from removing any grave goods.

The vertical walls and even floor of the chamber (3.2x2.7m, original height 80cm) were carefully carved, and an intact edge of the ceiling indicates it was also cut flat (Figs. 23, 27). Towards the rear, western, part of the chamber, two extended north-south orientated, burials of a male (Sk 301-3) and a female (Sk 301-4) were placed side by the side (Fig. 14). Both were originally placed in wooden coffins (F8029, F8063), now largely reduced to powder through

termite activity; the male's coffin had been placed upon two large schist blocks. Fragments of wood, and also of white plaster with remnants of red, black and yellow pigments, hint at the original appearance of the coffins. No figures or hieroglyphs could be identified amongst these tiny fragments. Small pieces of textile, adhering to both skeletons, indicate that both bodies were wrapped in linen.

The burials were equipped with an array of vessels arranged around the walls of the chamber (Figs. 15, 28–29): five beer jars (C8004-8008), three plates (C8003, C8010, C8011) and a large amphora (C8009). The amphora bears a hieratic inscription reading 'year 10, wine of 3 days (fermentation) of the vineyard of Hormes' (Fig. 30); the palaeography suggests that the year date lies within the reign of Ramesses II (R. Demarée, pers. comm.). Few other objects accompanied the burials: a copper-alloy blade (F8024, Fig. 26), a faience scarab (F8023, Fig. 31) and the remains of a neonate piglet (F8035), all deposited near the feet of the female. The scarab bears the name of Ramesses II and depicts pharaoh offering a conical loaf of bread to an enthroned Amun-Ra, with the winged goddess Maat behind him.

In contrast to the western chamber, the northeastern chamber had been re-opened for further burials, and is also likely to have been robbed in antiquity. Its entrance was originally blocked with a large schist slab (90x35cm) and sealed with mud plaster; the slab still lay to one side of the doorway (Fig. 32). Immediately inside the entrance, two extended juvenile burials were found on top of each other (Sk 301-1 and Sk 301-2; Figs. 14, 33). Both had been tightly wrapped in an organic substance of which only fragile traces remain; the skeletons were disturbed below the knee, suggesting that they were not found in their original burial position. The back of the northeastern chamber was filled with disarticulated human remains of at least four more individuals piled up against the back wall, presumably from an earlier phase of burials, moved to create space for the consecutive burials (Fig. 35). These bones were completely disarticulated, in all likelihood indicating a long time period between their interment and the later burials (in such environmental conditions one would expect connective tissue to preserve some articulation).

Few finds were recovered from the fill deposits in the northeastern chamber, and none can be explicitly associated with individual skeletons. Fragments of wood and painted plaster (e.g., F8030, Fig. 36) again suggest that decorated coffins were used for the burials though it is not possible to ascertain if these derive from the earlier or later burials. Small finds recovered from the fill include several beads made of carnelian, bone, faience, ivory and red jasper (F8005, F8034, F8037), amulets in the form of *udjat*-eyes (F8014; F8006 [Fig. 57]) and cats (F8010), and earrings of red jasper and carnelian (F8051, Fig. 34). While some of them were found in alignment, suggestive of a composite necklace, the majority were found loosely distributed within the fill. A faience scarab bearing four *uraei* crowned with sun discs was also found in the chamber (F8022, Fig. 37). No complete vessels were found in this chamber; the sherds are discussed below in relation to dating.

Vaulted brick tombs

G101

Also excavated by the EES in 1939, Tomb G101 differs from the pyramid chapels in having a

rectangular mud brick structure built within a rectangular cut into the alluvium and bedrock. When first excavated, remnants of a mud brick enclosure wall were still preserved (Fig. 38; Spencer 2002, pl. 2 [b]), but no details of its plan were recorded. None of this superstructure survives today (Figs. 39–40), thus it is not possible to establish whether a pyramid was associated with the tomb.

The central chamber (3.2x1.6m, depth 2m) is lined by mud brick walls on all four sides, with its western part covered by a vault (Figs. 40–43), still partly intact today, constructed of two parallel rows of thin bricks (32x16–17x6cm). Its outer and inner sides were coated with a thick layer of mud plaster (2–3cm); schist stones and sherds were used as keystones. No vault was provided over the eastern end of the excavated chamber, thus creating a shaft through which the subterranean spaces could be accessed. While the southern wall of the shaft is intact, the eastern and northern walls are largely destroyed.

Two arched doorways (eastern height 75cm, width 80cm; western width 89cm, height not preserved), provided access from the brick-lined central chamber to rock-cut chambers to the east and west (Fig. 45); it is unknown if the doorways were originally blocked by a wall or stone slab, as found in other tombs in cemetery D. A large sandstone slab, found leaning against the north wall of the shaft, may derive from one of the door blockings. In contrast to the elaborate brick doorways, the rock-cut entrances themselves are summarily carved (Fig. 44).

The oval eastern chamber is the larger of the two at 3.3 x 2.15m (65–80cm in height, Fig. 46); the western room is circular in plan (diameter 2.6m; height 70cm). Both chambers had been looted in antiquity, with robbers again using narrow tunnels cut from the surface directly into the subterranean rooms. As with G301, the ceiling collapsed around the opening in both chambers. During the cutting of the chambers, a supporting column of stone was left in place. No finds were discovered in the wind-blown sand which filled both chambers; the records from the 1939 excavations list two scarabs, a faience *udjat*-eye, a large number of beads of precious stone, faience and glass, fragments of a copper-alloy vessel, fragments of coffins and painted plaster as well as a few fragments of textile, although no precise findspots are indicated (Spencer 2002, 4–5, pls. 4–5). The EES archives refer to a single skull recovered from the eastern chamber; 15 vessels were also discovered (see below).

G305

Located 40m north of the cluster of tombs described above (Figs. 47–49), G305 is distinct in featuring a tumulus superstructure. The low oval-shaped mound (diameter 8m) is formed from alluvial silt, presumably the material created when the chambers were first excavated during construction of the tomb. The surface of the tumulus was covered by a loose scatter of local schist stones and heavily eroded fragments of pottery and human bone, indicating that the tomb had been looted in antiquity. Wind erosion had severely truncated the tumulus, exposing the eastern and western subterranean burial chambers.

Removal of wind-blown sand revealed a rectangular chamber (2.8x1.2m; depth 1.2m), lined with mud brick walls (70cm in height; bricks 37–39x17–18x8–10cm), cut into the alluvium. The floor coincided with the top of the bedrock. On the western side, the shaft was originally covered by a mud brick vault, 1.9m in height, of which only the last course on

the north side remains (Figs. 50, 52). The vault was constructed with a single course of thin mud bricks (32x20x5–6cm), bearing distinctive finger grooves. On the eastern side of the brick-lined chamber, the lack of a vaulted cover created a rectangular shaft (depth 650mm) for access from the surface.

Two narrow brick doorways provided access from the central chamber to rooms on the west and east. The entrance to the eastern chamber (Fig. 51), perhaps once arched, was originally sealed with a mud brick wall, later partly dismantled to allow reuse of the chamber. Though the lintel, threshold and northern side seem to be original, the bricks on the southern side are later additions, associated with secondary burials. The shape of the entrance to the western chamber is even less clear (85x45cm; Fig. 52). Large rectangular schist stone slabs placed on their ends, behind the entrance, may once have lined the entrance.

The central, brick-lined chamber, contained the heavily disturbed and entirely disarticulated remains of at least four different individuals, together with well-preserved fragments of wooden objects, some of which could be identified as feet from funerary beds (F8011) and maybe also coffins. It remains unclear whether the individuals were originally buried in the central portion of the chamber or whether they were removed from either of the chambers. Several facts argue for the former. Only upper body parts were recovered, exclusively in the western half of the shaft; perhaps the remains of west-east orientated burials. Furthermore, neither of the chambers yielded bones that did not belong to the skeletons buried in that chamber: if bodies had been dragged out to clear the side chambers for new burials, it is unlikely that some bones would not have been left behind. Burials in the shaft, or central part of the tomb, are also found in tombs at Tombos (Unit 6; Smith 2003, 145).

The tops of the two burial chambers do not survive, though the squat doorways argue for a relatively modest height, dictated by a wish to avoid cutting into the bedrock. The western chamber of G305 (diameter of 2–2.2m; preserved to 1.2m in height) contained the remains of four adults (Figs. 47, 53–54). Three of them were found superimposed on the bottom of the chamber, with only the uppermost (Sk 305-4) being fully intact. Skeletons 305-5 and 305-6 were partly disturbed, though largely articulated, indicating that their disturbance occurred not long after burial (Fig. 54). Skeleton 305-4 was orientated head to the north and feet to the south even though there are indications that this was in fact not its original burial position; remnants of wood around the body suggest it may have once been within a coffin. Small fragments of textile, now adhering to the bones, indicate that the body was wrapped, a conclusion supported by the position of some bones. The lower burials were covered with a 40cm thick deposit of fine sand, blown in through the door. The third burial (Sk 305-3; Fig. 53) was found resting on top of this sand, orientated east-west. Thus, while skeletons 305-4, 305-5 and 305-6 represent one continuous phase of burials within the western chamber, skeleton 305-3 might indicate reuse of the chamber after some time, during which the tomb shaft was open. The human remains are well preserved and comprise remnants of hair, skin and brain tissue, and a large number of coprolites.

Only two adult individuals were recovered from the eastern chamber of the tomb (diameter of 2m, approximate height 1.15m), again superimposed (Figs. 47, 55). While the lower skeleton (Sk 305-1) was buried in an extended position orientated north-south, the upper one (Sk 305-2) is a slightly flexed burial with head to the east. Both bodies were again surrounded by remnants of a dark organic substance, and remains of textile wrapping around

the skeletons. Given their fragmentary state, it is not yet clear whether the organic brown material represents the remains of coffins or matting in which the bodies were wrapped; archaeobotanical analyses will be undertaken in due course. Apart from a single blue faience bead (F8061) associated with Sk 305-1, no objects were recovered from the chamber. Further grave goods were limited to a beer jar (C8012) and a plate (C8013); it is not clear with which burials these objects should be associated. Two large schist stones may have been intended to support the wooden coffins off the floor, as in G301. A small cut (G306), presumably for a burial, east of G305, yielded no skeletal material, but two very eroded sherds of Nubian vessels. Immediately to the south lies another cut (G307, Fig. 56), but its excavation is not yet complete.

G106 (Spencer 2002, 6, pl. 14C)

This is another vaulted brick tomb found by the EES. Its location is as yet unknown, and may not even be in cemetery C (see above). The brief description of the tomb does not mention any details about the substructure (Spencer 2002, 6).

Other tombs

G300

This grave features a shallow tumulus superstructure, formed from alluvial silt and schist gravel, presumably the debris dug up while excavating the substructure of the grave. The top of the mound was covered with schist stones of 10–30cm in size.

The oval grave shaft (1.1x0.75m) was cut to a depth of 1.3m, the lower 65cm cut through the schist bedrock (Fig. 58). Two small burial chambers are located to the east and west of the shaft, accessible through narrow, triangular doorways 85cm (western, Fig. 59) and 60cm (eastern) in height. In contrast to those tombs discussed above, no remnants of blockings were found. The western chamber contained the disturbed and comingled remains of at least three adults; only some hand and feet bones remained in articulation. Termite activity has severely damaged these bones, and might also explain the almost complete lack of remains of coffins or other objects of wood. Only a few powdery traces remained of organic objects but it is impossible to reconstruct their shape; a considerable number of plaster fragments—some 26cm in length, and bearing the imprint of wooden surfaces—may attest to the presence of plastered wooden coffins. No traces of paint were found on these fragments. The eastern chamber, which was considerably smaller than the western one, was empty with the exception of some unarticulated human bones (Fig. 60). The tomb yielded a small number of eroded sherds, principally from the shaft.

The most distinctive feature of G300 is its apparent simplicity. Apart from being considerably smaller than the other communal tombs discovered in cemetery D, and the absence of a preserved superstructure, its construction lacks the care afforded the pyramid and vaulted tombs: the shaft and chambers are roughly hewn, not smoothed, and do not have vertical side walls. Furthermore, the entrances to each chamber have not been dressed to form regular edges (Fig. 59).

G304

Immediately north of the chapel of G301, and originally partly over it (the 1939 trench had destroyed its southern edge), lies a low tumulus of 6.39m in diameter, preserved to a maximum height of 40cm. The mound is formed from schist gravel placed directly upon the alluvial surface, with some larger schist slabs scattered across the surface (Figs. 61–62). A depression filled with wind-blown sand may partly be the result of robber activity, with the remains of a small original cut below (8042). No skeletal material, or funerary goods, were found in and around this monument, other than some sherds. These are poorly preserved but nonetheless significant, as all are fragments of Nubian pots (Fig. 68; see further below).

G302

A single adult burial (G302), was revealed at the northeastern corner of G301 (Fig. 14), immediately beneath the surface deposit of wind-blown sand. No remains of grave goods, superstructure or even a grave cut could be identified. Nevertheless, the flexed position of the burial does indicate a different funerary tradition; the 1939 excavation also found simple pit burials with flexed skeletons (Spencer 2002, 8–14, pls. 12–15).

Dating the burials

Fairman's initial assessment of the cemetery excavated in early 1939 was that the 'tombs are New Kingdom, have been robbed, reoccupied and robbed again' (Spencer 2002, 2). This assessment has proved to be relatively accurate, borne out by current excavations in the same cemetery. His colleague John MacDonald assigned Tombs 101 and 112 (along with 102–4) to the New Kingdom, but others as 'X-Group (?)'; the latter interpretation can be ruled out. As the 1939 excavations found no explicit evidence for any of the tombs being New Kingdom in date, subsequent scholars assigned the tombs to the early Napatan era. This assessment was based on parallels with the cemetery at Missiminia, south west of Abri on the opposite bank of the Nile (Vila 1980; Spencer 2002, 3). The new excavations provide clear evidence, however, that some of the tombs were built and used during the New Kingdom. Nonetheless, reuse was widespread, into post- New Kingdom times, but accompanied by the construction of new tombs. Vila also admitted that the vaulted tombs at Missiminia on which the redating was based might, in fact, have been built before the Napatan period and then reused (Vila 1980, 31–32). Integrating the records of the ceramics recorded by the EES, although it is unclear if all sherds were being collected or only unusual ones and complete vessels, with the material recovered in 2010, it is possible to assign date-ranges for when tombs were constructed and used for burials (Figs. 63–67).

The western chamber of G301 can be securely dated to Dynasty 19, and in all likelihood the reign of Ramesses II. The undisturbed ceramic assemblage (Fig. 63) featured five beer jars (two with painted rims) and three plates with red-painted rims. Such forms were popular throughout the New Kingdom, and even afterwards, but the marl D wine jar with its long, narrow profile and convex neck is of Ramesside date (Aston 1996, 305 fig. 203 [c]; Andreu 2002, 89–90). Its inscription suggests a date in the reign of Ramesses II, which correlates well with the scarab bearing that king's prenomen. The form of the ceramic *shabti* (Fig. 57) is also

consistent with such a date.

It seems reasonable to believe that the other, northeastern, chamber of G301 was constructed at a similar time, and that the mound of skeletal remains pushed to the back of the chamber could be the remains of the original burials, moved during a reuse of this chamber. The ceramics indicate that the chamber was in use for several centuries after the end of the New Kingdom. Pottery from the northeastern chamber is similar to that found in the shaft and indeed scattered on the surface around G301. The form of the plates (C8103 from the surface, C8119 from the northeastern chamber) do not correlate well with the examples from the tombs excavated in 1939 (red-painted rims or red slips are not represented in the drawings), nor those found in cemetery C (see Spencer 2009, col. pls. 23–24). Rather, they closely parallel examples from Elephantine (Dynasties 10–21: Aston 2008, 90 [299], 225 [1587]) even if the form persists after the New Kingdom in Egypt (Aston 1999, pls. 21 [603], 30 [933–4]). Bases of large jars, forms known in Egypt from both the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, were found on the surface (C8116), in the shaft (C8117) and inside the northeastern chamber (C8002). In addition to these two forms, thirty rim fragments from beer jars were found in surface deposits around the grave, perhaps reflecting their use in funerary rituals in the chapel. Finally, a bowl with red-painted rim (C8105, Fig. 57), found in the shaft, can be compared to an example from Tomb 2-V-6/31 in Missiminia (Vila 1980, fig. 21 [2]).

The other pyramid chapel (G112) was almost entirely devoid of archaeological material when re-excavated in 2010, other than a small number of sherds, and some skeletal remains found in the western chamber. Given that G301 lies on the same alignment, and is very similar in terms of architecture and layout to G112 (Figs. 5–6, 14), it is tempting to conclude that it was also an elite Ramesside tomb. The 1939 excavators distinguished ceramics found in four different parts of G112: outside the tomb, in the shaft, in the eastern chamber and by the door to the western chamber (Fig. 64). The recorded assemblage is notable for a wide variety of forms, the majority of which can be dated to the New Kingdom or Napatan era. Some forms, however, are known to have been in use across that whole time span. For example, an ovoid jar found outside the grave (AW496), could date to the late New Kingdom (Aston 1999, pl. 5, 116), post-New Kingdom (Aston 1999, pl. 19 [558]) or even the mid-8th to 7th centuries BC (Aston 1999, pl. 52 [1616]).

Forms typical of the New Kingdom include a beer jar (AW502) and plate; their findspot in the eastern chamber suggests that this space once held a Ramesside burial. The presence of only one beer jar contrasts with the number found in G301, although our excavations yielded further fragments scattered on the surface, along with a bread mould. Further forms dating to the late New Kingdom include a funnel-necked jar (AW498; phase I of Aston 1996, 63, 296 fig. 194 [d]; for an example from the tomb of Ramesses IV, see Aston 1996, fig. 17 [1]), a globular jar with a red rim (AW499, compare Aston 1996, fig. 17 [2]) and globular jars typical of late Dynasty 19 and Dynasty 20 (AW512 and AW497; see Aston 2008, 50 fig. 20 [q] and 53 fig. 23 [b]). In Egypt, this last form continues in use during the Third Intermediate Period, sometimes with a red slip (Aston 1989, 219 and 605; 2008, 140).

Nonetheless, Napatan ceramics were also found in the eastern chamber of G112. A slender marl jar (AW494) is similar to examples known from Elephantine (mid 8th/7th centuries BC: Aston 1999, pl. 55, 1685) but also Missiminia (Vila 1980, fig. 17 [1]), a globular

marl jar features a ribbed profile diagnostic of the 8th–7th centuries BC (Aston 1999, pl. 55, 1690) and bowl AW495 is similar to a bowl with a painted rim found in Tomb 2-V-6/31 at Missiminia (Vila 1980, fig. 21 [2]). Napatan ceramics were also recovered from the shaft of G112: jar AW503 can be paralleled at Thebes in Dynasty 25 and 26 (Aston, 2008, 360, 143, 2966), while bottle AW500 has parallels in Tomb 2-V-6/18A at Missiminia (Vila 1980, fig. 17 [2]) and at Sesebi (Spence et al. 2009, 43, pl. 6).

It seems reasonable to conclude that the eastern chamber was cut and used for a New Kingdom burial, but was later re-opened in Napatan times. The western chamber, however, seems to have been empty; it is not clear when the two New Kingdom plates (AW491, AW492) were placed by the entrance to this western chamber. Of course, the possibility of reuse of earlier ceramic vessels during secondary burials makes such chronological classifications somewhat tentative.

Two tombs (G101, G305) feature a brick-lined subterranean chamber with vaulted roof, providing access to two burial chambers. The architectural form is related to tombs found at other New Kingdom cemeteries in Nubia (see below), and the position of G101, between and aligned with G301 and G112, is suggestive of a similar date (Fig. 5). Ceramics recovered from the tomb, however, provide scant evidence of any New Kingdom use, and the tomb was dated to the Napatan Period on the basis of the 1939 excavation records (Vila 1980; Spencer 2002, 4). The EES archives record 15 vessels, seven from the western chamber and eight in the eastern chamber (Fig. 65). No pottery from the shaft or surface was recorded, although some sherds from beer jars and a fragment of a bread-mould were found in 2010. Given that this grave was ‘the best preserved and [...] the best recorded’ of those investigated in 1939 (Spencer 2002, 4), perhaps the ceramic assemblages in the burial chambers were relatively undisturbed. Only two of the vessels may date to the New Kingdom. Although the form of the tall-necked bottle from the eastern chamber (AW486) is found in Third Intermediate Period Egypt (Aston 1999, pl. 19 [558]), the blue- and red-painted decor suggests a late New Kingdom date (Aston 1996, 63, 297 fig. 195 [e]; 1999, pl. 6 [119]), perhaps before the reign of Ramesses IV (see at Qantir, Aston 1989, 375, 1312–13). Vessel AW509 was assigned to Dynasty 20 (Spencer 2002, 5), but this form is also found in Dynasty 19 (Aston 2008, 50, fig. 20 [b]).

The remainder of the vessels are of post-New Kingdom date. In both the western and eastern chambers of G101, shallow bowls with a thick red-painted band on the rim are similar to examples found in cemetery C, in burials of the 10th–8th centuries BC (Spencer 2009, col. pls. 23 [C9122, C9121], 24 [C9009]). In Egypt, such bowls are dated to the 11th–10th centuries BC (e.g., Memphis: Aston and Jeffreys 2007, fig. 42). Bowls AW488, AW507 and AW513 are similar to those found in Tombs 2-V-6/51 (Vila 1980, fig. 32 [3]) and 2-V-9/69 (Vila 1980, fig. 40) at Missiminia, ostensibly of Napatan date. Meanwhile, bowl AW484 is similar to examples from G112 (AW495) and G301 (C8105), and the bowl with red-painted rim from Tomb 2-V-6/31 in Missiminia (Vila 1980, fig. 21 [2]). Vessel AW485, perhaps the rim of a bottle (such as AW500 from G112) also dates to the Napatan era (Spence et al. 2009, 43, pl. 6). It is notable that beer jars are absent from G101, a phenomenon matched in cemetery C, and given the range of forms described (similar to Tomb ARA 15 at Hillat el-Arab, Vincentelli 2006, 99), it seems the tomb was constructed and used in the Napatan Period, contemporary with the reuse of adjacent Ramesside tombs (G112 and G301).

A plate and a beer jar (Fig. 66), both with red-painted rims, were found *in situ* in the eastern chamber of G305. The form of these vessels cannot be precisely dated, as they were popular in the New Kingdom and its aftermath. Within the shaft, and in surface deposits around the tomb, however, the pottery is clearly of Napatan date. Two globular jars (C8113 and C8112) find parallels in mid-8th and 7th century Egypt (Aston 1999, pl. 63 [1867]), while a slender jar with flaring neck (C8115) is probably contemporary (similar to AW494 from G101). The eroded surface of these sherds cautions against the assumption that they reflect a reuse of the tomb for burials; the sherds may simply represent debris fallen into the shaft. It is also worth noting that G305 features the only remnants of a funerary bed found anywhere in cemetery D, in contrast to cemetery C, where this type of furnishing was typical in all of the larger tombs. Of course, pit burials such as G302, and those found by the 1939 archaeologists (Spencer 2002, 8–14, pls. 12–15), are not possible to date, but there is no reason that they cannot be contemporary with the more grandiose New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom tombs surrounding them.

Elsewhere in the cemetery, G300 is difficult to date. The cutting of the chambers is rather coarse compared to that in G112 and G301, and badly eroded pottery was only found in the shaft, not in either chamber (Fig. 67). Sherds from two beer jars and three plates (two with a red-painted rim) cannot be closely dated, as they are forms common across the chronological span of cemetery D. In addition, two small sherds of Nubian ware were found. The pottery from G304, a small tumulus, only included fragments of Nubian pottery (Fig. 68); while this tomb is likely to post-date the New Kingdom (it was built over the remains of G301), a more refined dating is not currently possible. Amongst the subsidiary graves investigated in 2010 (G302, G303), the lack of ceramic remains makes dating impossible.

In summary, it seems the cemetery was first used for burials during the early Ramesside Period, though many of the tombs were then re-opened for later burials, perhaps after the collapse of Egyptian control over the area. It is even possible that the large tombs with pyramid-chapels (G112, G301) were designed with only one, western, burial chamber, with the second chambers representing part of a post-New Kingdom reuse. At this period, new tombs were also constructed. Further fieldwork in cemetery D at Amara West should elucidate how the later use of the necropolis related to the earlier tombs, and also investigate the nature and date of a number of other tumulus tombs in the cemetery.

Cultural expression in burial: integrating indigenous and pharaonic traditions

The excavations in 2010 have shown that an elite, Egyptian-style, cemetery existed at Amara West during the Ramesside Period. During the town's heyday as administrative centre of occupied Kush, a number of elite individuals were buried in a style consistent with that prevalent in pharaonic Egypt. Above ground, an offering chapel, perhaps vaulted, and possibly whitewashed or painted, provided the focal point for the funerary cult, with an eastern entrance allowing the morning sun to flood the chapel with light. The final element of the visible tomb was a small pyramid of mud brick, perhaps once plastered and painted white.

This type of superstructure is found throughout New Kingdom Nubia, as far south as Tombos. The architectural form is exemplified by the tombs at Soleb, where stone architectural

elements included doors and pyramidia (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 79–340), or at Aniba in Lower Nubia (Steindorff 1937). The pyramid is, of course, a feature of many New Kingdom tombs throughout the Nile Valley, such as at Saqqara (Martin 1991) and Deir el-Medina (e.g., Bruyère 1924, pl. 30); the importance of such solar iconography is evident when very modest burials were accompanied by triangular-topped stelae, as in the South Tombs Cemetery at Tell el-Amarna (late 18th Dynasty; Kemp 2006, 37–39, figs. 12–13; 2008, 31). The focal point of the chapels at Amara West may have been a stela or offering table (see Schiff Giorgini 1971, 83; Minault and Thill 1974, 81), though remnants of such artefacts are yet to be found at Amara West. The two pyramid tombs in cemetery D do not preserve any trace of a brick enclosure wall outlining the tomb precinct, as found at Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 82–83), Sai (Geus 2004, 116, figs. 90, 91), and Tombos (Smith 2003, 138–43). Many of the tombs at these three sites feature a pyramid with a much larger footprint than the offering chapel before it; the reverse proportions are found at Amara West. The majority of published New Kingdom pyramid-tombs in Nubia date to Dynasty 18, not the Ramesside Period as at Amara West. Beneath ground, the provision of multiple burial chambers off a shaft is also found at Soleb, Sai and Tombos, though examples with a series of interconnected chambers are also found at Soleb, where the chambers are sometimes cut with vault-shaped ceilings (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 84–86). In all tombs, examples of stone slabs used to close the chambers were found; the entrances would have been easy to open and close for additional burials.

The other type of large tomb in cemetery D at Amara West, that with a vaulted subterranean chamber with access to two burial chambers (G101, G106 and G305), varies somewhat from the examples found at other sites in Upper Nubia. As the superstructure is only known from the 1939 photos, and was already heavily eroded at that time, its exact plan is unclear; at Missiminia, a tomb with a single vaulted chamber may have had a low mound over the top (Vila 1980, 26 [Tomb 314]), though those vaulted tombs at this site feature only one chamber, reached by a sloping descendary (Vila 1980, 21, type V). In the rather different environment of Serra East, low mounds were created over the burial shafts of some tombs, fronted by built chapels (e.g., Williams 1993, 162–63).

Vaulted superstructures are found in some New Kingdom tombs at Sai, above a shaft leading to one or more subterranean burial chambers (Minault and Thill 1974), but such architecture is typically within the subterranean part of the tomb. In another cemetery at Sai, vaulted brick-lined subterranean chambers are encountered (Gratien 2002, 220–21, 224), as at Tombos (Smith 2003, 142–45, fig. 6.9). In some of the latter examples, staircases provided access, and additional chambers lay off the vaulted rooms. Thus far excavations at Amara West have yet to uncover examples of tombs with descending staircases, in either cemetery C and D; descendaries are a common feature in Napatan and later cemeteries, such as at Missiminia (Vila 1980, 21, types IV and V).

Vaulted brick architecture is as much a New Kingdom funerary tradition as the pyramid, with tombs found throughout the Nile Valley and Delta, for example that of the Viceroy of Nubia Hori (temp. Ramesses III/IV) at Tell Basta (Habachi 1957, 97–102), and tombs at Abydos (Garstang 1901, pl. 35) and Tell el-Amarna (Kemp 2006, 30–36 fig. 6). Thus these burials at Amara West were placed in a consciously Egyptianising architectural setting, though with a more indigenous appearance above ground: the low mound.

Although the chronological classification of graves in the cemetery is likely to be refined

with future work, it is striking how many different tomb types are encountered in a relatively restricted area. While such a variety is familiar at sites such as Aniba or Tell el-Amarna (Kemp 2008, 42), other cemeteries have more defined zones, with distinct tomb types in each. This is the case for cemeteries associated with two important Egyptian settlements in Upper Nubia. The pyramid cemetery and the contemporary vaulted brick tombs at Sai are located in distinct, though adjacent cemeteries (Geus 2004, 115), while at Tombos the pyramid tombs, vaulted brick tombs and tumuli are confined to three different zones (both for New Kingdom and later burials, Smith 2007a, 347; 2007b, 3). It is rather early to speculate whether the tombs in cemetery D represent communal tombs, perhaps for family groups, or are examples of opportunistic appropriation of earlier tombs. Both phenomena seem to occur at Tombos (Smith 2003, 136–66), Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 86–87) and Sai (Thill 2007). At Amara West, the western chamber of G301 was only used for the burial of a man and woman, despite plenty of available space for further bodies. The ceiling may have collapsed here shortly after the initial burial, precluding any reuse. That communal burials, rather than single interments, continued at Amara West after pharaonic state control waned shows how embedded aspects of Egyptian funerary ritual had become in this region, though by the early first millennium BC, such phenomena may have been seen as essentially indigenous to the region. The ancient inhabitants lacked the perspective over centuries available to the modern scholar.

A striking feature of cemetery D is the apparent lack of subsidiary burials of infants and children, a notable phenomenon in cemetery C, where several single child burials were found scattered around the larger communal tombs (Spencer 2009, 59). Furthermore, bones of infants and children were not encountered amongst any of the larger tombs. The apparent lack of child burials is unlikely to be a result of low childhood mortality; it seems more reasonable to assume that the children were either buried in separate places or in a distinctive zone of the cemetery which has yet to be located. Separate areas for the graves of young infants and children within a necropolis are reported from other New Kingdom sites such as cemetery G at Gurob (Brunton and Engelbach 1927, 3), but are also found in the *Kerma Classique* cemetery at nearby Sai (Murail et al. 2004). The scarcity of sub-adult remains is similarly noted in the New Kingdom cemetery at Tombos (Buzon 2006). Burial of children within settlement areas is another possibility, though evidence for this practise has yet to be found at Amara West.

Identification of the ethnicity of the individuals buried in cemetery D is not presently possible, though strontiumisotope analyses to assess region of origin may have potential at this site (see Buzon et al. 2007). How any results correlate with architectural form and burial assemblage would prove particularly interesting. At present, the choice of objects to accompany the dead is worth consideration. The archaeologically intact double burial of Dynasty 19 (G301) is wholly Egyptian in form, with wooden (anthropoid?) coffins, a scarab, a copper-alloy blade, five beer jars, three plates and a wine-jar. In the other chamber, which was subject to reuse, the burials were also in coffins, provided with Egyptian necklaces and in one case a scarab. The small fragment of an ivory or bone plaque (F8026) in this eastern chamber may point towards a more 'Nubian' artefact type; objects of this type were also found in the post-New Kingdom cemetery C (Spencer 2009, 59, pl. 26). The *shabti*, though unusual in form, clearly reflects an interest in Egyptian funerary traditions; an artefact type also found at Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 93), Sai (Minault and Thill 1974, 89–90) and

Tombos (Smith 2003, 146–49). Heart scarabs and canopic jars, present at some of these sites, have yet to be found at Amara West. The evidence from G112 may largely pertain to a post-New Kingdom reuse, but the objects are still fundamentally pharaonic in style (beads, scarabs, amulets, pottery; see Spencer 2002, 6–8). For the vaulted brick tombs, G101 had been badly disturbed, and the material recovered may relate to both Ramesside and post-New Kingdom assemblages, but it is interesting that fragments of copper-alloy bowls, and perhaps even a wooden bed, were found (Spencer 2002, 5), reflecting a desire that one or more of those interred were accompanied by recognisably Nubian objects. In G305, architecturally similar to G101, the presence of both a fragment of a funerary bed (F8011), and the flexed position of some skeletons (Sk 305-2) underlines that indigenous traditions were entering into the burial assemblages in the aftermath of the New Kingdom, a phenomenon even more prominent in post-New Kingdom cemetery C (Spencer 2009, 58, pl. 24). At Hillat el-Arab, in contrast, funerary beds may have been more prevalent, and no evidence for wooden coffins was encountered (Vincentelli 2006, 5). Though adjacent to the Egyptian temples at Jebel Barkal, Hillat el-Arab is far upstream from the heartland of Egyptian occupation and associated cemeteries. Finally, the presence of linen wrappings adhering to the skeletal remains suggests some form of mummification was taking place with both the New Kingdom and post-New Kingdom individuals. Without finding traces of embalming oils and fluids, or examples of the ethmoidal bone being deliberately broken, it may be that a simple wrapping of the dead sufficed, as attested at Tombos (Smith 2003, 160–62).

The ceramics buried with the dead, and those used in any ongoing rites in and around the tomb chapel, again suggest a predominately Egyptian cultural sphere, with the notable exception of tumulus G304, which is also of distinctive architectural form. Throughout these tombs, it is striking that almost no fragments of Nubian vessels were found within the burial chambers. Sherds with impressed, incised or burnished surface décor, typical of Nubian pottery found in the settlement at Amara West, were found only in surface deposits, or in subsidiary pits/burials around the large tombs (one Nubian sherd was found in the eastern chamber of G305). This is in contrast to the settlement, where Nubian sherds make up around 10% of the ceramic assemblages (see Spencer 2009, 55, col. pl. 21). Rather, Egyptian beer jars and plates predominate, presumably reflecting the bread and beer fundamental to Egyptian funerary rites. Within G301, the deceased was also provided with wine, probably imported, in jar C8009. Wine jars in marl D were produced specifically for wine transport and storage, perhaps in northern Egypt (Andreu 2002, 90). The Nile silt vessels found in cemetery D were presumably made locally, although pottery kilns have yet to be identified at Amara West. The marl vessels are likely to come from Egypt, including the Ramesside wine jar in marl D (C8009), but also Napatan vessels in marl A2 and A4. These attest to continuing links between the inhabitants of Amara West and Egypt, even after pharaonic control of the area lapsed, and possibly in the centuries prior to Egypt falling under direct Kushite control.

Ongoing fieldwork will allow these preliminary observations to be refined, and perhaps answer further questions. Should we expect larger-scale tombs at Amara West, for the ‘deputies of Kush’ and other officials and priests, as found at Soleb? With the evident post-New Kingdom use of cemetery D, what is the relationship between it and cemetery C, the latter apparently first used after the New Kingdom? Tumuli graves are scattered throughout cemetery D: are any of these contemporary with the Ramesside tomb-chapels, given that

further upstream, indigenous funerary traditions clearly persisted alongside the Egyptian ones (Welsby and Welsby-Sjöström 2007, 387–89)? Now that it is clear that burials of Dynasty 19 through the 9th century BC are preserved at Amara West, the site may throw light on aspects of the population in this region in the late New Kingdom and its aftermath, long thought to be an era of declining population and even abandonment (Edwards 2004, 111). The cemeteries at Amara West are also likely to prove another reminder that chronological developments in funerary traditions were not always synchronised with political periods.

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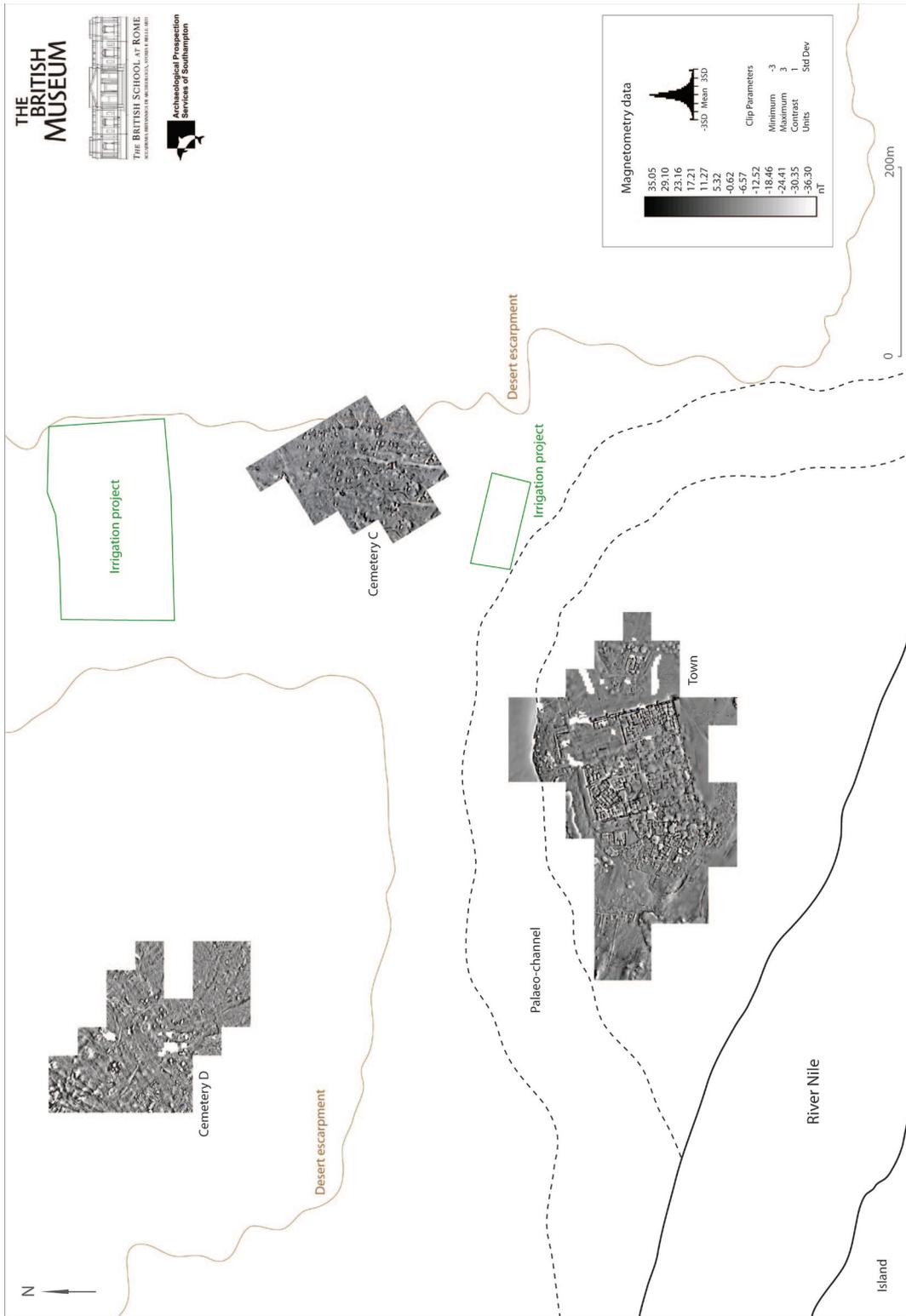


Fig. 1: Key map of Amara West, showing location of town site and cemeteries C and D.



Fig. 2: Amara West. View southwest over cemetery D.



Fig. 3: G112, as preserved in 1939, from the EES archives (courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society; see Spencer 2002, pl. 7 [a]).



Fig. 4: Cemetery D: magnetometry survey, with overlaid 10cm contours. Dashed rectangle indicates area of Figure 5.

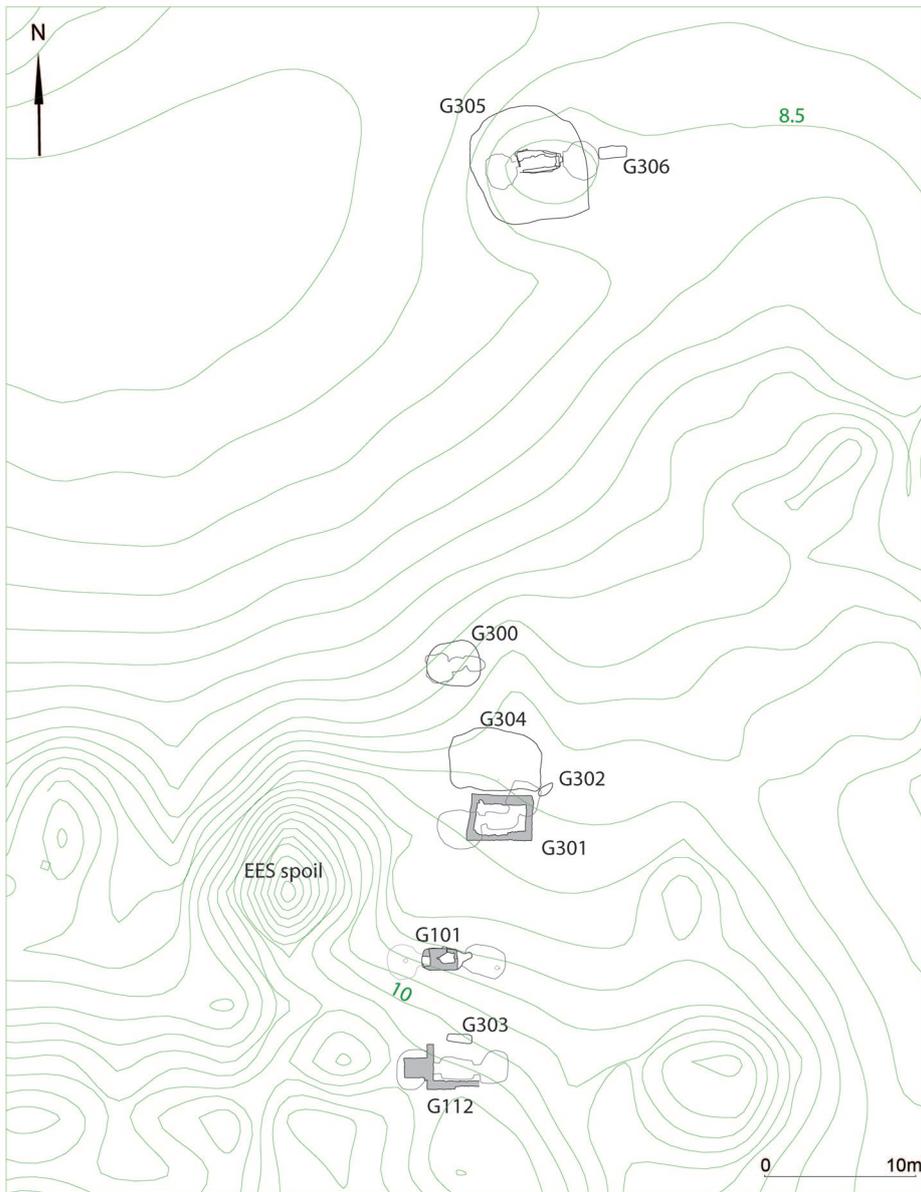


Fig. 5: Cemetery D: plan of burials excavated to date, with 10cm contours.

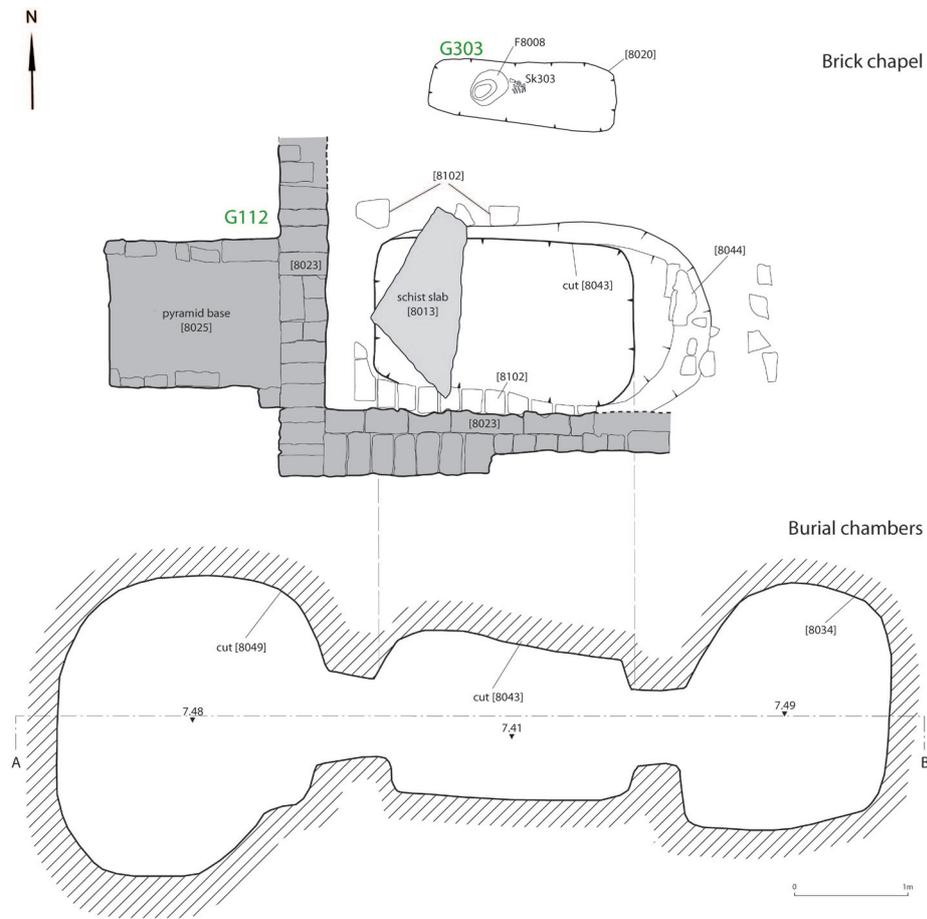


Fig. 6: G112, plan of superstructure and burial chambers with G303 to the north.

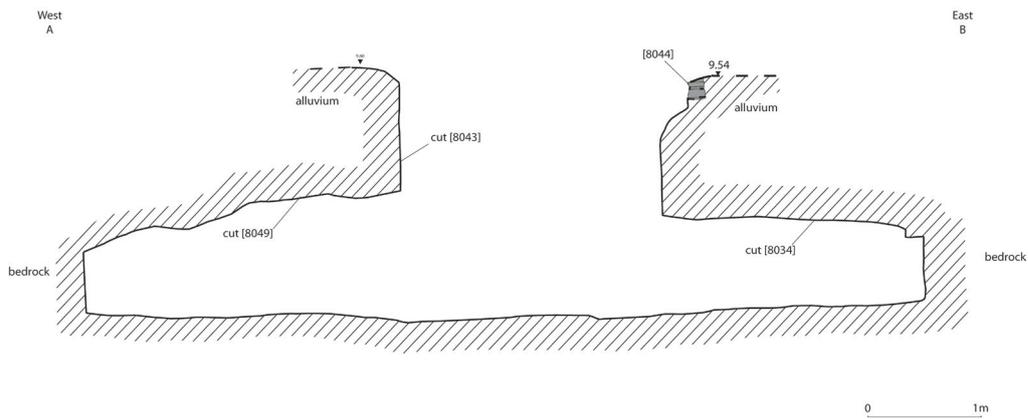


Fig. 7: G112, section through substructure.



Fig. 8: G112, preserved superstructure, with pyramid base in foreground.



Fig. 9: G112, doorway to eastern chamber.



Fig. 10: G112, view of shaft and entrance to eastern chamber.



Fig. 11: G301, shaft after excavation, with brick wall blocking entrance to western chamber.



Fig. 12: G112, eastern chamber with disturbed skeletal material.



Fig. 13: G112, detail of clay adhering to bedrock above doorway to eastern chamber, evidence of original sealing to burial chamber.

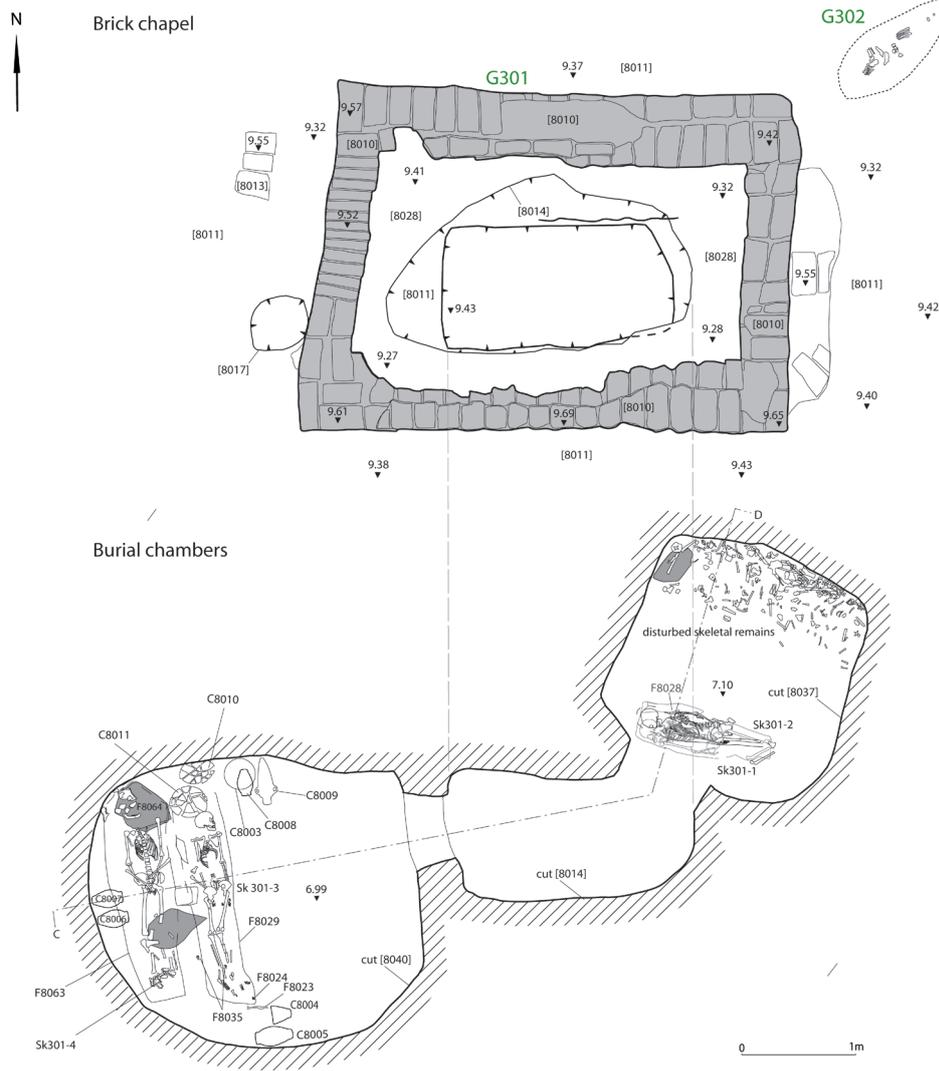


Fig. 14: G301, upper and chamber plans with skeletons.

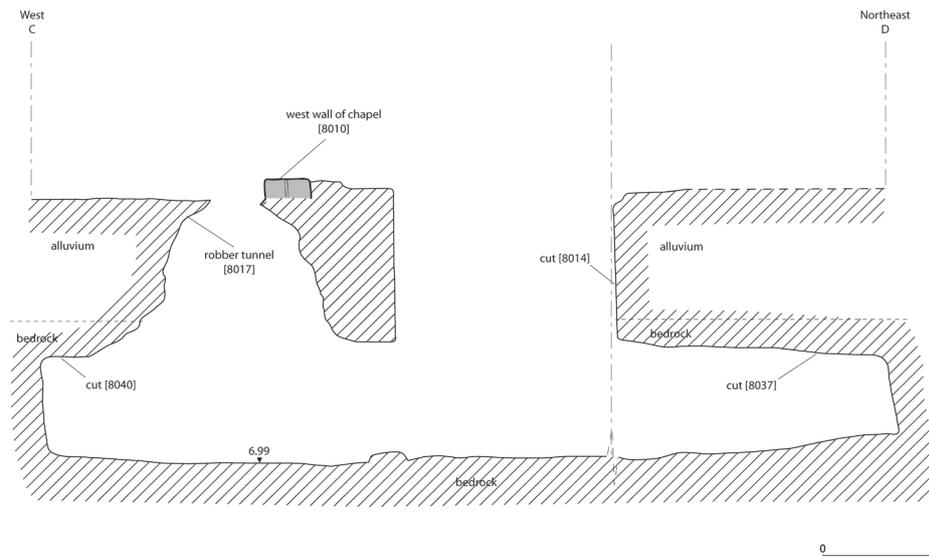


Fig. 15: G301, section through chambers.



Fig. 16: G303, pit-grave with child skeleton and remains of a basket.

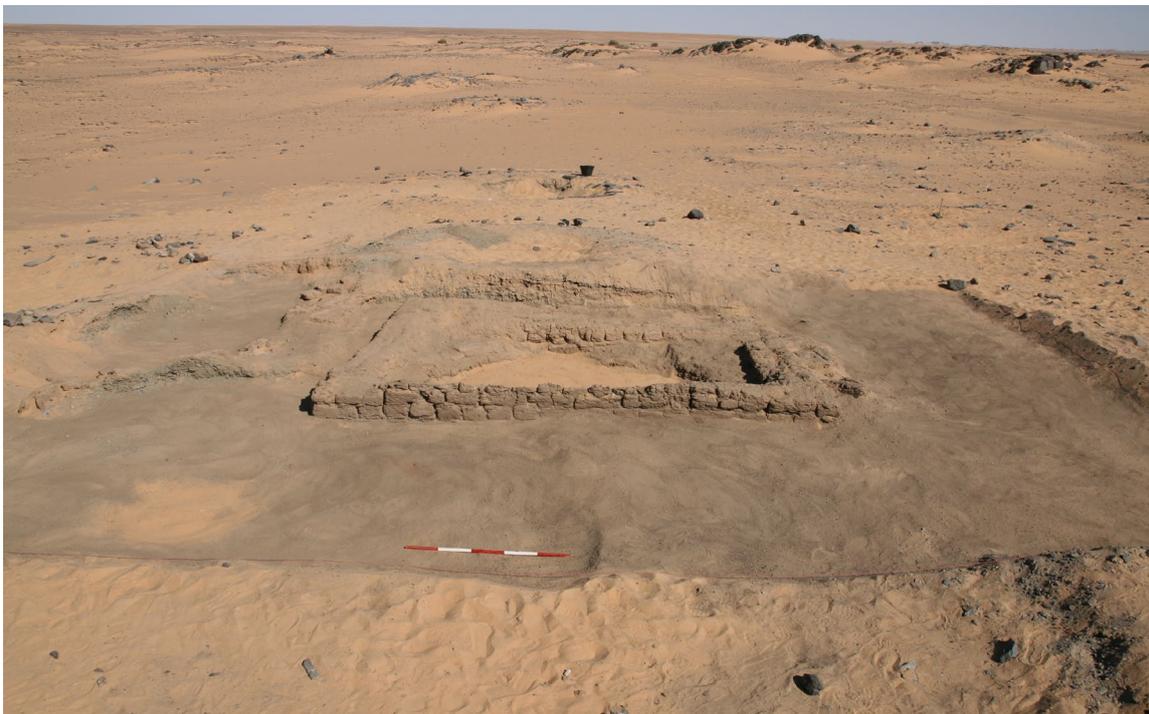


Fig. 17: G301, superstructure prior to excavation. Tumulus G304 in background.



Fig. 18: G301, view east over remains of superstructure prior to excavation of shaft.



Fig. 19: G301, detail of brickwork at exterior southwest corner of superstructure.



Fig. 20: G301, brick wall blocking access to western chamber.



Fig. 21: G301, after excavation, with robber hole expanded to allow access to western chamber. View west.



Fig. 22: G301, carved raised doorsill, at entrance to western chamber. View east.



Fig. 23: G301, door to western chamber after removal of brick wall and debris inside chamber.



Fig. 24: G301, ceramic shabti (F8004) from the shaft fill.



Fig. 25: G301, western burial chamber, with hole from robber tunnel and collapsed ceiling material.



Fig. 26: G301, copper-alloy blade (F8024) from the western chamber.



Fig. 27: G301, western chamber after removal of debris. Crushed remains of skeletons 301-3 and 301-4, with plates C8010 and C8011 to right.



Fig. 28: G301, beer jar C8008 and wine jar C8009, as found in rubble collapse from ceiling.



Fig. 29: G301, Selection of ceramic vessels found in the western burial chamber (left-right): C8009, C8008, C8006, C8007, C8005, C8004 and (right, top-bottom) C8003, C8011 and C8010.

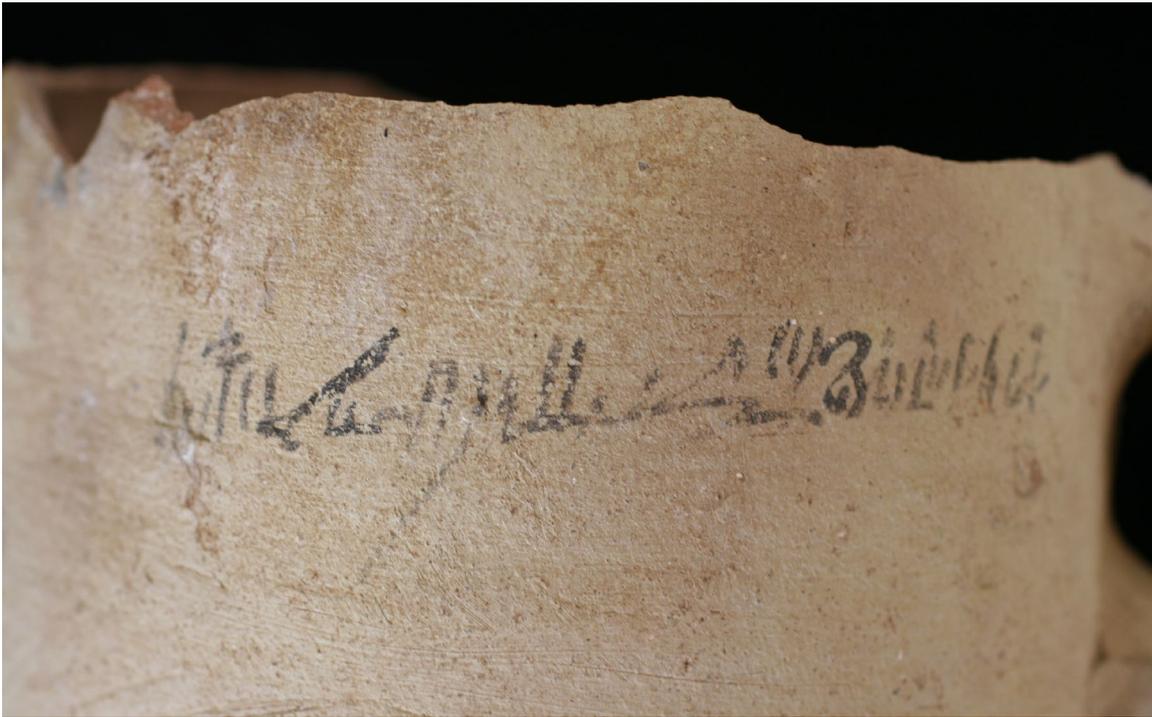


Fig. 30: G301, detail of hieratic inscription on wine-jar C8009.



Fig. 31: G301, faience scarab (F8023) from the western chamber.



Fig. 32: G301, doorway to northeastern burial chamber, with schist blocking slab.



Fig. 33: G301, skeleton 301-2, with traces of wooden coffin, in the northeastern chamber.



Fig. 34: G301, beads, amulets and earrings from the northeastern chamber (F8010, F8051).



Fig. 35: G301, disturbed bones at back of northeastern chamber.



Fig. 36: G301, painted plaster fragments (F8030), probably from coffin decoration, from the north-eastern chamber.



Fig. 37: G301, faience scarab F8022 from the northeastern chamber.



Fig. 38: G101, as preserved in 1939, from the EES archives (courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society archive; see Spencer 2002, pl. 2 [b]).



Fig. 39: G101, view west, showing vaulted brick structure.

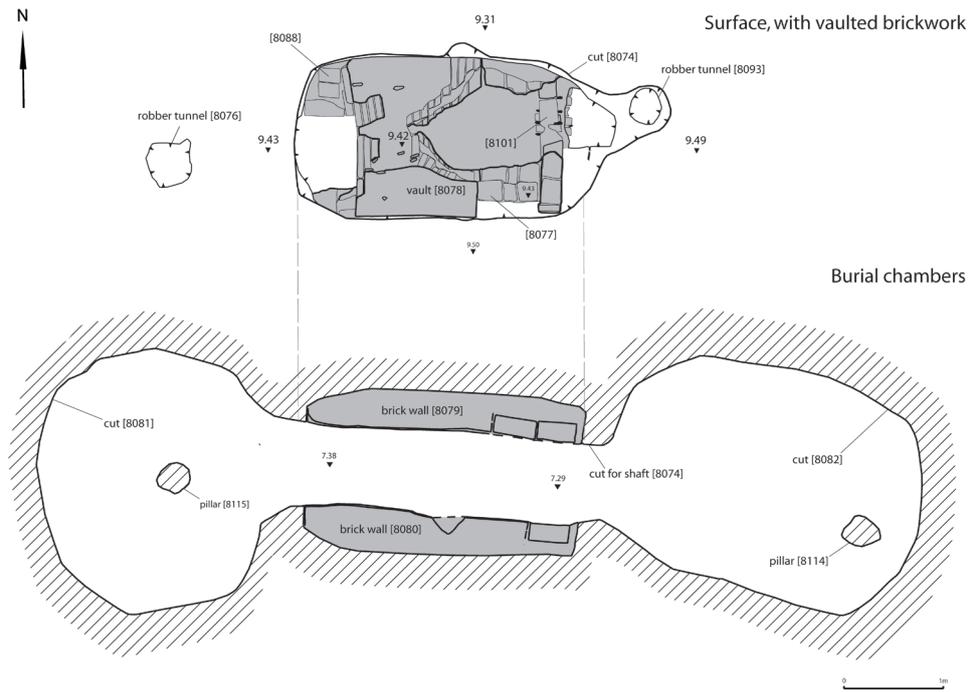


Fig. 40: G101, plan of vaulted structure and burial chambers.

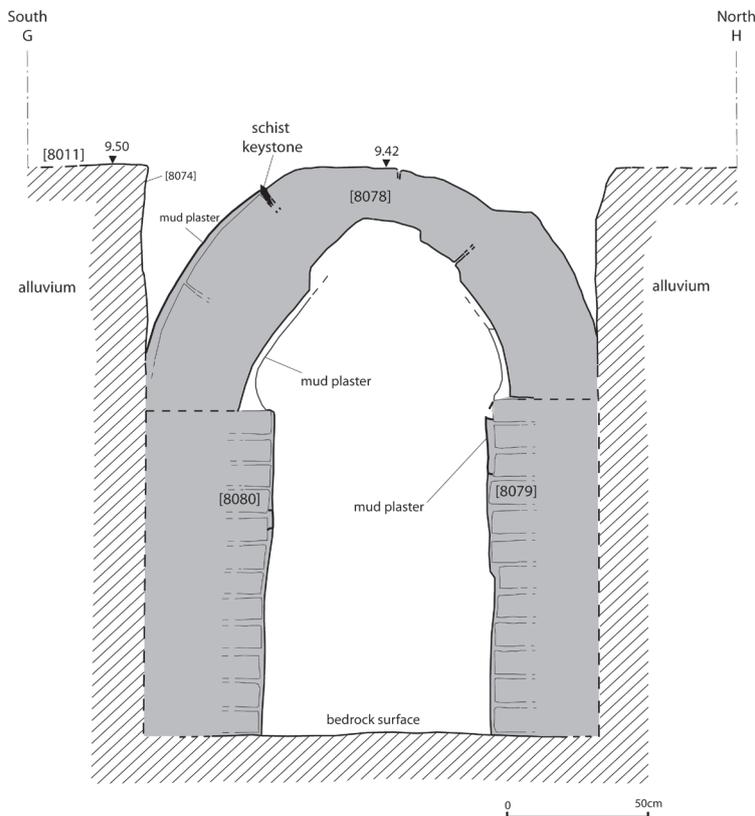


Fig. 41: G101, north-south elevation of brick vault in central chamber.



Fig. 42: G101, view north over vaulted substructure.



Fig. 43: G101, view northwest during clearance, showing vaulted substructure and, in background, entrance to western chamber.



Fig. 44: G101, eastern chamber doorway.



Fig. 45: G101, vaulted doorway to western chamber.



Fig. 46: G101, eastern chamber with supporting pillar.

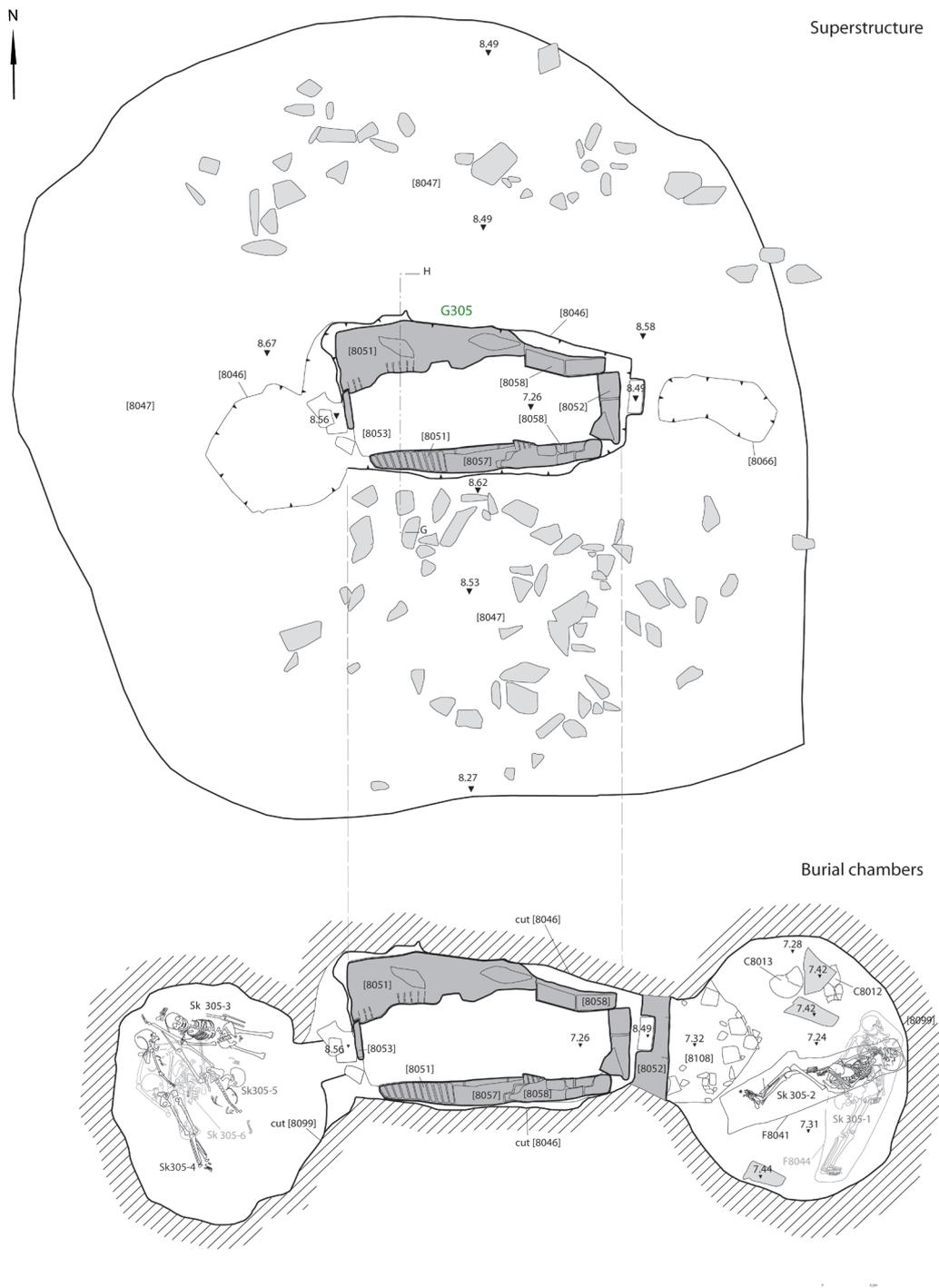


Fig. 47: G305, plan of superstructure and burial chambers.

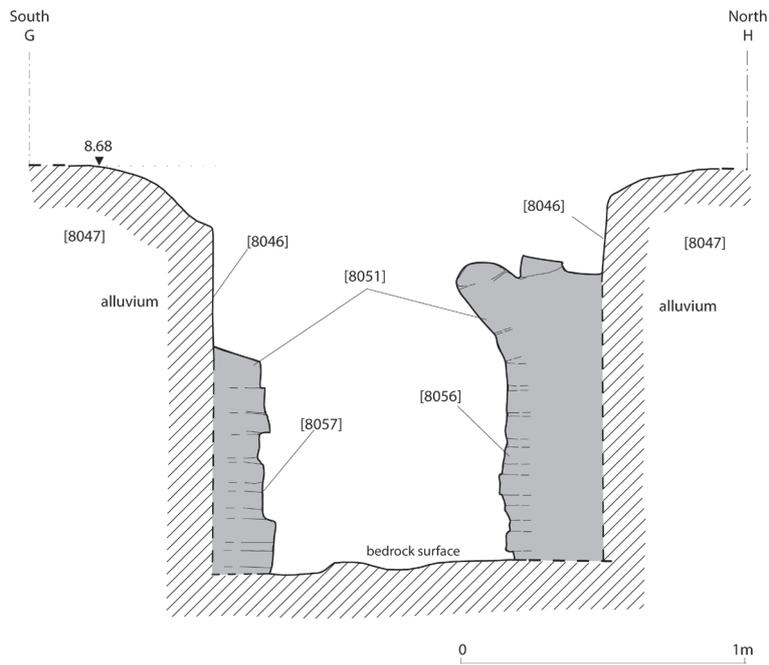


Fig. 48: G305: section through vaulted structure.



Fig. 49: G305, view west showing remains of mound superstructure and exposed chambers. Part of G306 visible in foreground.



Fig. 50: G305, doorway to western chamber, prior to removal of rubble.



Fig. 51: G305, brickwork of doorway to eastern chamber.



Fig. 52: G305, brickwork of doorway to western chamber.



Fig. 53: G305, skeleton 305-3 in the western chamber.



Fig. 54: G305, skeletons 305-5 and 305-6 in the western chamber.



Fig. 55: G305, skeletons 305-1 (extended) and 305-2 (flexed) in the eastern chamber. Vessels C8012 and C8013 visible top right.



Fig. 56: G307, view east after excavation.



Fig. 57: G301, (above) Siltware bowl (C8105) from shaft; (below) faience *udjat*-amulet (F8006) from northeastern chamber.

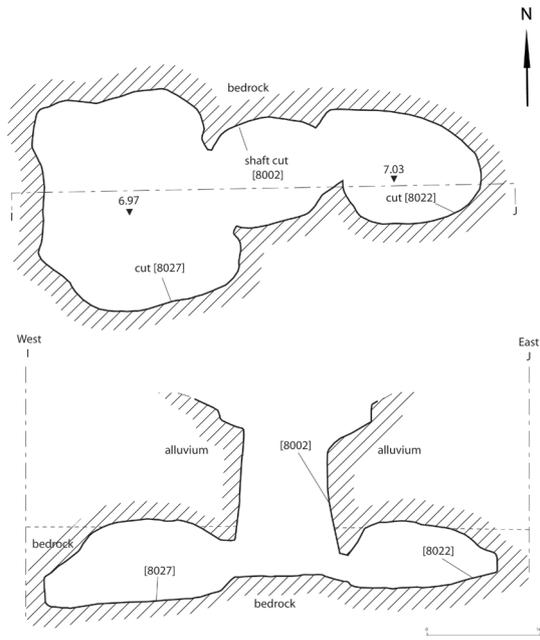


Fig. 58: G300, plan and section through substructure.

Fig. 59: G300, opening to western chamber.



Fig. 60: G300, eastern chamber.

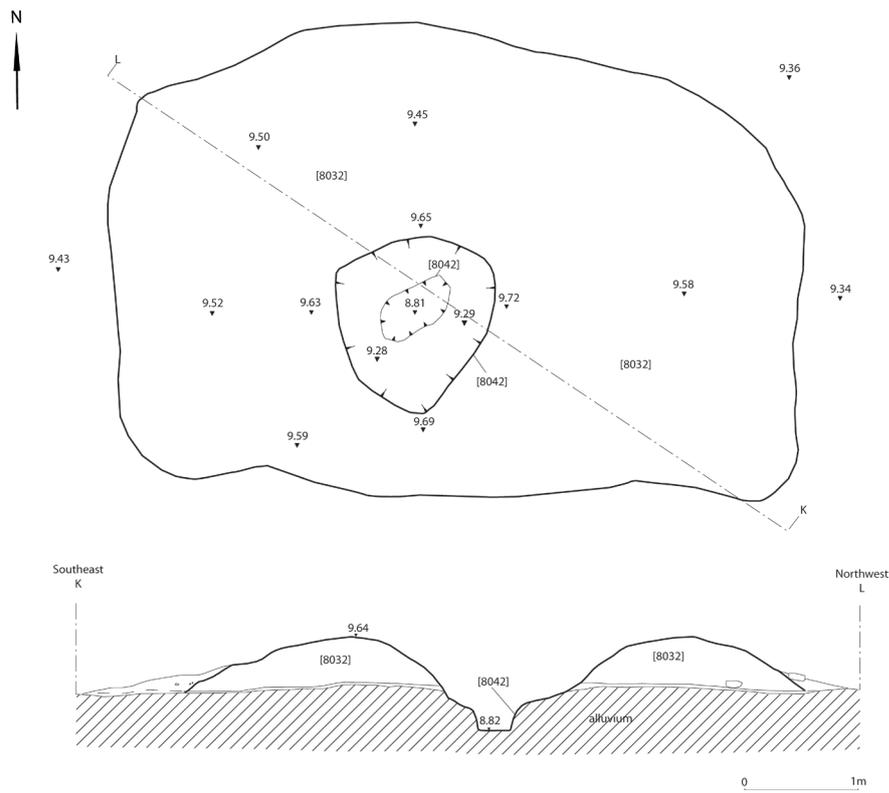


Fig. 61: G304, plan and section.

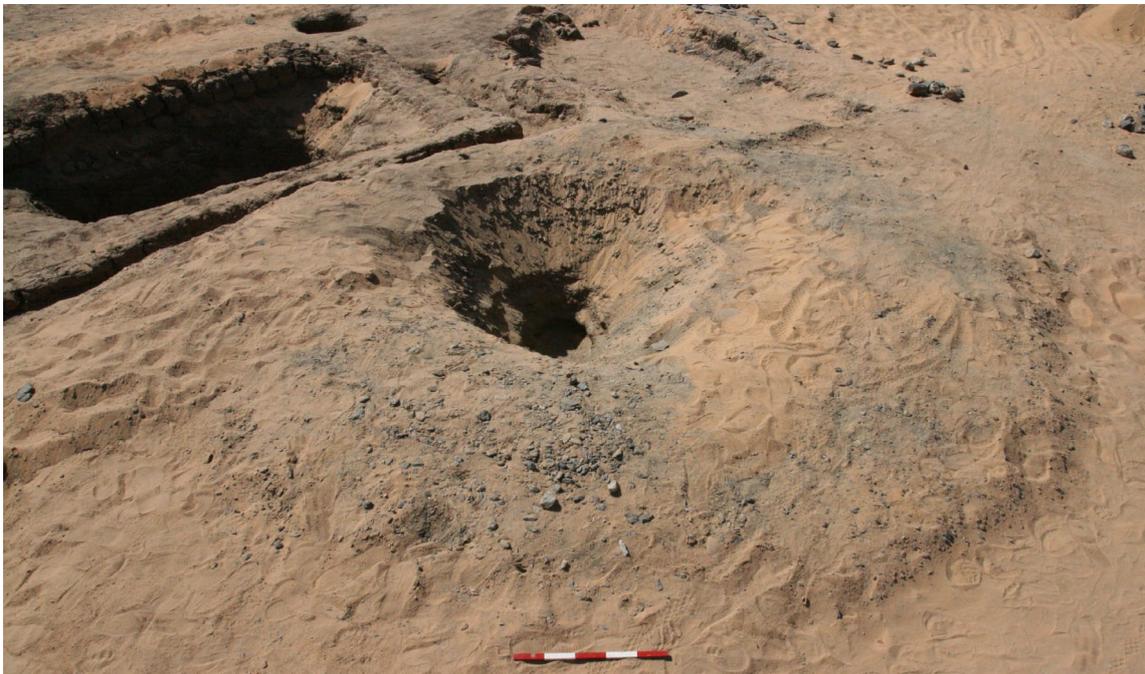


Fig. 62: G304, view southwest over tumulus after excavation, with G301 in background.

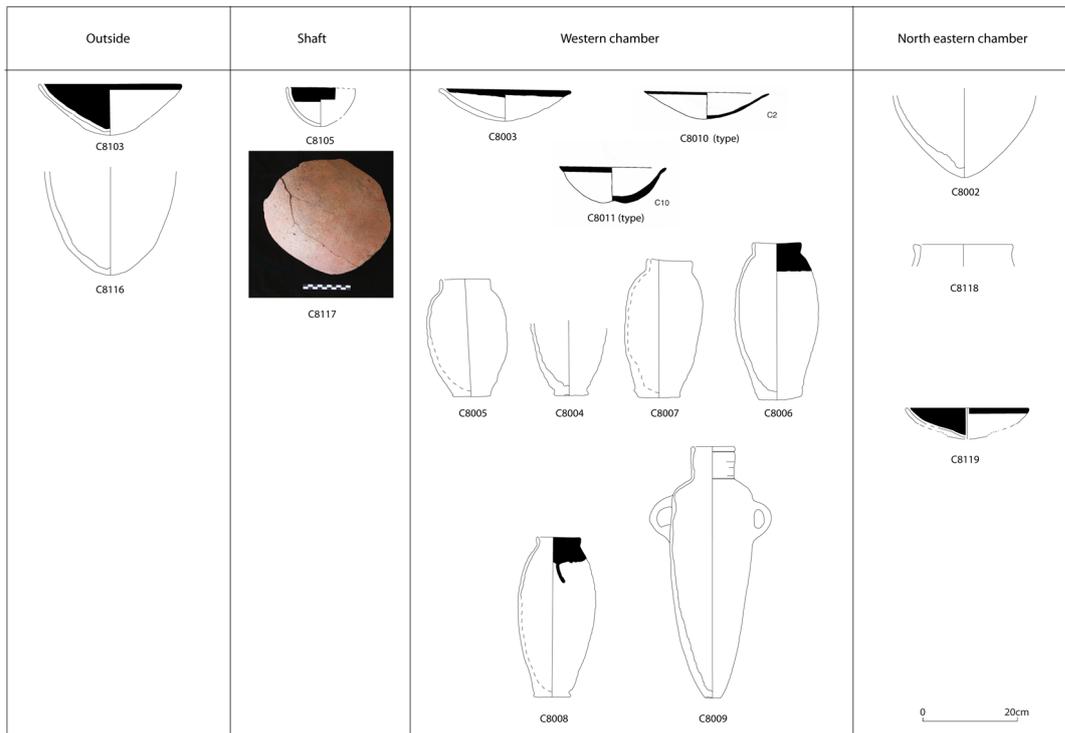


Fig. 63: G301, ceramics.

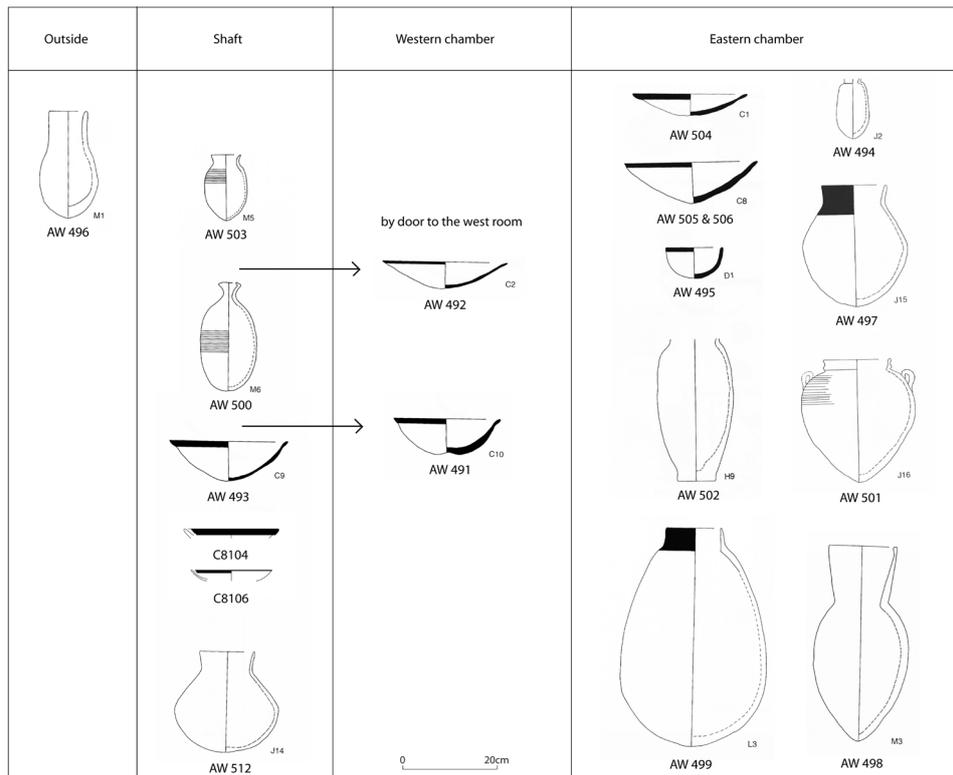


Fig. 64: G112, ceramics excavated by EES (after Spencer 2002) and current project (C8104, C8106).

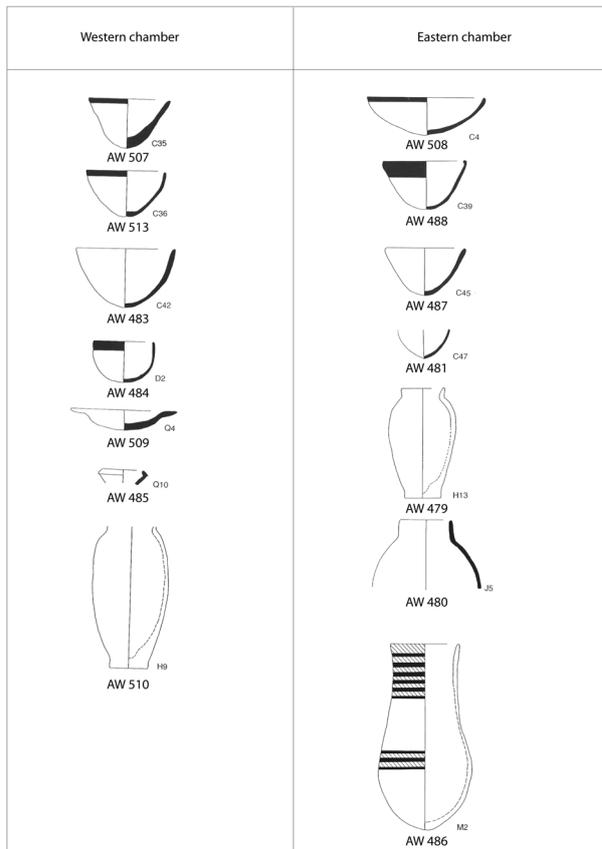


Fig. 65: G101, ceramics excavated by EES after Spencer 2002.

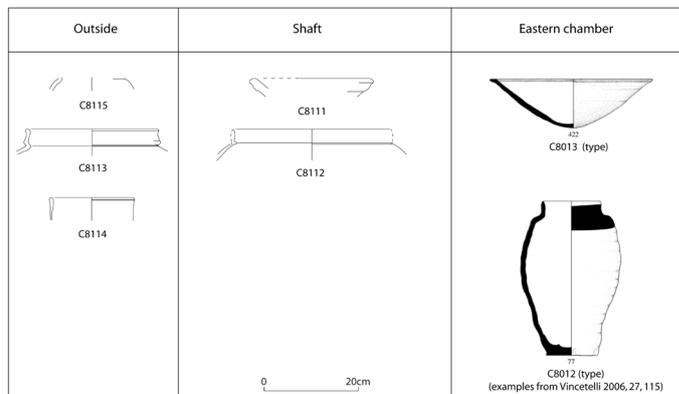


Fig. 66: G305, ceramics.

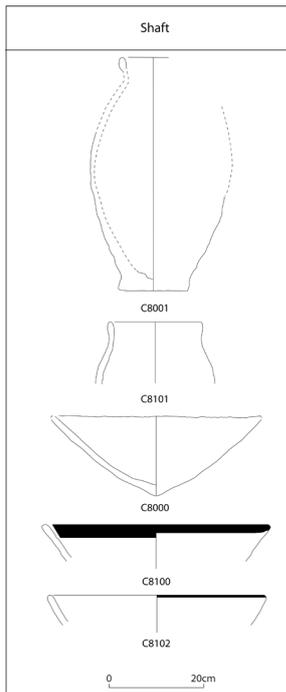


Fig. 67: G300, ceramics.



Fig. 68: G304: sherds of Nubian pottery (clockwise from top left: C8109, C8110, C8108).



**British Museum Expedition to Elkab and Hagr Edfu,
2010**

W. Vivian Davies and Elisabeth R. O'Connell

British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan 16 (2010): 101–32

British Museum Expedition to Elkab and Hagr Edfu, 2010

W. Vivian Davies and Elisabeth R. O'Connell

The latest British Museum expedition to Upper Egypt took place between 30 January and 4 March 2010, when work was continued at the sites of Elkab and Hagr Edfu.¹

Elkab

Vivian Davies

In addition to continued study of the tombs of Sobeknakht and Renseneb, the team undertook the following work:²

*Tomb of Bebi*³ (Second Intermediate Period)

Documentation was begun of the inscriptions on the façade of the tomb-chapel (Fig. 1), hitherto unrecorded. The lintel of the doorway is decorated with four horizontal lines of hieroglyphs and the jambs with two columns each, all in sunk relief. The text on the lintel, much damaged in the centre, consists of an offering-formula for the tomb-owner and includes the names of members of his family including his mother 'royal ornament Satrenutet' and a son, 'Neferhotep' (Fig. 2). The texts on the jambs consist in each case of first-person statements by the tomb-owner. The ending of that on the left is much eroded (Fig. 3) but is now established as 'I shall be in the following of my god, in the praise of Wenennefer'.⁴

*Tomb of Senwosret*⁵ (early Dynasty 12)

Cleaning and recording continued, with particular attention paid again to the west wall. The decoration here, all in paint and of fine workmanship, though faded and damaged, includes a scene of huntsmen returning from an expedition, armed with bows and other weaponry,

¹ The work was carried out with the kind permission of Secretary-General Dr Zahi Hawass and the Permanent Committee of the SCA. The team comprised Vivian Davies (Director/Epigrapher), Elisabeth R. O'Connell (Co-Director/Epigrapher), Marcel Marée (Deputy Director/Epigrapher), Lamia El-Hadidy (Senior Conservator), Mohamed Badawy (Conservator), Daniel Antoine (Physical Anthropologist), Thomas Beckh (Ceramic Specialist), Anke Blöbaum (Egyptologist), Robert Demarée (Epigrapher), Marisa Fischer (Surveyor Assistant), Kathrin Gabler (Archaeology Assistant), Günter Heindl (Archaeologist/Surveyor), Focke Jarecki (Surveyor), Joel Paulson (Surveyor), Ilona Regulski (Epigrapher), James Rossiter (Photographer), Alena Schmidt (Surveyor), Claire Thorne (Epigrapher), Susanne Woodhouse (Epigrapher). Our SCA inspector was Osama Ismail Ahmed, who was very helpful throughout, as were the senior officials in the Aswan and Edfu Inspectorates, Dr Mohamed Bialy and Zanaan Noubi Abdel Salam.

² The British Museum's recording project has been generously supported over two seasons by Dr. Ahmed El-Mokadem in the name of his brother, Mohamed El-Mokadem, and is designated as the 'Mohamed El-Mokadem Project.'

³ PM V, 184, no. 8 bis; Davies in Davies and O'Connell 2009, 52, 58–59, figs. 1–2.

⁴ Cf. Vernus 1988, 147–48, D.

⁵ PM V, 184; Davies in Davies and O'Connell 2009, 52–53, 60–61, figs. 3–5.

and accompanied by dogs (Fig. 4). One huntsman, identified as ‘his brother, beloved of him, Sehetepibef,’ is shown leading a captured gazelle on a leash (Fig. 5).

There was further recording of the many loose fragments which originally made up the façade. The most substantial of these is a section of the door-lintel, which is decorated with horizontal lines of sunk hieroglyphs (Fig. 6), part of an inscription with biographical content, ending with a dedication by the tomb-owner’s son. It is unclear at present how many of these fragments fit together.

*Stela of Ipusoneb*⁶ (early Dynasty 18)

Ipusoneb’s tomb-chapel, yet to be planned, bears in the centre of its rear wall a fine stela in painted relief (Fig. 7), its top now gone (max. width 73cm). It shows the tomb-owner, seated on a lion-legged chair before a pile of offerings, facing the standing figures of his son, Amenmose, and the latter’s wife, ‘mistress of the house, Kem,’ respectively. Both father and son have the military title, *wꜣw n ḥm.f*, ‘soldier of his Person,’ the son evidently following in the footsteps of his father, as in the case of their contemporary, the famous soldier, Ahmose Son-of-Ibana, whose tomb is situated next door. At the bottom right, three other children or grandchildren are shown, named Sensoneb (female), Senemnetjer (male) and [...] uu-ra (female), respectively. At the bottom left (Fig. 8) is an offering-formula arranged in several horizontal lines (the first part now mostly lost), ‘for the *ka* of the soldier of his Person Ipusoneb, justified before Osiris. It is the soldier of his Person Amenmose who causes to live the name of his father Ipusoneb, justified before Osiris, the great god, ruler of the west.’ The figures are in shallow raised relief; the hieroglyphs are incised and relatively crude by comparison. The spelling of the title *wꜣw* here, , is unusual.⁷

*Tomb of Ahmose-Pennekhebet*⁸ (or *Pennekhebet*) (mid-Dynasty 18)

A new ground plan of the tomb-chapel was made (Fig. 9) and photographic documentation of the decoration carried out. The plan is provisional, pending the removal of the sand and debris which carpets the floor inside and the courtyard outside. The chapel, one of the largest in the Elkab necropolis and in poor condition internally, consists of a long rectangular chamber, with vaulted roof, and a smaller rectangular niche at its inner end, now collapsed and much damaged (Fig. 10). It is entered through a central doorway in the façade. There appear to be two low doorways in the east wall, only the tops of which can be seen as they are filled with debris. It is unclear at the moment whether they are original or secondary.

There is decoration, in sunk and raised relief, on the façade, now mostly obscured by the modern gate (Fig. 11), and on the thicknesses of the doorway (Figs. 12–13), which are very damaged. The west thickness (Fig. 12) bears in the upper register the well-known biographical inscriptions which recount Ahmose’s career in the service of the kings of early Dynasty 18. There is also unfinished decoration, previously unrecorded, near the rear west corner of the first chamber and on several fallen blocks (Figs. 14–15), some of which may have come from the left façade of the niche. These latter bear the remains of a scene showing Ahmose and

⁶ PM V, 183, no. 6.

⁷ Cf. *Urk.* IV, 996, 1.

⁸ PM V, 176–77, no. 2.

members of his family worshipping the god Osiris seated in a shrine. On a slab detached from the west wall (Fig. 14), one of the entourage, a man named Amenhotep, is shown in the garb of a *sem*-priest. The workmanship is of excellent quality. For the reading of Ahmose's second name as *Pn-Nḥbt*, 'Pennekhbet,' see Vandersleyen 1971, 22, but note that in one instance, on the left façade of the tomb (Fig. 16), the name is written without the *t* and with the town-determinative as *Pn-Nḥb*, 'Pennekheb.'

It is clear from the scenes and inscriptions that: (1) the tomb-chapel was decorated by a descendant of Ahmose, identified as 'his brother' (possibly a great grand-nephew), named 'Amenhotep called Hapu,'⁹ who was also buried in the tomb together with his family; (2) a number of the texts are copies of earlier originals.¹⁰

The content and style of the decoration may suggest a date within the reign of Amenhotep III. Further study is intended.

Hagr Edfu

Elisabeth R. O'Connell

Since 2001, the expedition has concentrated work on a cluster of three pharaonic tombs and, from 2005, the topographic mapping of tomb openings at Hagr Edfu (Davies 2006, 2008, 2009). Documentation of Late Antique remains and other features at the site commenced in 2007 (Davies and O'Connell 2009).¹¹ Over the past decade of British Museum work at the site, the adverse effects of encroaching settlement and water distribution systems have become increasingly apparent. Modern settlement, once confined to villages located along the cultivation to the north and south, now wraps around the antiquities site (Figs. 17–18). A large reservoir located to the west and extending the length of the site now irrigates ever-increasing plots of arable land, and is causing the water table to rise. Thus, recent BM work has focused on completing the topographical of the site and prioritizing features for documentation and study. The 2010 fieldwork season at Hagr Edfu was generously supported by an Antiquities Endowment Fund (AEF) grant administered by the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) for a project entitled 'Hagr Edfu: Conservation through Documentation (Phase One)' (O'Connell 2010).

Topographical map

Good progress was made on the real-time kinematic differential GPS topographical map of the main hills constituting Hagr Edfu (Fig. 19). This season, 142 tomb entrances were plotted for a total of 464. The map is scheduled for completion in the 2011 season.

Tomb 1

The epigraphic work in the tomb of Sataimau (Tomb 1) is nearly complete, but new discoveries continue to be made. The identification of one fragmentary and much abraded painted scene

⁹ Cf. Vandersleyen 1971, 22.

¹⁰ Cf. Vandersleyen 1971, 227.

¹¹ The Yale Egyptological Institute generously funded the documentation of Late Antique remains in 2008 and 2009.

at the east end of the north wall has long eluded the team's epigraphers. With careful copying it was at last recognized to depict a calving scene (Fig. 20).

Tomb 3

Conservation team members continued to clean the walls of Tomb 3 allowing epigraphers to record inscriptions and secondary motifs systematically (Fig. 21). Wasps' nests, soot and damp constitute considerable challenges for recording Tomb 3's superimposed inscriptions and secondary motifs. Hieratic visitors' inscriptions recorded by R. Demarée suggest that visitors to the tomb understood it as a temple (*hwt-ntr*) of Isis by Dynasty 18; later inscriptions and secondary motifs attest its continuing cultic significance (Davies 2009, 26). Further work is intended to make a full record of the tomb.

'Pyramid' tomb

In 2009, rubbish from modern settlement was removed from a rock-cut tomb with three burial emplacements and the chambers were measured and planned (Davies and O'Connell 2009, 54 and pl. 10). In 2010, the expedition focused on clarifying the character of the mudbrick superstructure located directly above the tomb and the area around it (Figs. 22–23). Cleaning supported the identification of the superstructure as a probable pyramid base. Constructed around a boulder, the brickwork is stepped to follow the east-west slope of the hill. On both the north and south walls of the superstructure, patches of extant white plaster coat the bricks (Fig. 24–25). To the south of the superstructure, at a distance of 50cm, four 'sausage jars' were discovered in the course of cleaning (Fig. 25). Discolouration of the sand and fragments of termite-eaten wood suggest the presence of a coffin, which may have been associated with the jars. Dating c. eighth-seventh century BC, the jars contain embalming materials in accordance with their well-attested function (Fig. 26).¹² Two of the four jars were registered in the Elkab magazine.

Located in the saddle between two hills, the 'pyramid' tomb is surrounded by other rock-cut tomb entrances, two of which are surmounted by a pedastaled boulder (Fig. 23). None of the other tombs in the vicinity evidence remains of mudbrick superstructures, but they share the trapezoidal shape of the 'pyramid' tomb's rock-cut entrance and may be contemporary. Further work is needed to establish the approach to the complex.

Pylon 'tomb'

A large rock-cut entrance located on a low terrace near the cultivation leads to a well-cut, sloping corridor that terminates in an irregularly shaped chamber (Fig. 27). The substructure has been especially affected by the rising water table; the damp is disintegrating the walls and destabilizing the rock. Efforts to refine the plan by pumping out excess water were not repaid and must await the identification and procurement of a more powerful pump (Fig. 28). The well-built stone pylon fronting the complex and its approach will be the object of future study (Fig. 29).

Late Antique complex (Area 4)

A rock-cut tomb repurposed in Late Antiquity was cleaned and planned (Fig. 30). Although

¹² Following T. Beckh's 2010 report citing Aston 1996, fig. 221, p. 323.

a fragment of a 1990 Arabic newspaper demonstrated that the chamber had been 'cleared' prior to the British Museum Expedition's work at Hagr Edfu, intact features indicate that the space was an active part of a Late Antique complex consisting of five mudbrick rooms. Accessed through one of these rooms, the original rock-cut entrance was partially blocked up with stones and fired bricks, and the reappointed entrance was fitted with mud plastered stairs (Fig. 31). Disturbed finds included pottery (Fig. 32), sections of palm-bark fiber matting, a wooden door handle and, perhaps, a fragment of the locking mechanism (Fig. 33).

The south hills

Up until 2010, British Museum Expedition work at the site focused on the northern hills of Hagr Edfu. This season, the expedition's topographers concentrated on mapping the southern hills. This area is especially vulnerable to modern settlement with many tombs along the lowest terraces currently used for depositing rubbish.

Along the eastern faces of the southern hills, D. M. Bailey's 2007 preliminary surface survey of pottery suggested first to fifth century AD activity (unpublished report). Over the entrance of one rock-cut tomb at the southern limit of the site, a Roman period Greek inscription carved on a prepared surface reads 'Harpokration, son of Hierax, farewell' (Figs. 34 and 35). The name and patronymic of the deceased—meaning 'Horus-the-Child' and 'Falcon,' respectively—are fitting for an individual from the Edfu region, the cultic life of which centered on the Temple of Horus at Edfu.

Elkab magazine

In the 2009 season, pottery and ostraca from earlier SCA excavations at Hagr Edfu were identified in the Elkab magazine (Davies and O'Connell 2009, 56–57). In 2010, the team returned to the magazine in order to record a selection of pottery (Fig. 36), and clean and study Coptic ostraca (Fig. 37). Wooden boxes were commissioned from Dayr Anba Bakhum at Hagr Edfu and the expedition's Senior Conservator, L. El-Hadidy, working with the Edfu Inspectorate Magazine conservators, lined them with foam and acid free tissue before placing the ostraca inside (Fig. 38). A. Blöbaum will publish the ostraca.

By targeting a range of features for documentation, the chronological horizons of use and reuse at Hagr Edfu are gradually coming into focus. AEF funding for a second phase of the project entitled, 'Hagr Edfu: Conservation through Documentation (Phase Two)' has been awarded for a planned field season to commence in January 2011.

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Fig. 1: Elkab, tomb of Bebi, recording of façade inscriptions in progress (Photo: L. El-Hadidy).

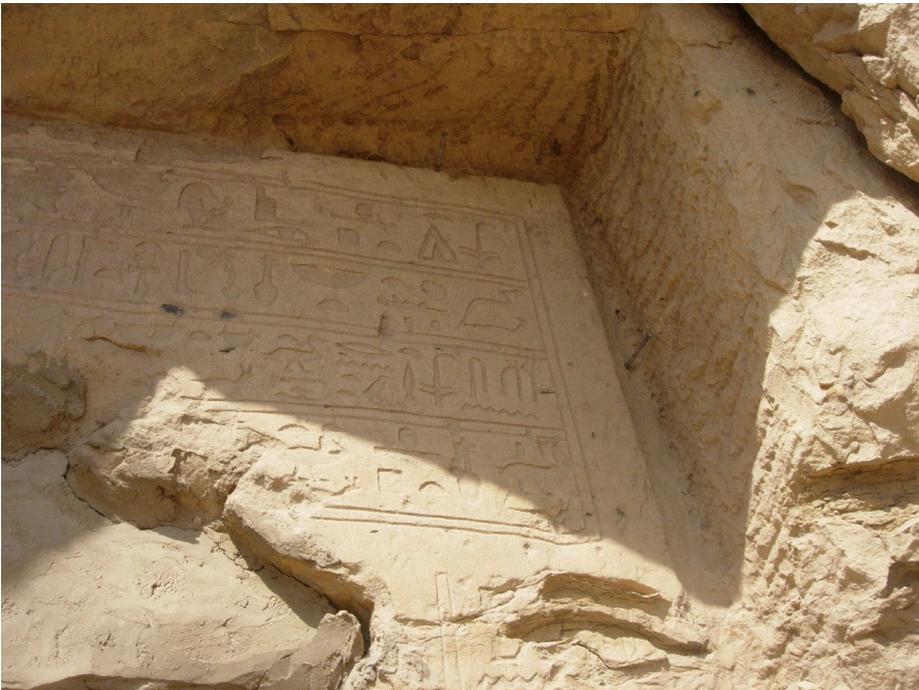


Fig. 2: Elkab, tomb of Bebi, detail of lintel inscription (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 3: Elkab, tomb of Bebi, detail of inscription on left jamb (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 4: ElKab, tomb of Senwosret, section of hunting scene on west wall (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 5: ElKab, tomb of Senwosret, detail of hunting scene on west wall (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 6: Elkab, tomb of Senwosret, inscribed block from lintel of doorway, detail (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 7: Elkab, tomb of Ipusoneb, stela (Photo: James Rossiter).

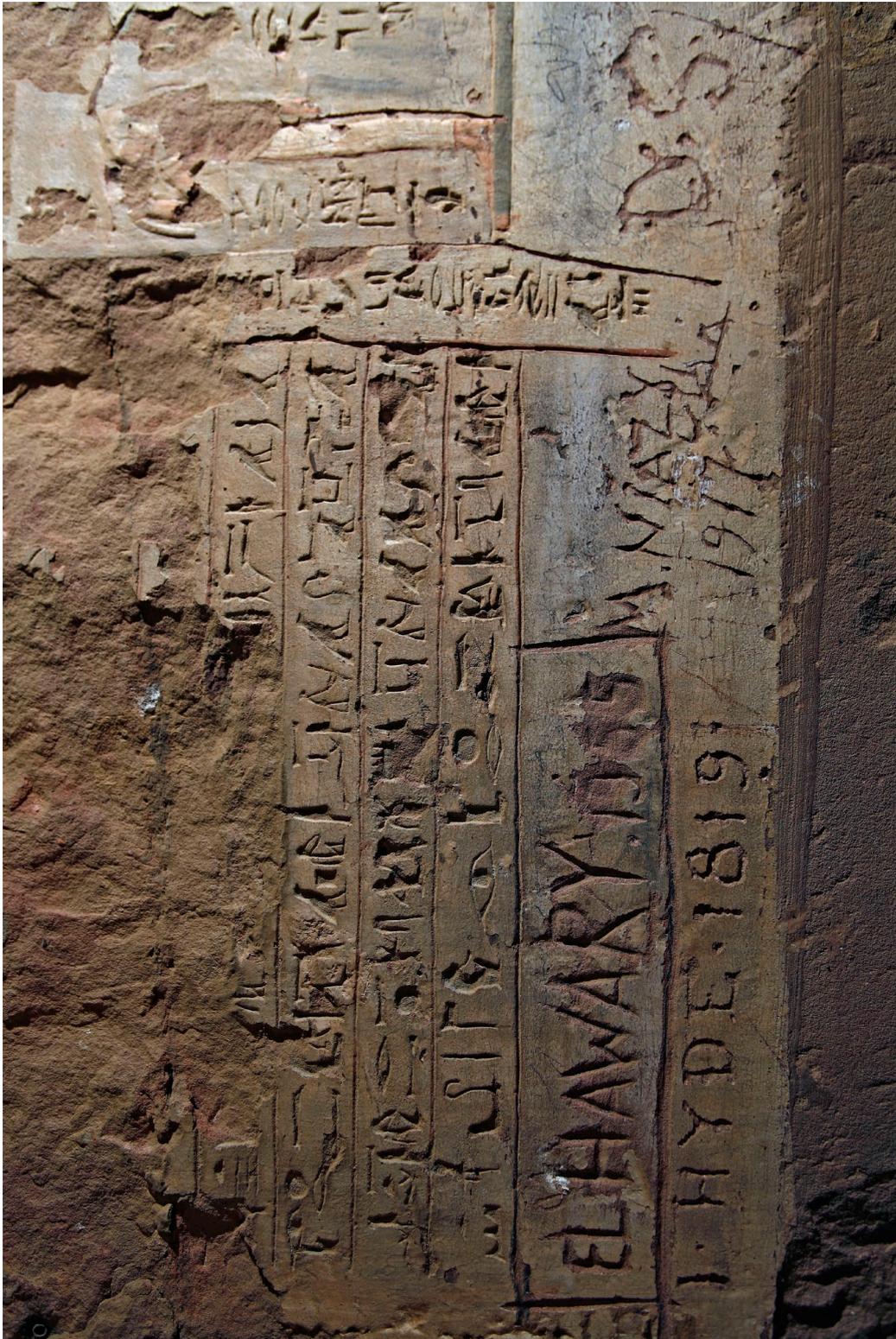


Fig. 8: Elkab, tomb of Ipusoneb, detail of stela (Photo: James Rossiter).

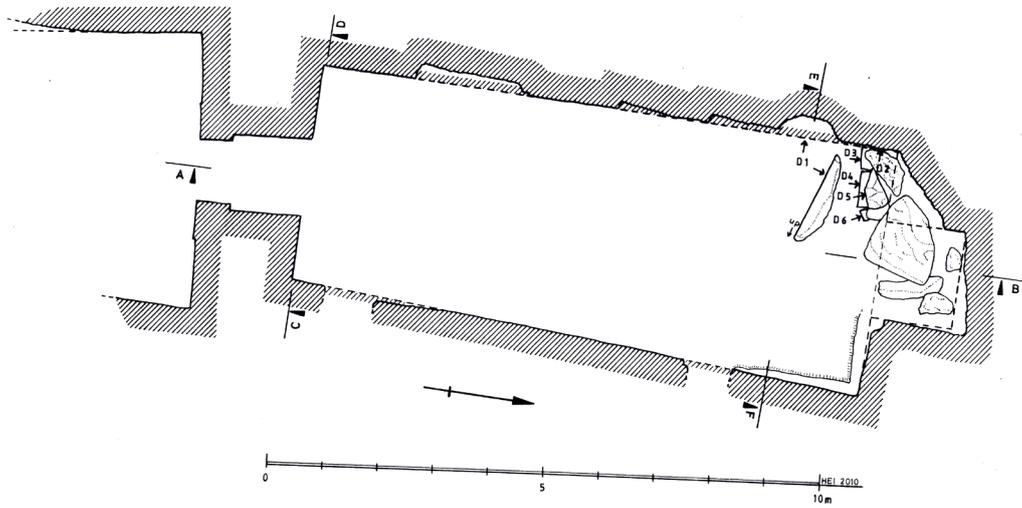


Fig. 9: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, ground-plan (Günter Heindl).



Fig. 10: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, interior (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 11: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, façade (Photo: W. V. Davies).



Fig. 12: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, west thickness (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 13: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, east thickness (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 14: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekhebe, decorated block from rear of tomb. (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 15: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, decorated blocks from rear of tomb (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 16: Elkab, tomb of Ahmose-Pennekheb, facade inscription, detail (Photo: W. V. Davies).

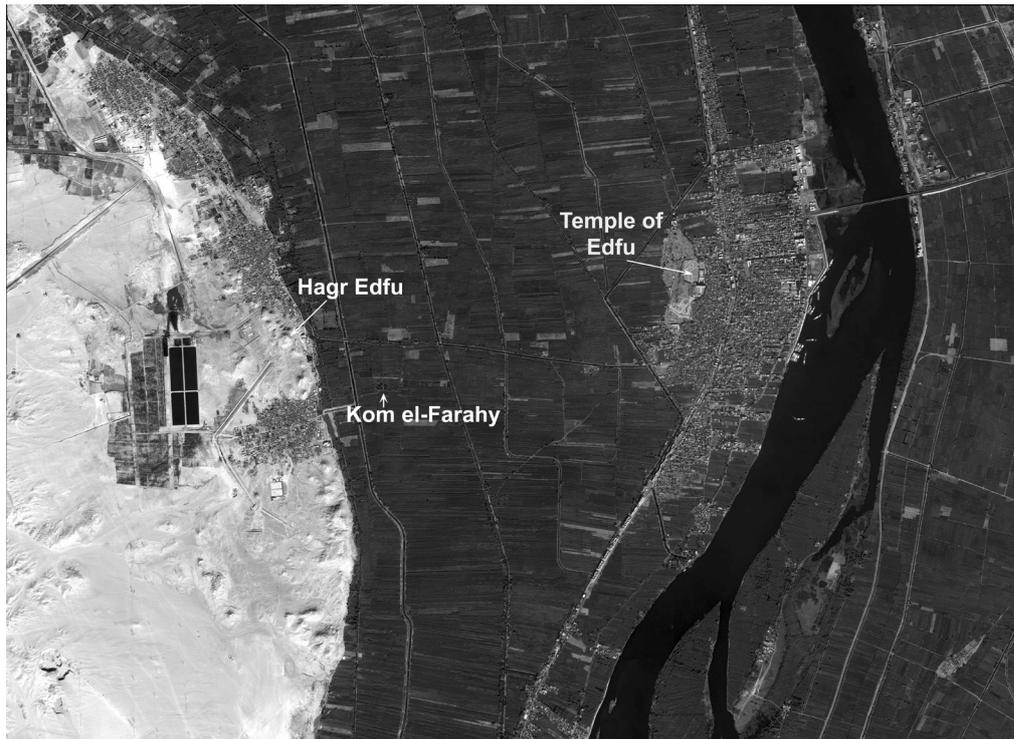


Fig. 17: Hage Edfu, Quickbird satellite image of the Edfu region (© Digital Globe, Inc.).



Fig. 18: Hagr Edfu, view southeast from the southernmost hill of Hagr Edfu. In the foreground team members inspect a Greek inscription over a tomb that is currently used as a rubbish dump for the adjacent village (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 19: Hagr Edfu, topographers map the tomb entrance with a Greek inscription on the southernmost hill (Photo: E. R. O'Connell).



Fig. 20: Hagr Edfu, decipherment of the calving scene in Tomb 1, Sataimau (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 21: Hagr Edfu, conservators clean the walls of Tomb 3 (Photo: James Rossiter).

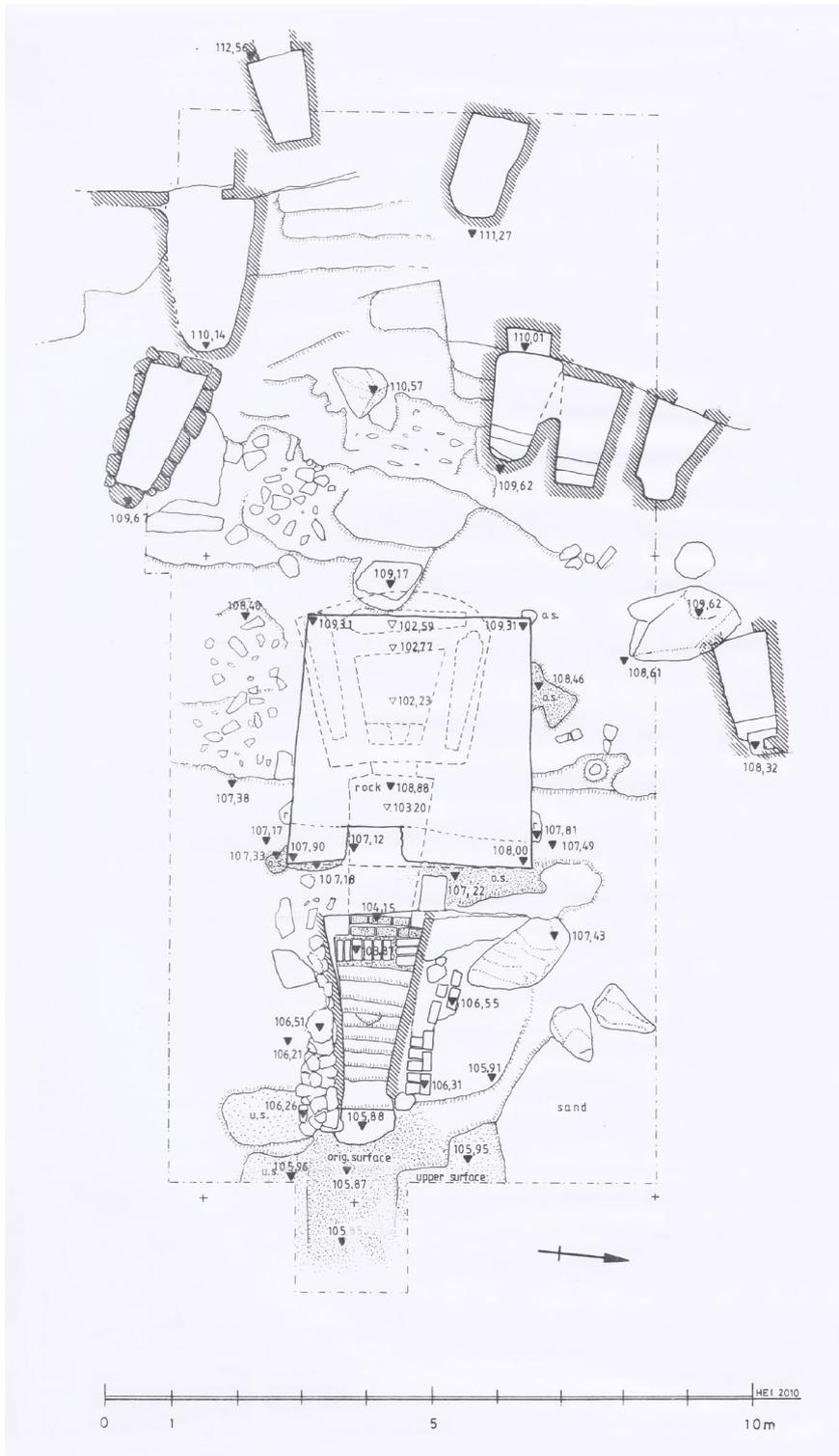


Fig. 22: Hagr Edfu, plan of the 'pyramid' tomb and its environs (Günter Heindl).



Fig. 23: Hagr Edfu, 'pyramid' tomb, view from the northeast (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 24: Hagr Edfu, 'pyramid' tomb, north side showing ancient whitewash (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 25: Hagr Edfu, the discovery of the first of four 'sausage jars' south of the 'pyramid' tomb, view north (Photo: E. R. O'Connell).



Fig. 26: Hagr Edfu, one of four 'sausage jars' containing embalming materials (Photo: Lamia El-Hadidy).



Fig. 27: Hagr Edfu, pylon 'tomb,' rock-cut entrance (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 28: Hagr Edfu, pylon 'tomb,' attempt to pump out excess water (Photo: Lamia El-Hadidy).

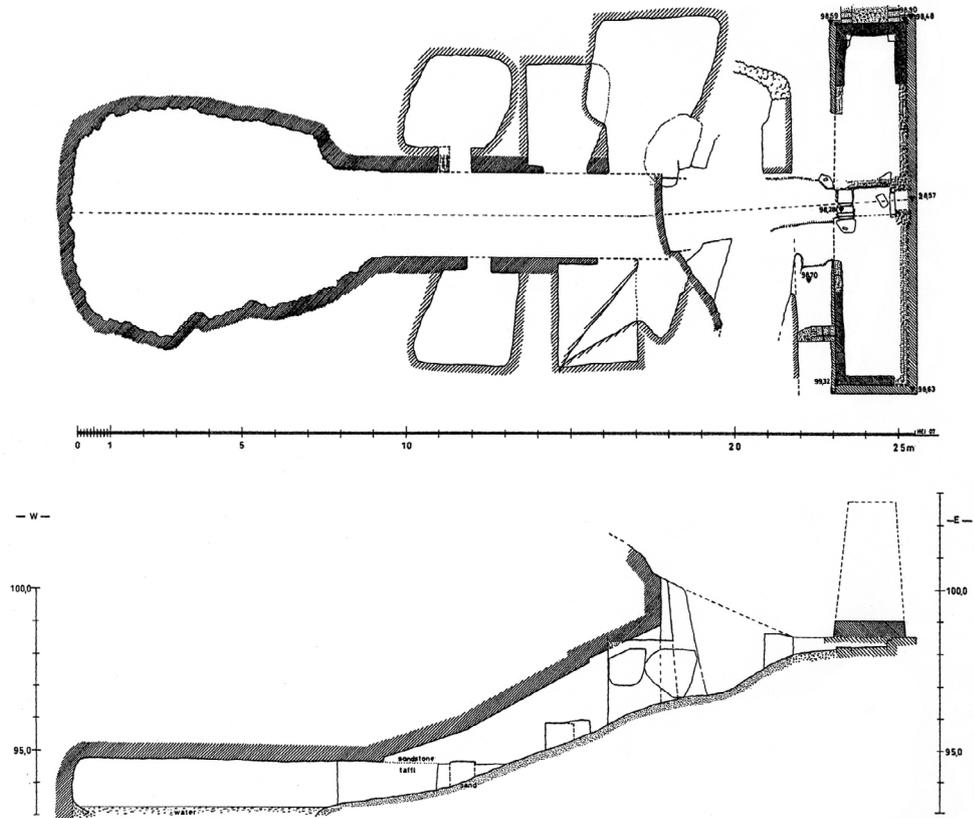


Fig. 29: Hagr Edfu, plan of the pylon 'tomb' (Günter Heindl).

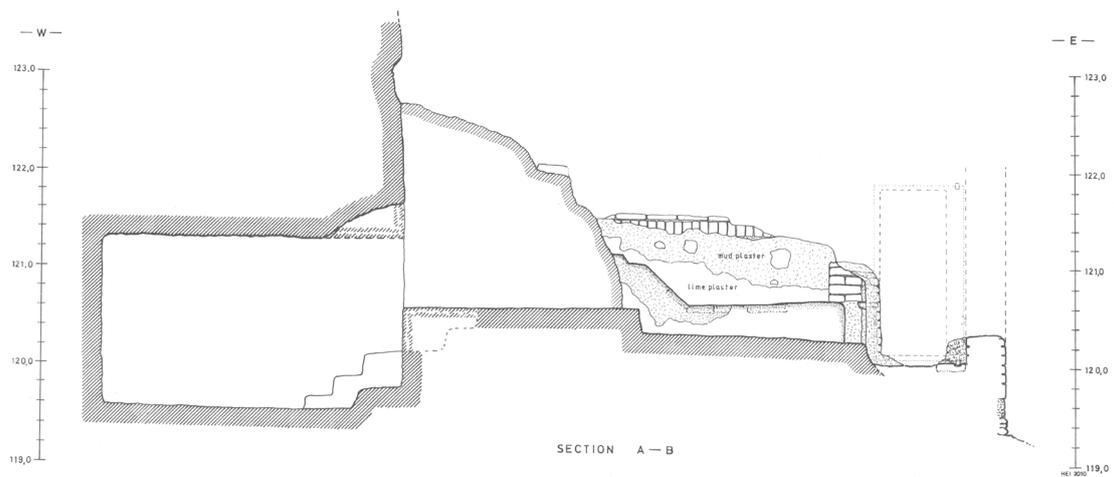


Fig. 30: Hagr Edfu, rock-cut tomb reused in Late Antiquity, section (Günter Heindl).



Fig. 31: Hagr Edfu, rock-cut tomb reused in Late Antiquity, interior view from the west (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 32: Hagr Edfu, ceramic bowl found in rock-cut tomb reused in Late Antiquity (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 33: Hagr Edfu, wooden door handle and possible locking mechanism found in rock-cut tomb reused in Late Antiquity (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 34: Hagr Edfu, tomb with a Greek inscription over the entrance, view north (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 35: Hagr Edfu, Greek inscription over tomb entrance, detail (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 36: Elkab magazine, Isis pot from SCA expedition to Hagr Edfu (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 37: Elkab magazine, ostraca from SCA expedition to Hagr Edfu (Photo: James Rossiter).



Fig. 38: Elkab magazine, ostraca rehoused in new boxes lined with acid-free tissue (Photo: Lamia El-Hadidy).



Nabta Playa Black-topped pottery: Technological innovation and social change

Kit Nelson & Eman Khalifa

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Nabta Playa Black-topped pottery: Technological innovation and social change

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Black-topped pottery is part of a ceramic tradition that represents important changes in the technological choices at Nabta Playa. It did not develop as an isolated phenomenon, but instead emerged within the context of climatic upheaval and broader cultural changes. New technologies that appeared included controlled-firing regimes, multiple-phased firings and the addition of surface treatments, as well as changes in the types of raw materials used and the incorporation of new forms. These multiple technological developments represented complex transformations in construction and production techniques that developed within a climate of environmental uncertainty and appeared simultaneously with other markers of social change.

This paper explores the various technological changes by comparing samples from the Middle Neolithic to the Late Neolithic periods recovered from sites in the Nabta Playa area (Fig. 1). The pottery assemblage found there offers an opportunity to explore a range of important modifications to pottery production methods because it includes ceramics from well-dated contexts. Using this assemblage, we explore the possible system in which these changes took place. We also seek to explain the rapid transformation from a once stable pottery regime maintained from the onset of pottery production until the end of the Middle Neolithic to the emergence of a new, widespread ceramic complex in the Late Neolithic.

The Neolithic at Nabta Playa

At approximately 11,000 to 10,000 years BP (uncalibrated), the globe witnessed the major climatic change known as the Younger Dryas (Rosen 2003). Nabta Playa in the Western Desert of Egypt was affected by these changes (Figs. 1 and 2). Today this area is known to be among the most arid parts of the Sahara Desert, receiving only an estimated 1 mm of rain per year (Wendorf and Schild 1980) or less (Haynes 1996). It has not always been such a hostile environment. Indeed, between 11,000 and 3,860 bp, the Nabta Playa area witnessed seven humid interphases that were interrupted by five arid phases (Wendorf and Schild 2001a). Excavations of the Holocene settlements at Nabta Playa revealed that between 9500 and 5000 radiocarbon years ago, the area received 100 to 200 mm of rainfall per year, making it more suitable for human occupation. The rainfall gathered in a series of lakes, including Nabta Playa, one of the largest in the region, with an estimated catchment area of 1500 km² (Wendorf and Schild 2001b). The earliest sites were located, as were many Palaeolithic sites in Egypt, around these large water resources (Brewer 2005). The lakes attracted humans and other animals and supported a subsistence base of hunting, gathering and in some cases, fishing (Smith 1984; Hassan 1998). During the last part of the Neolithic sequence at Nabta Playa, beginning around 4,500 bp, the climate began shifting towards the modern hyper-aridity (Hill 2001; Wendorf and Schild 2001a).

The archaeological record associated with these lake deposits includes sites that have defined through surface survey and excavation to be of various ages. These have been dated by associated radiocarbon dates (Schild and Wendorf 2001) as well as a ceramic sequence developed from a combination of stratigraphic deposits and associated radiocarbon dates (Nelson 2002d). Based on the Nabta Playa sequence, the Neolithic of this region has been divided into four phases: Early, Middle, Late and Final. The phases have been defined by similarities in the material culture and by the clustering of radiocarbon dates. Research has determined that there were humid phases resulting in the occupation of the region that alternated with dry interphases during which the area was abandoned (Wendorf and Schild 2001b).

The Early Neolithic, dating to approximately 10,000 to 7,500 bp, marks the re-entry of human inhabitants into Nabta Playa at the onset of the Holocene. This return to the area is associated with an intensification of plant gathering. There is variability in Early Neolithic habitation: some sites were for short-term usage, while others, especially towards the end of the phase, were larger and more permanent, with features such as houses, storage pits and wells.

The stone tools discovered are based on microlithic technology, and the stone tool assemblage is dominated by tools made from small bladelets (Wendorf and Schild 2001b). The earliest pottery at Nabta Playa dates between 9,800 and 8,000 bp, at least 1500 years before the appearance of plant domestication or sedentism (Zedeño 2002). Pottery shapes are restricted to large bowls, the majority of which have rocker-stamp decorations across the exterior surfaces (Nelson 2002c). Variability exists in the layout of the design of rocker-stamped impressions through time (Nelson 2002b), and M. Gatto has recognised regional variation in surface decoration that includes a limited set of impressed types for the Western Desert (2002; 2006a; 2006b). Petrographic analysis of the temper of the Early Neolithic pottery from Nabta Playa shows that it is limited to two parent source types: granodiorite and gneiss. This limited variability in pottery temper is interesting given the wide variety of possible materials available for temper in the region. The lack of variability suggests that they had already explored several options and settled on these tempers as meeting their needs in the early years of pottery production. The subsistence base for the Early Neolithic has come under scrutiny due to discussions concerning the presence of domesticated bovids (for a summary, see Gifford-Gonzalez 2005; also see Gautier 1984, 71; Hassan 2002; Mohammed-Ali 1984; Wendorf and Schild 1984; Wendorf et al. 1997). The evidence at Nabta Playa supports a diverse subsistence base of domesticated bovids and a variety of wild animals and plants (Gautier 2001).

The identification of a Middle Neolithic phase at Nabta Playa is based on scant evidence. Few sites are present, and information about this period is primarily derived from the excavations of a small sample of pits and hearths as well as a single stratigraphic layer at Site E-75-8. Dates derived from these excavations range from 7,300 to 6,500 bp (Wendorf and Schild 2001b). The pottery of this period includes bowls with smoothed-over rocker-stamped or roughly smoothed exteriors. Stone tools continue to be based on a microlithic technology, characterised only by a slight shift towards more flake tools, overturning the dominance of blade tools in the assemblage. The subsistence base is in part a continuation of the previous system, with the important addition of sheep/goats (Wendorf and Schild 2001a), animals

that would have expanded the degree of mobility of these mixed economy pastoralists. By the end of the Middle Neolithic, Nabta Playa witnessed a hyper-arid phase, which led to the abandonment of the area (Wendorf and Schild 2001b). The migrating groups are believed to have fled to the nearest permanent water resource in the region, the Nile River (Kobusiewicz 1992).

Following this arid phase, major changes occurred at Nabta Playa. The Ru'at El Baqar Late Neolithic (6,200–5,800 bp) and the Bunat Al Ansam Final Neolithic (5,400–4,800 bp) saw the rise of Nabta Playa as a ceremonial centre at which large stone constructions were erected (Wendorf and Schild 2001b).

The Late and Final Neolithic are better known by the larger academic community because they include features that have become famous: the calendar circle and megalithic alignments (Wendorf and Schild 2002). Great effort was put into these constructions with regard to both the labour involved and the astronomical knowledge required (Applegate et al. 2001; Applegate and Zedeño 2001; Wendorf and Krølik 2001; Wendorf and Malville 2001). Based on this, F. Wendorf and R. Schild argue that the creation of these features required a high level of complexity and social organization (2001a), and the clustering of these features has led them to refer to Nabta Playa as a 'regional ceremonial centre' (Wendorf and Schild 2002, 15). These complex features occur in a Late Neolithic landscape primarily composed of deflated, open-air hearths resulting from short-term use by pastoral groups. These habitation areas have provided information on the everyday material culture of this pastoral economy (Wendorf and Schild 2001a).

The material culture of the Late Neolithic diverges from that found in earlier assemblages. These changes include a shift in the predominance of blade and flake tools to tools made from side-blow flakes. This is visible in both the débitage and in the final tool forms (Nelson 2001b). The pottery also presents dramatic changes that continue through the Final Neolithic. This new ceramic complex includes the first thin-walled vessels with smoothed, burnished and/or slipped surfaces as well as the first appearance of Black-topped pottery (Nelson 2002d). During the course of the Final Neolithic, the ceramic complex expands to include Ripple-ware pottery.

Previous research on Black-topped pottery

Black-topped pottery is made by hand from a tempered or untempered paste and is characterised by a distinctive black lip. It is a marker of many cultures present at sites in the Western Desert. Although its presence in the Dakhleh Oasis region is reported as early as 7,120±90 bp (Hope 2002, 41), recent refinement of the chronology questions the association of this pottery type with these early dates (Warfe 2003; 2008). Its earliest occurrence in a good stratigraphic context comes from Nabta Playa, with a date of 5,810±80 bp (Table 1). Black-topped pottery is best known for its association with the Predynastic of Upper Egypt, beginning with the Badarian, during which it was a predominate type (Friedman 1994). It continues to be typical of pottery production during Naqada I and Naqada IIA–B periods in Upper Egypt, but becomes less common in Naqada IIC and appears to fall out of use by Naqada IID. Its production is revived in the Naqada III period when it is exclusively used for

cult vessels of a specific shape (Sowada 1999).

It is difficult to determine the reason behind the production of Black-topped vessels. Several theories as to why it first developed have been postulated. W. Needler argues that Black-topped pottery originated as a special type of the polished red ware because both share the same surface treatment and forms (1984). The black top is also thought to imitate black-lipped gourd vessels that were heat-treated to prevent splintering around the cut edge (Arkell 1960; Lucas and Harris 1962). K. N. Sowada maintains that the makers of Black-topped pottery during the Early Dynastic (Naqada III) period adapted a colour scheme that reflected the vessels' ritual functions (1999). She refers to the symbolic nature of colour use in Egyptian art in which red is the colour of chaos and death and black is the colour of the fertile land of Egypt and resurrection, suggesting that the two colours were combined to represent the contrast between life and death.

How Black-topped pottery fits into the larger picture of cultural change is a more complicated question. At Nabta Playa, the earliest examples are from Site E-75-8 located on the north-western edge of the lake, which yielded stratified deposits with alternating layers of cultural material and fossilised dune (Figs. 2 and 3). The first Black-topped pottery-bearing layer at E-75-8 is Layer 8 (Nelson 2001b) (Fig. 4), which is bounded by a Middle Neolithic context dated to 6,155 bp. Its first appearance is in conjunction with Red/Brownish wares that lack the blackened rim, but share the other features, including construction, material and surface treatment (Table 1) (Nelson 2002b; Zedeño 2002).

Red/Brownish ware is also present at Nabta Playa at site E-92-9, which has been dated to 6,000 bp, but without accompanying Black-topped pottery (Applegate and Zedeño 2001). The assemblage from this site is small, with only forty-five sherds, and the absence of Black-topped pottery may simply represent a sampling error. Nevertheless, this shows that the early phase for the complex of pottery in which Black-topped pottery first occurs is securely dated to around 6,000 bp and is present at multiple sites at Nabta Playa.

The presence of Black-topped pottery as part of a larger ceramic complex that shares general features is important. This is first because this combination of features represents broad changes in technology, which will be discussed in detail below, and second because this complex, although referred to by a variety of cultural names, including Badarian, Tasian and A-Group, appears to be a widespread phenomenon. Broadly defined, this ceramic complex includes Black-topped pottery, Ripple-ware and tulip-shaped vessels, together or in conjunction with other vessels that fall within the more general Red/Brown, Qussier Clastic and Olive wares (as described in Nelson 2002b). The extent of this complex includes the Nabta Playa area (Nelson 2002a), the adjacent Gebel Ramlah (Kobusiewicz et al. 2004), Dakhleh Oasis (in the culture described as Bashendi B in McDonald 2002), Kukur Oasis (Darnell and Darnell 2006), as far east as the Eastern Desert at Wadi Atulla (Friedman and Hobbs 2002), southwards to Khartoum (see, for example, Arkell 1949, pls. 91–100) and beyond. This ceramic complex replaces the rocker-stamped and impressed wares that were also widespread. It is not possible within the scope of this paper to discuss all of the details of the distribution and variability of this new ceramic complex. Regardless, it is necessary to understand the broader changes that led to this transformation in pottery and to consider this transition within the larger context of the formation of cultures in southern Egypt and northern Sudan.

Importance of the shift to Black-topped pottery

The technological changes that occurred between the Middle Neolithic and Late Neolithic are important for understanding the advent of Black-topped pottery and its associated assemblage. There is a disjunction between the pottery types and forms of the two periods that reflects more than simply the introduction of a new style. The first major differences are in the basic essentials of pottery production, including the materials and methods used. Both clay and temper raw materials used by Middle Neolithic potters are different from those used during the Late Neolithic. Middle Neolithic vessels are composed of what appear to be clays derived from lake or river deposits and resemble those used for pottery produced during Early Neolithic (Nelson 2001a). The pastes are porous and appear to contain residual silts or gravels, and are tempered with large fragments of granite locally available in the Nabta area. The Late Neolithic wares are made from finer clay, higher in organics than Middle Neolithic clays. The Late Neolithic clay may have been coarser when originally collected from the parent source, and then refined through a process of flotation. The overall appearance of the fabric is similar to that identified in the Badarian by R. F. Friedman (1999, personal communication). Late Neolithic pottery can include sand, sparse carbonized organic material, or both for temper or no temper at all.

In addition to different materials used, very different techniques for finishing and firing were practiced. During the Middle Neolithic, rocker-stamping is still present on some vessels, while others have a roughly smoothed surface. These are the only two surface treatment techniques that have been identified, and they show a transition from the typical rocker-stamped pottery of the Early Neolithic to the roughly smoothed surfaces of the pottery from the last phase of the Middle Neolithic (Nelson 2002c). The finishing techniques for Late Neolithic pottery include new types and a wider variety within those types. Some vessels with blackened lips are smoothed, others are smoothed and burnished and still others are smoothed, slipped and burnished. Slipping and burnishing of vessel surfaces are new techniques added to the pottery-making repertoire. Both added slips and self-slips were noted among the Late Neolithic pottery surface treatments and burnishing, although only on a small number of vessels. They are usually perpendicular to the rim and across much of the vessels' exterior surfaces.

Slips can serve a variety of functions. They can be applied to add or change the surface colour, to create a fine, smooth surface and/or to reduce the porosity of a vessel (Rice 2005). It is not certain why this technique comes into use at Nabta Playa. Based on the presence of pottery with self-slips, which maintain the same colour as the clay paste, and a few examples with an added red slip in the Late Neolithic assemblage, it appears that the intended outcome was a red surface. This surface colour, however, could have been achieved through the process of creating a self-slip alone. Both processes, slipping and self-slipping, produce a smooth surface, so the reason for an additional slip is not clear.

Changes in firing techniques include possible new methods to achieve higher firing temperatures and the deliberate creation of the black tops. In general, the pottery of the Late Neolithic is fired under higher temperatures than that of either the Early or Middle Neolithic which resulted in greater vitrification of the clay body and so harder, more durable wares. Although it is not certain how higher firing temperatures were achieved, modification in the

types or amounts of fuel or the introduction of basic kilns are possibilities.

Specialised firing to create Black-top ware is first used during the Late Neolithic. Many researchers have discussed the possible methods used to create Black-topped pottery (Davies 1962; Hodges 1982; Lucas and Harris 1962; Spencer 1997), and two detailed studies by S. Hendrickx, Friedman, and F. Loyens (2000) and M. Baba and M. Saito (2004) have examined the processes through a series of experiments and achieved successful results. The findings show that there are several methods that could produce Black-topped vessels; all of them appear to involve a carbon absorption process (smudging) that reflects a detailed knowledge of firing technology and the use of new techniques to create this attribute. Overall, it reflects a more diverse and complicated technological regime.

The forms of Black-topped vessels at Nabta Playa differ greatly from the range of shapes associated with earlier periods. Throughout the Early and Middle Neolithic, the only vessel form documented is the large bowl. The reason for this stability through time is not certain, although based on use-wear analyses, it may be due to the continued use of these vessels for the same or similar purposes (Nelson 2002c). During the Late Neolithic, vessel forms include small, flaring, walled bowls with rounded bases and straight, walled beakers with rounded bases. No tulip-shaped beakers were identified, but the majority of sherds are small and the vessel form could not always be determined. All of the sherds are thin-walled and the fabrics are friable.

The pattern of use for the small, thin-walled, Late Neolithic vessels from Nabta Playa does not suggest that they functioned for storage or cooking based on use-wear and form analysis. H. Howard notes that storage vessels should have restricted orifices, a characteristic absent from the Late Neolithic pottery assemblage, and there are no visible residues or soot deposits to suggest that they were used for cooking (1981). Given that the vessels are strong, thin-walled, lightweight and small, in general they can be characterised as having the same form as elongated gourd vessels. They may have been used for collecting, processing and serving milk and blood. Gourds are used for these functions in ethnographically documented pastoral cases, including several examples by the Maasai (Ibrahim 2001; Merker 1910; Spencer 1988; Talbot 1964), but given the long history of use of pottery in the region, ceramic vessels may have taken on this role.

Discussion and conclusion

What is the significance of the disjunction between the Middle Neolithic and Late Neolithic assemblages at Nabta Playa and the emergence of Black-topped pottery? The transformation in pottery production reflects important shifts in technology and changes in pottery use that are part of a larger system of changes in the social organisation, visible in the construction of monuments (megaliths) and the understanding of time (calendar circle and megalithic alignments).

Technological choices are bounded by the limits of resource access and technological knowledge. They are also restricted and driven by culture (Van der Leeuw 1993). It is within these confines of access (Arnold 1988) and learned behaviour (see Graves 1981) that technological and stylistic changes occur. Thus, the multitude of changes that appears in

pottery during the Late Neolithic are an important reflection of broader changes that occur during this period.

As the process of desertification slowly took hold, mobility patterns of groups using the desert lakes would have become more restricted and mobile peoples would have had to rely on permanent water sources for at least part of the year. The problems of available water, plants and animals for human consumption would have been heightened during the arid interphase that occurred at the end of the Middle Neolithic. This would have resulted in people clustering around the major water sources.

These climatic changes and the resulting limitations in water sources would have altered traditional mobility patterns. In doing so, they may have forced or encouraged greater interaction among groups and resulted in greater one-on-one interaction among potters of different cultures. In essence, they may have changed the spheres of interaction, leading to cultural transmission. Finally, the climatic changes may have forced the formation of new groups in which technological change was an outgrowth of a melding of cultures. When new cultures are formed, new pottery styles can be either an amalgam of previous styles or a formation of totally new types that reflect the needs of the newly formed system. This has been documented in other regions that faced similar conditions, such as the American Southwest, where, following the onset of a severe drought, pottery styles changed in areas where populations clustered (Duff 2002; Cameron 1995; Cordell 1995). Based on the technological and material changes at Nabta Playa, the first appearance of Black-topped pottery occurred during a period of increased aridity which caused shifts in mobility and interaction. These factors spurred technological innovation, encouraged the development of new styles and influenced the rise of complexity during the Late Neolithic.

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Cover image: Gebel Nabta (author's photograph).

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Site	Type	Ct	Context	Dates (uncalibrated BP)
E-75-8	Red ware burnished	1	Surface	
E-75-8	Red ware burnished	2	Layer 9	5810 ±80
E-75-8	Red ware burnished and Black-topped	10	Layer 10	5517 ±90
E-75-8	Red ware burnished and Black-topped	3	Layer 9	5810 ±80
E-75-8	Red ware slipped, burnished and Black-topped	13	Surface	
E-75-8	Red ware slipped, burnished and Black-topped	47	Layer 10	5517 ±90
E-75-8	Red ware slipped, burnished and Black-topped	9	Layer 9	5810 ±80
E-75-8	Red ware slipped, burnished and Black-topped	12	Layer 8	
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed	12	Surface	
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed	17	Layer 10	5517 ±90
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed	9	Layer 9	5810 ±80
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed	5	Layer 8	6030 ±195
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed or polished and Black-topped	4	Surface	
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed or polished and Black-topped	48	Layer 10	5517 ±90
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed or polished and Black-topped	10	Layer 9	5810 ±80
E-75-8	Red ware smoothed or polished and Black-topped	1	Layer 8	
E-77-1	Late/Final Neolithic unknown type	2		
E-92-7	Red ware burnished	3	Surface	
E-92-9	Red ware burnished	40		6000 ±60
E-94-2	Olive ware	2	Hearth 9	5980 ±60
E-94-2	Qussier clastic yellow-ware	15		
E-94-2	Red ware burnished	?	Hearth 1	5840 ±60
E-94-2	Red ware smoothed	?		
E-94-2	Red ware smoothed with dung-temper	1		
E-94-3	Red ware smoothed	34		
E-94-3	Red ware smoothed	73		
E-94-3	Red ware smoothed with dung-temper	5		

Table 1: Nabta Playa sites with Late/Final Neolithic pottery (adapted from Schild and Wendorf 2001: table 3.1; Nelson 2002a).



Fig. 1: Map of the location of Nabta Playa.

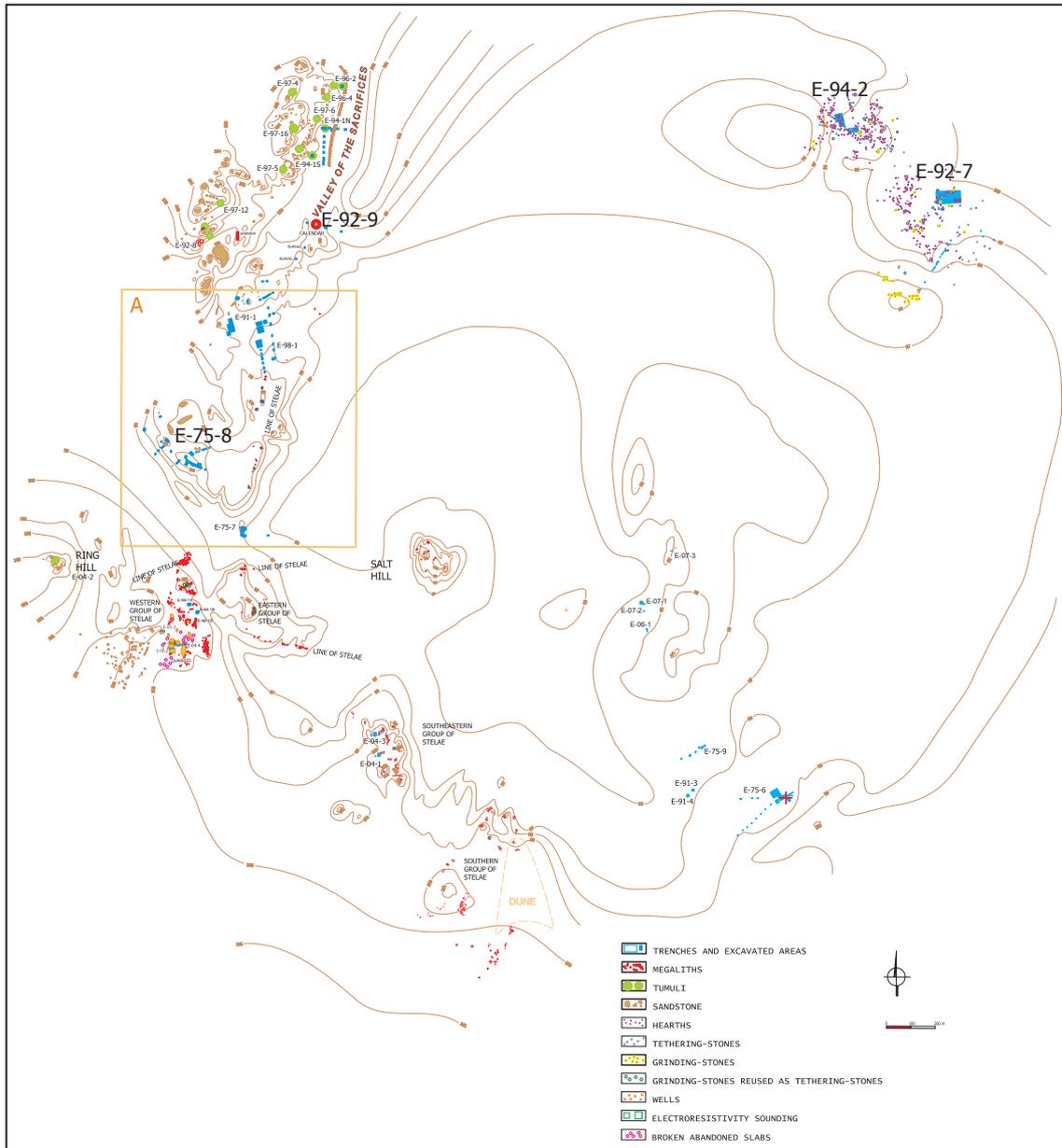


Fig. 2: Map of archaeological sites at Nabta Playa. The sites mentioned in the text are in large font. Not included are Sites E-77-1 and E-94-3, which are located closer to Gebel Nabta. Map created by R. Schild, M. Puskarski and A. Mazhar as part of CPE activities in years 2001–2007.

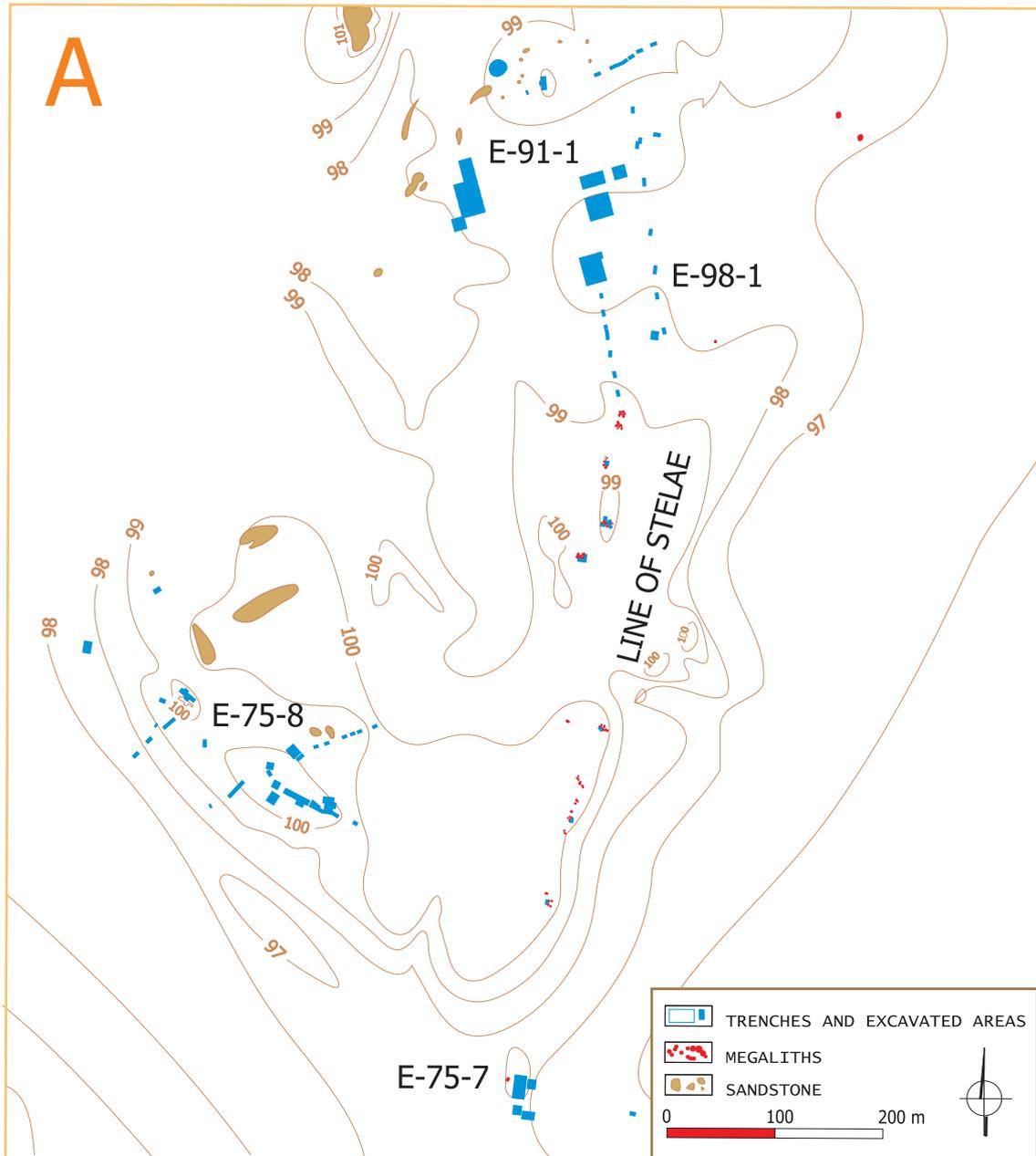


Fig. 3: Detail of Site E-75-8. Map created by R. Schild, M. Puzzkarski and A. Mazhar as part of CPE activities in years 2001–2007.

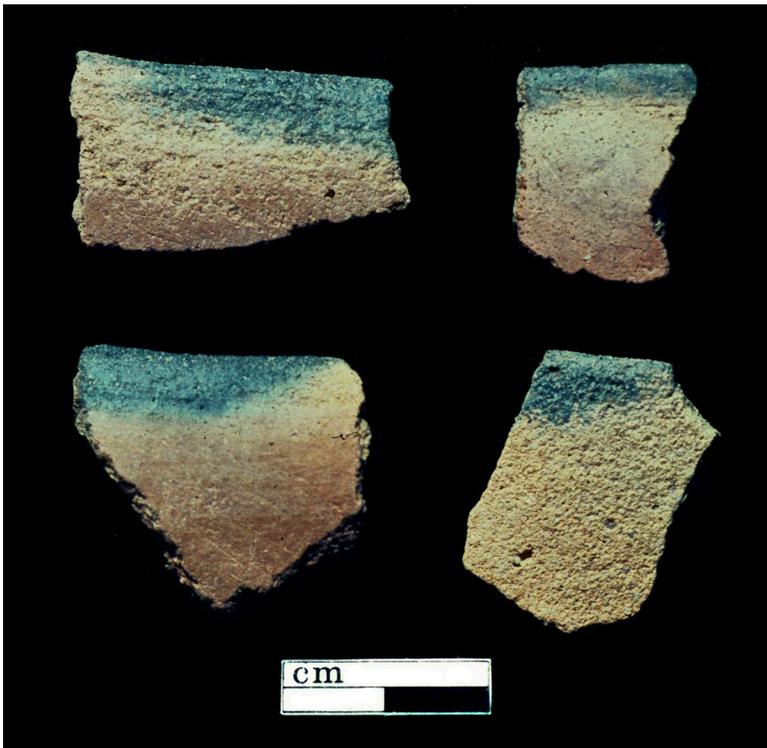


Fig. 4: Examples of Black-topped pottery from Site E-75-8, Nabta Playa.



Tell el-Balamun 2010

A. J. Spencer

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Tell el-Balamun 2010

A. J. Spencer

After the completion of the British Museum research project at Tell el-Balamun in 2008, a small amount of residual work remained to be accomplished. This involved the magnetic survey, begun in 2005 with the intention of mapping the entire area within the great temple enclosure, on the southern side of the site. One small area had not been finished and a particularly good example of a building identified by magnetometry had not been tested. The area was often wet, sometimes with standing water but more often with soft mud half a metre in depth. With unusually dry weather in 2010, the opportunity arose to complete the area. While the magnetic mapping proceeded, the previously identified structure was investigated.

Introduction

In March 2010 the magnetic mapping of the great temple enclosure at Tell el-Balamun was finally completed by the addition of the last remaining area,¹ completing the survey undertaken between 2005 and 2008. These 0.86 hectares had previously been impossible to survey owing to the waterlogged conditions, but the unusually low rainfall in the winter of 2009/10 resulted in the area being sufficiently dry to walk across. Seizing the opportunity, and hoping the weather would remain dry, the area was scanned over three days of intensive work.² The result is that the missing portion of the map to the west of the temple of Amun was completed (Fig. 4). Although few features were revealed in this location, this was not entirely unexpected, because the area is a deep hollow into which all the rainwater has flowed for centuries, bringing with it mud from the higher parts of the site. It is possible that the mud is too deep for magnetometry to reveal any structures below it, or the region may never have been chosen for building. One distinct possibility is that below the mud lie the remains of the Sacred Lake of the Dynasty 30 temple complex. This lake has not been found anywhere else, and the location at the side of the main temple of Amun is certainly a likely place for its construction. The presence of a lake would also explain why there are structures around the periphery of the area but not in the centre.

The accuracy of the magnetic survey has been proved repeatedly by the way in which it has identified the presence of structures previously known from the British Museum excavations of earlier seasons. More recently, it has been an invaluable tool for identification of additional areas for investigation, including the East gate in the Dynasty 26 enclosure wall, an anonymous temple of the Third Intermediate Period and the substantial limestone ruins of the Dynasty 26 chapel (Spencer 2009, 50–87). An additional test of the map was made this year and is

¹ The magnetic map of the Tell el-Balamun enclosure is a joint project of the British Museum and the Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology, represented by Dr. Tomasz Herbich.

² Carried out by Artur Buszek.

described below. Many other buildings and features have been revealed by the survey but it is not necessary, or practicable, to excavate them all. Excavation may add stratigraphic context and enable a date to be assigned to a structure, but for many buildings, the map itself is sufficient to show the complexity of the architecture within the temple enclosure and along its borders, particularly to the southeast where there is a heavy concentration of foundations for buildings of the Third Intermediate Period and Dynasty 26.

A small-scale excavation at Tell el-Balamun in 2010 was concentrated on a building (N4) identified from the magnetic map just to the southeast of the temple of Amun (Fig. 5). In fact, this structure was one of the first to be revealed at the beginning of the programme of magnetometry in 2005. It shows clearly on the map as a pale-coloured square, with sides of around 15m in length. Excavation was begun at the north corner and then extended, first to the other corners of the structure and then to the entire length of the southwestern side. The walls were found to be composed of mud brick and to have an average thickness of 1.9m, with bricks of 40–41x19x10–11cm. The northeast and southwest walls had both been partly destroyed by deep pits, which from their contents must have been dug in the Ptolemaic Period. The ground around the exterior of the building and also beneath its foundation level contained much pottery of the early Third Intermediate Period, among which bread moulds were especially common. At the south east, this material had accumulated around a mud brick wall which may itself date back to Ramesside times. The presence of Third Intermediate Period material in this part of the site, and at the level of the present ground surface, is a new discovery. The foundation of Building N4 had been cut into this older material, and so must date to an age after the Third Intermediate Period but before the Ptolemies. The most probable date would seem to be Dynasty 30, assuming that the building was associated with the rebuilding of the temple of Amun by Nectanebo I. Only the foundation of the structure was preserved, thus there was no remaining evidence for the positions of any doors or internal rooms. A plan of the building and the adjacent features, showing the location of the excavation trenches, is given in Fig. 1.

The excavation of Building N4

Excavation at the north corner

The initial attempt to locate the remains of Building N4 from its position on the magnetic map was made at the northern corner, where a trench measuring 3x3m, later extended to 3x6m, was set out. The upper fill was extremely hard-packed (it lay under a modern vehicle track) and contained much limestone debris (cover image), thrown out from the stone-robbing of the adjacent temple of Amun. Part of the wall of the building was found in the northern part of the trench, about 30cm below the surface of the ground. It was found to be composed of mud bricks, but there were only two or three courses of brickwork remaining in the wall at this point. The portion of the building which fell within the trench included a part of the northwestern wall and the interior of the north corner. The exterior of this corner was deeply buried under an ancient dump thrown out from the temple and was, therefore, not cleared. Excavation was continued to greater depth within the interior of the corner of the building and into the fill below its foundation level. Under the stone debris encountered at the surface

was a dark earth deposit, in the centre of which a pit soon appeared, delineated by pieces of limestone and containing discarded broken pottery (Fig. 6). The latter was mixed and included fragments of bowls, plates and jars from the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period. Two joining sherds belonged to the neck of a very large silt jar (Fig. 3, no. 4). The tops of two imported amphorae were found, together with part of the base of one (Fig. 2, nos. 7–8). These were made in a very gritty pink fabric, very probably of foreign origin, containing inclusions of limestone; the surface colour was a pink-beige. The shape of the body and the high angle of the loop-handles are features which resemble Etruscan transport-amphorae from the sixth century BC, but the form of the neck differs. Below these, some 90cm below the ground surface, lay a larger amphora in a totally shattered state. The friable pink clay of which it was made had laminated and fractured in the damp and salty soil, but its original form was nonetheless clear (Fig. 7). The vessel was 66cm high and of about 30cm maximum diameter. It is most probably a Corinthian Type A amphora. The pit also contained a simple cubical weight of brown quartzite (Fig. 36).

The fill around the pit was more homogenous. From the east side of the trench came parts of rims from two Third Intermediate Period bowls of the type used as grain-measures. Many similar bowls had been found in the 1998 season among the silos to the west of the Amun temple (Spencer 1999, pl. 70, no. 4; pl. 72, nos. 8–10). Other siltware ceramics included the upper part of a jar (Spencer 1999, pl. 75, no. 4), two cylindrical necks from jars, one with a thin pink slip (Spencer 1999, pl. 73, no. 12), the edge of a coarse platter, and several rims from coarse plates. From the northwest side of the excavation at the deepest level reached came a fragment of an imported Levantine amphora which proved to bear an ink inscription giving the name of the Deputy, Payemkheb (Fig. 3, no. 2 and Figs. 32–33). Part of another amphora of similar type was found nearby (Fig. 3, no. 1). In this trench it was evident that the deposits dated from the Third Intermediate Period, except where cut by the later pit. All of this material was lying just inside the north corner of the Building N4, or rather, just within and slightly below its foundation.

The west corner

Work moved on to the west corner of the building, which again was found at a high level, with 60cm, or five courses, of bricks in place (Figs. 8–9). It had been built over an area in which there had been some older constructions, comprising part of a drain made of ceramic pipe-sections, flanked by a row of large mud bricks. These bricks were of mixed mud and sand composition and measured 43cm in length, similar to Saite bricks at Tell el-Balamun. The wall of Building N4 lay some 70cm distant from the drain elements, the foundation trench for the wall having been cut into the ground beside these older remains. Parts of two sections of the drain remained (Figs. 11–12). The northern section was 64cm long and had been placed with a 5cm overlap with the next section; the southern section measured 69cm in length. Both elements were tapered, the northern one from a diameter of 38cm at one end to 30cm at the other; and the southern section tapering from 42 to 30cm. This shape was necessary for the pieces to be fitted together. The inner angle of the wall at this corner of the building had been cut by a Ptolemaic rubbish-pit (Fig. 10), another example of which was encountered a short distance along the southwest wall. Ptolemaic ceramics were recovered from the first pit, including parts of red-slipped bowls with incurved rims and a few sherds with red-line

painted decoration. By contrast, the fill outside the corner to the southwest contained Third Intermediate Period pottery, including many bread-moulds. This type of material was found to extend along the outside of the southwest wall of Building N4 and similar ceramics were subsequently discovered later to the east of the building.

South corner and southwest wall

The next corner to be excavated was that at the south, after which the excavation trenches at the west and south corners were linked to reveal the whole length of the southwest side of the building (Fig. 13), and the large Ptolemaic pit (Fig. 14). This pit had cut right through the brick wall to below its foundation level, creating a break in the continuity of the wall that had been visible previously on the magnetic map. A very narrow foundation trench into which the wall had been set was detected at both the west and south corners. The fill outside this trench, comprising the original ground into which the foundation had been cut, was full of pottery of the early Third Intermediate Period, including the bread moulds mentioned above. The layer containing this material continued under the Building N4. A section cut through the Ptolemaic pit in the southwest wall illustrated the various stratigraphic components of the area. From the surface, the Ptolemaic pit descends through the bricks of the wall, to such an extent that the deepest part, in the centre, passes right through the brickwork of Building N4. This brings the base of the pit with its Ptolemaic contents into contact with the original ground below the building, in which the Third Intermediate Period pottery is embedded (Fig. 15). So the sequence began with an area of Third Intermediate Period occupation, overbuilt by (and cut by the foundation trenches of) Building N4, which was itself later destroyed and its ruins cut by Ptolemaic rubbish pits. Excavation at the east corner (see below) revealed the same sequence.

The Ptolemaic pit contained fragments of bowls in Memphis Black Ware (Fig. 2, nos. 2–4 and Fig. 34). There were also a few decorated fragments from Megaran bowls, Fig. 35), a small siltware dish (Fig. 2, no. 1) and parts of red-ware cooking pots and plates. In the areas clear of the Ptolemaic pit, the grey bricks of the wall of Building N4 were well preserved. The thickness of the wall on this side varied from 190 to 200cm. At the south corner there were four courses of brick remaining, amounting to a depth of 43cm (Fig. 16). Below the foundation of this corner were remains of a brick-built storage silo, almost certainly for grain. The walls of this silo were a single brick in thickness and they continued into the section of the excavation at the south west (Figs. 18–19). The original diameter of the silo had been 294cm. Remains of a second example were found a little further to the south west, also partly covered by the wall of Building N4.

The east corner

The east corner had been damaged by another Ptolemaic pit, which had destroyed most of the northeast wall close to this corner. This damage had been visible before excavation on the magnetic map and had removed most of the brickwork from the interior of the angle, to leave only a narrow strip remaining on the outer face of the southeast wall. The pottery from the pit comprised characteristic Ptolemaic products like those found in the pit over the southwest wall. There were pieces of red-slipped bowls with incurved rims and ring-bases (Fig. 2, no. 5 and Fig. 38; cf. Spencer 1996, pl. 51, nos. 28–29; pl. 59, no. 4), cooking-pots (cf.

Spencer 1996, pl. 54, nos. 1–2 and 4), silt plates (cf. Spencer 1996, pl. 51, no. 3; pl. 52, nos. 3–4), fragments from bowls of Memphis Black Ware (Fig. 37) and a small vase of the same material (Fig. 2, no. 6 and Fig. 41). There was also a neck from an amphora of Type Dressel 1A and a head from a terracotta horse-figure (Fig. 39).

Outside the face of the southeast wall the intact earlier fill had remained in place, undisturbed by the construction of Building N4 or by later pits. Here there were many more examples of bread-moulds and other Third Intermediate Period ceramics.

Summary

The overall result of the excavation of the Building N4 showed once again the accuracy of the magnetic map, which had shown not just the general location of the structure but also the areas damaged by later pits. The measurement of the sides, at 16.05m, is very close to the estimate obtained from the map. But the excavation has added context and dating evidence. The presence of Third Intermediate Period deposits below the building, and Ptolemaic pits above it, place it stratigraphically in the Late Period. Its alignment parallel to the adjacent temple of Amun and the similarity of the bricks to those used in the Dynasty 30 rebuilding of the temple suggest that it dates from the same period, although the purpose of the building remains unknown.

Work to the southeast of Building N4

The excavation was extended to the south east in order to better examine the ground on which Building N4 had been constructed. The fragments of Third Intermediate Period pottery found around and below the edges of the building suggested that the zone of occupation from this period might be quite extensive. An area of 5.5x7m was investigated to the southeast of the south corner of Building N4. Much more red siltware pottery was found here, immediately under the surface mud, including a large quantity of bread-moulds (Figs. 17, 20). The range of other types of vessel in the assemblage was quite restricted, but included a number of small shouldered jars in red siltware (Fig. 21; cf. Spencer 1996, pl. 75, nos. 1–6) with a few of larger size (Fig. 3, no. 3; see the similar rim profile in Spencer 1999, pl. 71, no. 4). There were a few thick, coarse platters and sherds from simple plates. A single example was found of a vessel with a flared base, a typical Third Intermediate Period feature (Fig. 3, no. 5). An exact parallel to this piece was found in 1998 on the west side of the Amun Temple (Spencer 1999, 62, pl. 70, no. 8). Associated with the layer of pottery were the remains of two ovens, filled with red burned earth (Figs. 24–25). One of these was of rectangular shape and the other circular. The external dimensions of the rectangular oven were 1.2x1.0m, the sides being made of a single row of mud bricks (Figs. 26–27). The interior chamber, full of red burned earth, measured 85x46cm. The circular oven, of similar construction, had a diameter of 1.3m (Figs. 28–29). Only the lower part of each oven had survived, with a preserved height of around 20cm. Both ovens were situated to the east of the angle of a mud-brick wall which extended for a length of 5m through the trench, but as the ovens and associated pottery deposits had accumulated around this wall, it must therefore have existed from some earlier period. The bricks of this wall measured 38x20x9.5cm (Figs. 22–23). The foundation level of

the wall was not reached because it extended below the subsoil water-table. In a test-trench cut to search for the base of this wall, an older oven was identified at a lower level in the ground than the two noted on the surface. Its presence indicates continuous baking activity over some considerable time. This oven had been a smaller version of the rectangular one found at surface level, with sides a single brick in thickness and an external width of 69cm. It was preserved to a height of 43cm (Figs. 30–31). The pottery in the area dated from the early part of the Third Intermediate Period, and included a very large number of bread-moulds of various types, made in coarse red silt pottery. The most common shape was in the form of a narrow cylinder about 23cm high, tapering slightly to the base (Fig. 3, no. 6 and Fig. 40),³ but others were shorter with flared sides and distinct marks from scraping around the base during manufacture (Fig. 42). Examples of this same type had been found in the area of silos to the west of the temple of Amun (Spencer 1999, 60–62). The Third Intermediate pottery was not restricted to our small trench, but clearly covered a much larger area, as shown by the finding of similar sherds and bread-moulds all around the walls of Building N4 in any areas not cut by the foundation trench for that structure. The quantity of bread-moulds was too great for domestic use so it is likely that the area was the site of an official Third Intermediate Period bakery for the bread-offerings to be presented in the nearby temple of Amun. The circular brick silos for grain storage under the foundation of the south corner of Building N4 lie within the Third Intermediate Period level and must have been connected with this large-scale bakery.

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³ For some similar moulds of late New Kingdom to Third Intermediate Period date see Jacquet-Gordon 1981, 19–21, Type D, fig. 5.

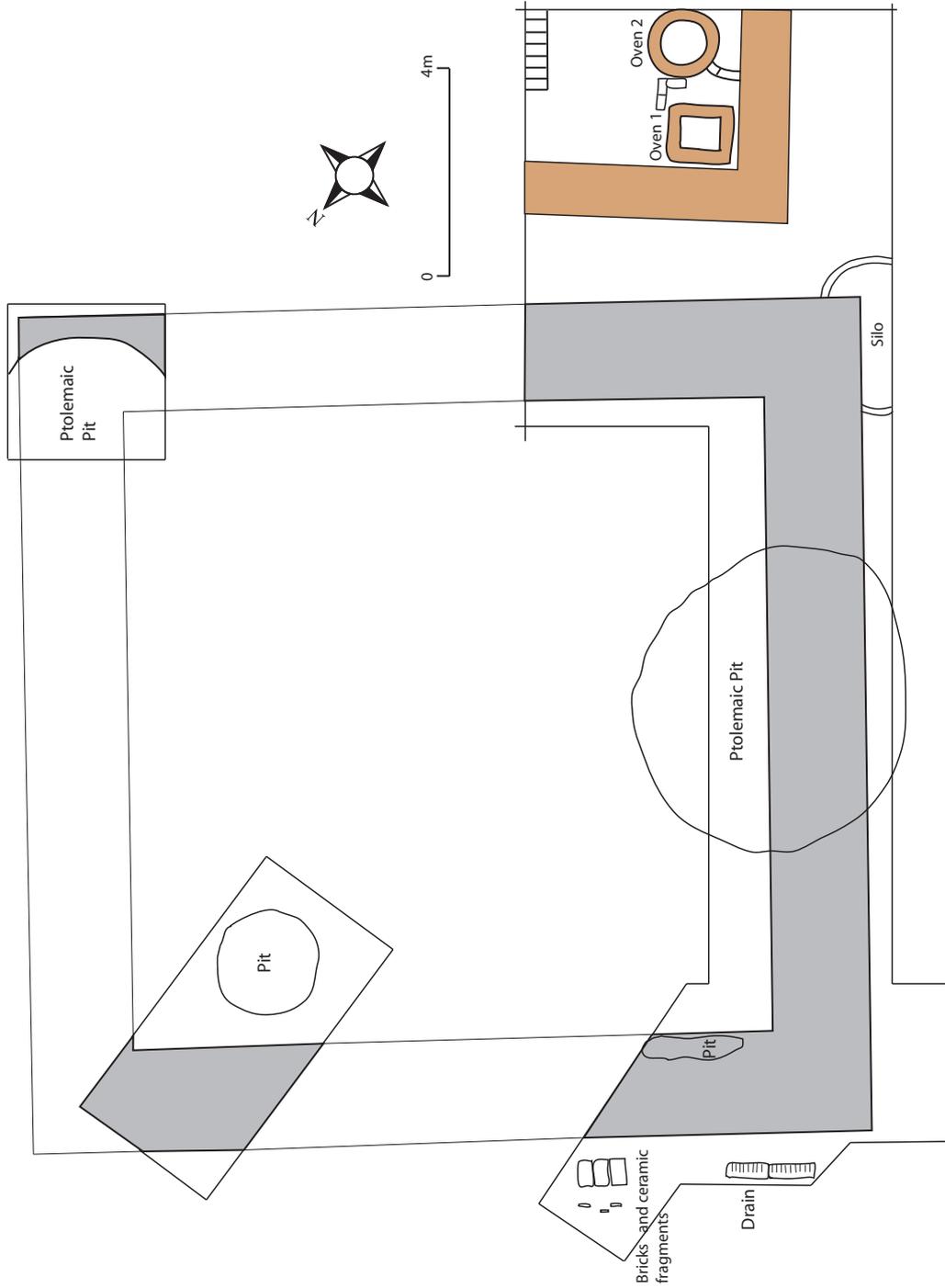


Fig 1: Plan of the excavation: building N4 and adjacent features.

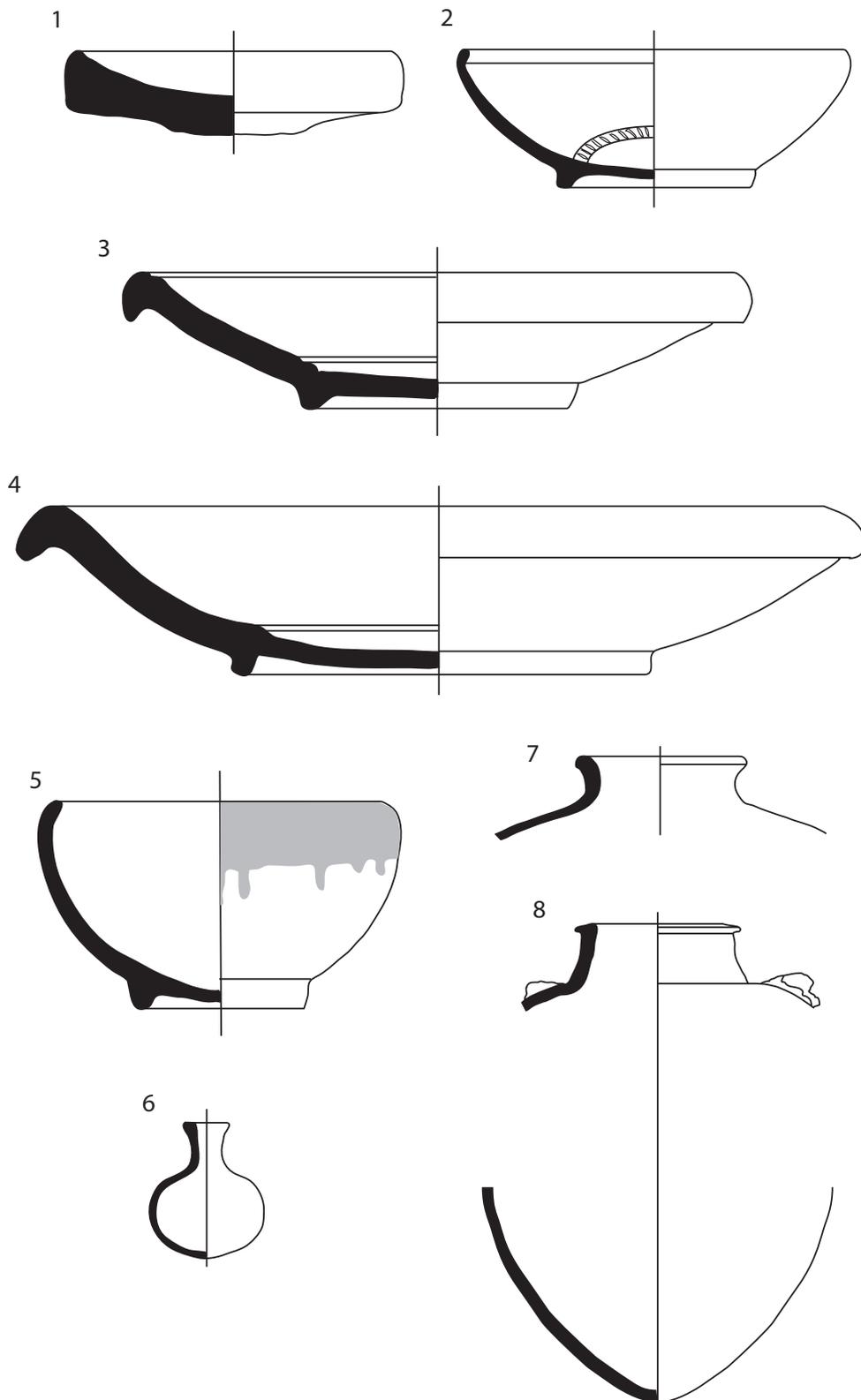


Fig. 2: Ptolemaic and Late Period pottery from pits above Building N4 (Nos. 1–6 at 1:2; 7–8 at 1:4).

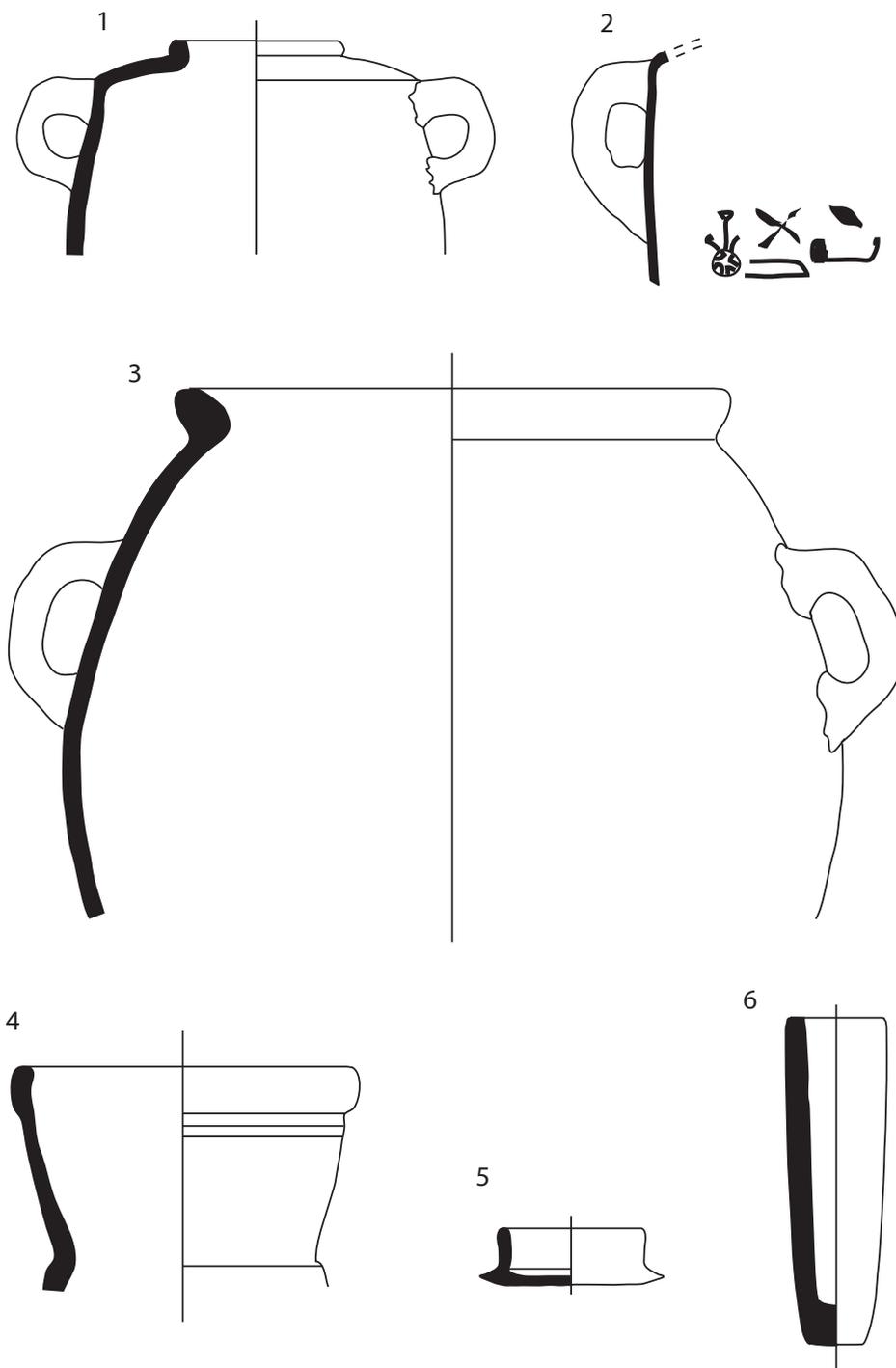


Fig. 3: Third Intermediate Period pottery (1:4).

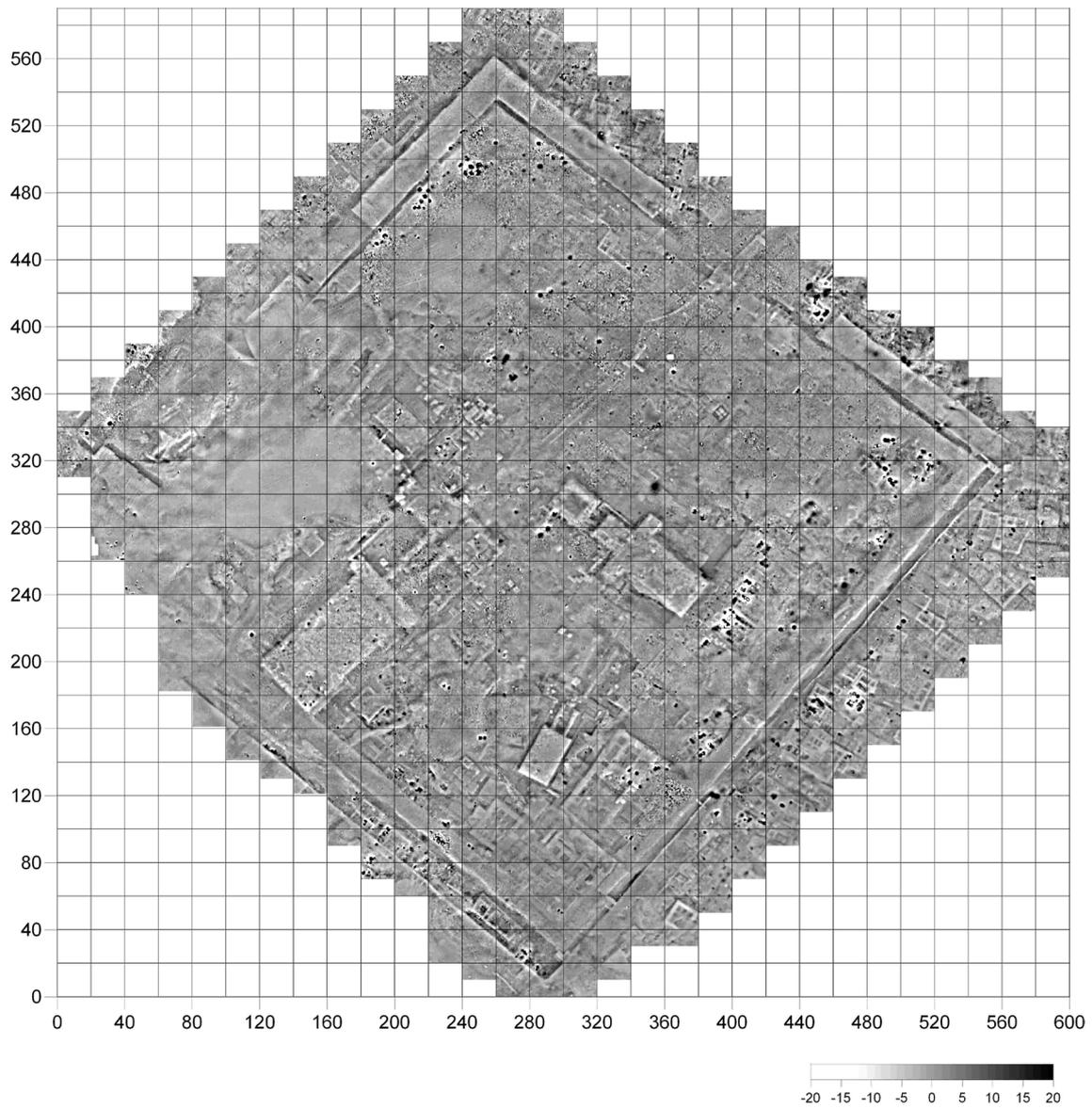


Fig. 4: The complete magnetic map of the temple enclosure.



Fig. 5: Position of Building N4, adjacent to the Amun temple.



Fig 6: Rubbish-pit within the north corner of the foundation of Building N4.



Fig 7: Broken Corinthian amphora in the bottom of the pit.



Fig 8: The west corner of Building N4, with drain elements outside the wall.



Fig. 9: The west corner from the north-east.



Fig. 10: Pit cut into the west corner.



Fig. 11: Drain in fill predating Building N4.



Fig. 12: Detail of drain elements.



Fig. 13: Southwest side of Building N4.



Fig. 14: Ptolemaic pit with the south-west wall.



Fig. 15: Base of the Ptolemaic pit in contact with fill containing Third Intermediate Period pottery.



Fig. 16: Southwest side of Building N4 from the south corner. Note the older silo below the angle.



Fig. 17: Examples of bread moulds.



Fig. 18: Silo under the south corner Building N4.



Fig. 19: Silo under the south corner of Building N4, in trench section.



Fig. 20: Third Intermediate Period jars and bread moulds in the fill under Building N4.



Fig. 21: An example of a common siltware jar, together with parts of two bread moulds.



Fig. 22: Early wall south-east of Building N4 (the southeast wall is visible behind).



Fig. 23: Fill with pottery beside the early wall.



Fig. 24: Area with ovens within the angle of the early wall.



Fig. 25: Area with ovens within the angle of the early wall.



Fig. 26: Oven 1.



Fig. 27: Oven 1.



Fig. 28: Oven 2.



Fig. 29: Oven 2.



Fig. 30: Earlier oven at a deeper level beside the wall.



Fig. 31: Earlier oven at a deeper level beside the wall, with edge of brick oven visible to the left.



Fig. 32: Inscribed jar fragment from pit at the north corner.



Fig. 33: Detail of the inscription from Fig. 33.



Fig. 34: Memphis Black Ware bowl, from the southwest side pit.



Fig. 35: Sherds from a Megaran bowl, from the southwest side pit.



Fig. 36: Quartzite weight from pit at north corner.



Fig. 37: Sherds of Memphis Black Ware from a pit at the east corner of Building N4.



Fig. 38: Red-slipped bowl from pit at east corner.



Fig. 39: Head of terracotta horse from pit at east corner.



Fig. 40: Bread mould of the most common type.



Fig. 41: Black Ware vase from pit at the east corner.



Fig. 42: Heavier bread-moulds.