

Tomb 26 in Cemetery SAC5 on Sai Island

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Abstract

Tomb 26 in cemetery SAC5 was discovered by the European Research Council AcrossBorders project in 2015. It yielded several burials from the mid- to late 18th Dynasty with rich funerary equipment, including family members of a goldsmith, thus of Egyptian officials involved in gold working and exploitation in Upper Nubia. As a family tomb, Tomb 26 has much potential to illustrate the status and corresponding material culture traceable for lower and medium-ranked individuals from Thutmoside times onwards. All in all, Tomb 26 and its associated finds are of prime significance for understanding life on New Kingdom Sai.

Keywords: Sai, Nubia, Sudan, pyramid, funerary archaeology, goldsmith, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty

Pyramid cemetery SAC5

The pyramid cemetery SAC5 (fig. 1), located approximately 800m south of the New Kingdom town, was discovered in the 1972-73 season by the French mission and represents the most significant Egyptian cemetery on the island (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, 3; Budka 2014; 2015b; 2017b). Its size and qualitative data underline the importance of Sai as administrative centre during the mid-18th Dynasty in Upper Nubia (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, 418; Budka 2014; 2015a, 51; 2015c, 77-80). Similar to other Egyptian sites in Nubia like Aniba, Soleb and Amara West, Pharaonic style tombs¹ had been built at SAC5 (Budka 2015b, 56-58) which covers almost the entire New Kingdom and was still used into the Pre-Napatan and Napatan periods (Thill 2007, 353-369; Budka 2014; 2015b). The results from the French mission in SAC5, comprising data from 24 rock-cut shaft tombs with mudbrick chapels and mostly pyramidal superstructures, were recently published as a substantial two volume monograph (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012).

According to the published material, SAC5 cannot be associated with the foundation of the Egyptian settlement on Sai in the very early 18th Dynasty (reign of Ahmose or Amenhotep I).² The cemetery was not in use prior to Thutmose III and flourished

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- 1 For dating such tombs with pyramidal superstructures not before the mid-18th Dynasty and most likely from the reign of Amenhotep III onwards, see most recently Näser 2017, 560. Cf. Williams in this volume who argues for an earlier date, which is until now not attested on Sai.
- 2 For the discussion of the foundation of Sai, see Davies 2005; Budka 2011; Gabolde 2012; Budka 2015c, 77-80.

until the late 18th Dynasty, reflecting the general heyday of the 18th Dynasty on Sai Island (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, 403–418; Budka 2014; cf. also Budka 2011; 2015b; 2017a and 2017b). SAC5 is therefore contemporaneous

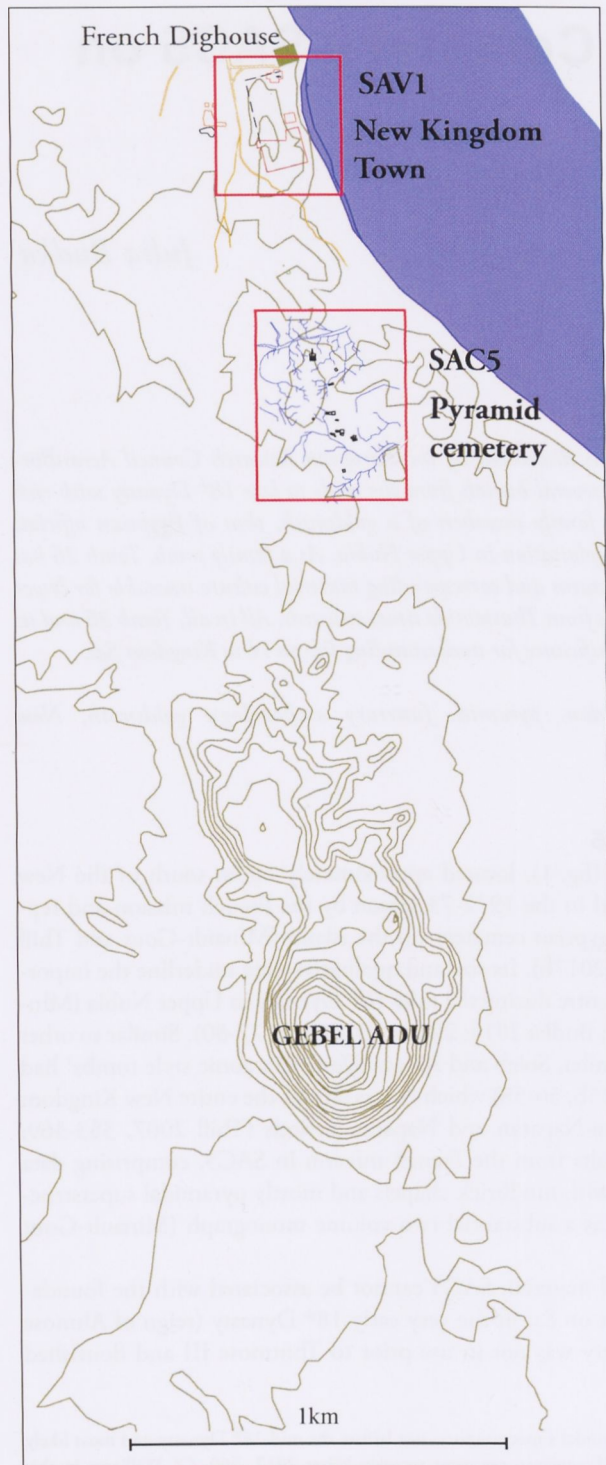


Figure 1. Location of SAC5 in relation to the New Kingdom town, the course of the Nile and Gebel Adou on Sai Island.

to the extensive building activities in the town, traceable in all town areas with a stone temple, an enclosure wall, magazines and cellars as well as the governor's residence (Azim 1975; Budka and Doyen 2013; Adenstedt 2016).³ The necropolis is of Egyptian type (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, 406), with a preferred extended position for burials, pyramid superstructures resembling the New Kingdom Theban model and typical Egyptian installations for funerary offering cult (Budka 2014). The assumption that Egyptian administrative staff and their families⁴ were buried here is very likely and seems to be reflected in high quality objects like heart scarabs and stone shabtis.⁵ By contrast, the "mixed" cemetery SAC4, located to the north of the Egyptian town, was most likely used by Kerma people in contact with the Egyptians living on the island (Gratien 1985; 2002; see also Williams in this volume). SAC1, a graveyard with about 20 chamber tombs, seems to predate SAC5 and was maybe used by occupants (of Egyptian origin?) prior to the flourishing time under Thutmose III.⁶

All in all, the mortuary evidence from SAC5 supports the assessment of the New Kingdom town based on the material culture that there was a multifaceted community on Sai Island, including both Egyptians and Nubians (Budka 2015c, 68–69). This corresponds to recent studies of the biological identities of people buried at other New Kingdom sites in Nubia, for example at Tombos (Buzon 2008; 2017; Smith and Buzon 2014; in this volume) and Amara West (Binder and Spencer 2014; Spencer *et al.* 2014; Binder 2017). Research at these cemeteries has shown a complex social diversity during the entire period of the New Kingdom (both in the 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside era).

Fresh fieldwork in SAC5 2015–2017

To achieve one of the main goals of the AcrossBorders project, a better understanding of the population on the island, fieldwork in SAC5 was planned for three seasons, starting in 2015. Taking into account earlier work and publications (Thill 2007; Minault-Gout 2012; Minault-Gout and Thill 2012; Cressent and Raimon 2016), new material from AcrossBorders excavations offers fresh

3 See also Budka 2015a; 2017a; SAV1 in this volume for corresponding results in new excavation areas investigated by AcrossBorders.

4 See Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, 413–414, for titles attested at SAC5 from French excavations; see also Auenmüller in this volume.

5 However, as discussed below, this also has to include "Egyptianised" Nubians, born in Nubia and fulfilling a role as Egyptian official as well as "Egyptians" born in Nubia to Egyptian parents/fathers.

6 This cemetery will be published in the near future by Brigitte Gratien.

data. Besides information about the past occupants, the questions of dating the phasing of the cemetery were of key importance. Does the mortuary evidence support the model of distinctive phases established for the evolution of the New Kingdom town (Budka 2015a; 2017a) or does it show inconsistencies? Furthermore, does it correspond to the assessment of SAC5 as previously proposed by Ann Minault-Gout and Florence Thill?

In 2015, two new areas were opened by AcrossBorders in SAC5 (fig. 2), aiming to clarify zones definitely void of tombs or with still unexplored tombs. Area 1 indeed did not yield any tombs, although little New Kingdom surface material was present (Budka 2015a, 47). Area 2, located to the north of Area 1 and immediately adjacent to various 18th Dynasty monuments, proved more efficient for the search of new tombs. A new structure, similar to

the tombs excavated by the French mission in its close surroundings, was discovered by AcrossBorders in 2015 with Tomb 26 (Budka 2015a, 47-50; 2017b).

In 2016, a complete surface cleaning over Area 2 and in particular towards the south and east of the new Tomb 26 proved that this part of the cemetery is otherwise void of tombs. In addition, Area 3 of the AcrossBorders excavation in SAC5 was opened in 2016 to the west of Tomb 8 (fig. 2). No mudbrick features were found and almost no pottery sherds, but the natural ground featured a number of irregular pits of unclear function and of unknown origin. These pits vary in dimensions and depths and might be connected to the Pharaonic building activity at SAC5 since very similar pits were observed directly within the mudbrick architecture of the courtyard of Tomb 11, located further to the west (fig. 2).

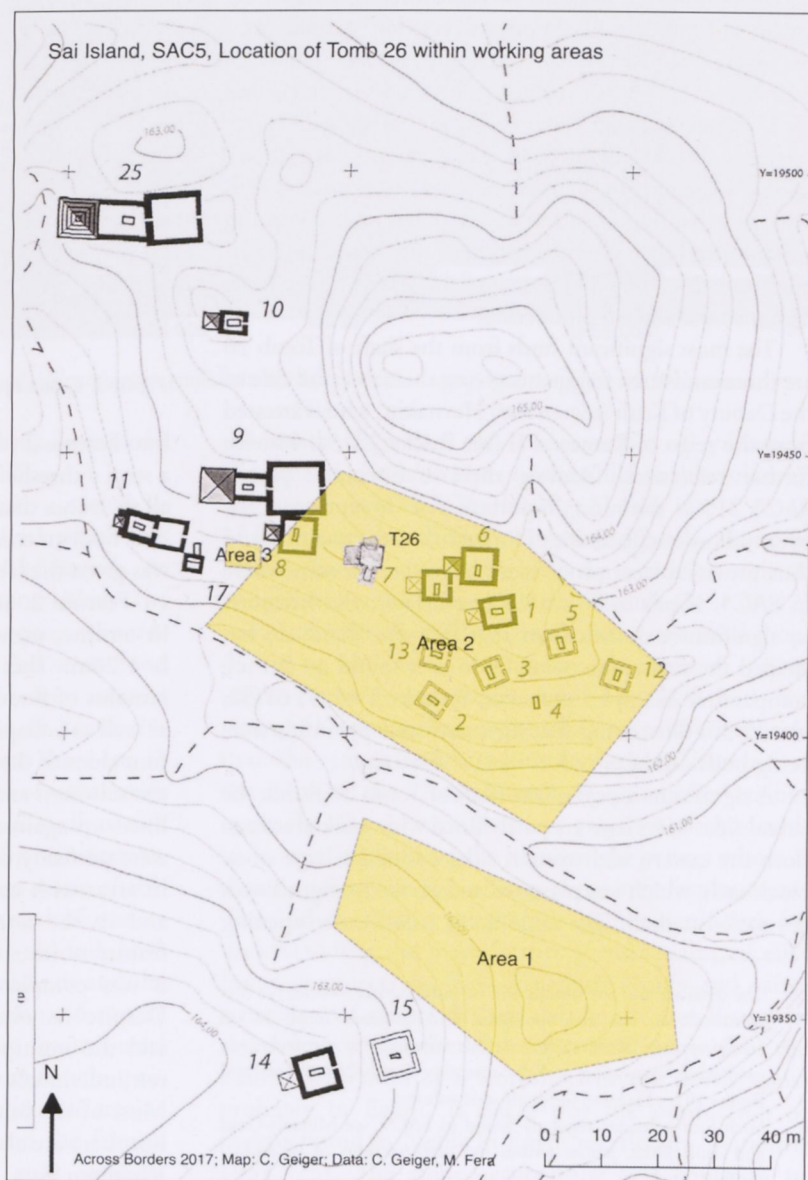


Figure 2. Location of Tomb 26 within SAC5 with highlighted working areas of AcrossBorders.

Tomb 26

The monument christened Tomb 26 was fully excavated in three seasons (2015-2017), yielding some unexpected finds and spectacular features which will be presented in the following.

The features and burials⁷

Only scarce remains of mudbrick attest to a now lost superstructure which can tentatively be reconstructed as a courtyard, a chapel and a pyramid (Budka 2015b, 63, fig. 20). The rock-cut substructure (fig. 3) is opened by a rectangular shaft (c. 2.6 x 1.8m) with a depth of more than 5.2m. A set of eight foot-holes was noted on each of the lateral walls towards the south (eastern and western shaft facing) (Budka 2015a, 47).⁸ The shaft (Feature 1) opens into a large burial chamber (Feature 2).

Finds from the shaft allow reconstructing a very long use life of Tomb 26 and comprise objects and ceramics from the mid- to late 18th Dynasty, the early and late Ramesside period until c. 700 BC, including the Pre-Napatan era and the Napatan era (Thill 2007; Budka 2015b; 2016; 2017b). Interestingly, some of the fragmented ceramic vessels found joining fragments in material excavated in Feature 2 – illustrating that burials within the tomb had been robbed in antiquity and their contexts had been distributed throughout Tomb 26. The broken state of the vessels furthermore demonstrates ancient plundering.

The most significant finds from the shaft of Tomb 26 are three sandstone fragments giving the name and title of the Deputy of Kush (*jdwn n K3š*) Hornakht, who is attested from the reign of Ramesses II (see Budka 2015a, 48 with further references). Among these architectural pieces, SAC5 215 is the most important one: it represents the pyramidion inscribed with Hornakht's name and title and thus provided clear proof that he was buried somewhere in SAC5, if not in Tomb 26 (see below). Furthermore, its significance derives from that fact that Tomb 26 has yielded the first stone pyramidion ever found on Sai (cf. comparative examples at Aniba, Steindorff 1937, 61-62, pls. 35-36) illustrating that Egyptian-style pyramids were being built on the island in the 19th Dynasty.

A significant aspect of the shaft of Tomb 26 is that the lateral sides of its base are partly lined with worked stones. Both the eastern and western sides contain a large stone block each, which was plastered and perfectly aligned with the rock-cut shaft. The same holds true for the opening



Figure 3. Ground plan of the substructure of Tomb 26.

into Feature 2 (the chamber situated to the north), where a step, a threshold and the door jambs of the entrance are all set stones that were originally nicely plastered in white. This built-in entrance into the rock-cut subterranean part was given the label Feature 3 (fig. 3).

Feature 2, accessible via Feature 3, is almost square in outline, measuring 3.96 x 3.89m, with a height of c. 1.20m. The chamber was found partly filled with remains of flood levels, heaps of looser debris and sand as well as collapsed white plaster from the side walls. All four sides of the chamber were originally plastered, with the southern and western walls created by worked stones lined up against the irregular rock. These stone blocks were perfectly concealed as rock-cut lateral sides – only in areas with collapsed blocks like west of the entrance and in the north-western corner was this interesting feature noticeable for us (Budka 2016; 2017b). Feature 2 was completely excavated in 2016 (Budka 2016). Despite its obviously disturbed state of preservation and the multiple flooding, remains of a minimum of ten individuals were documented from different levels. Most of the burials can be dated to the Ramesside era, but there are also some that are likely to be of Post-New Kingdom date. The best preserved burial was found in

7 The details about the burials will be published elsewhere; for first comments on the anthropological findings from Tomb 26 see Stadlmayr and Wohlschläger in this volume. For the technique used while excavating and documenting Tomb 26 see Fera and Budka 2016; Fera and Geiger in this volume.

8 Such foot-holes are regularly found in SAC5, see Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, *passim* within the plans/sections of individual tombs.



Figure 4. Burials within Feature 6 (DEM combined with orthophotograph); the northern one was identified as the goldsmith Khnummose.

the south-western corner and most probably dates to the late 18th Dynasty (Budka 2017b, 116-117).

Along the north wall of Feature 2, a trench is located (Feature 4, 1.90 x 0.70 x 1.40m) which was cleaned in 2017 and yielded a number of burials. At the bottom of this trench, what is most likely the original burial chamber (Feature 6) opens towards the north (see fig. 3). It was found sealed with flood deposits and was obviously undisturbed since ancient times, contrasting with the other parts of Tomb 26. Feature 6 (2.13 x 1.35m), which is less than 1m in height, held two wooden, painted coffins of which only traces survived in the flood sediments as well as rich burial equipment of Egyptian style (fig. 4): scarabs, faience vessels, pottery vessels and one stone shabti (fig. 5) were used as burial goods. Traces of the funerary masks, here especially inlaid eyes and gold foil, have also survived. According to the inscribed finds and the human remains, the double burial in Feature 6 can be identified as the goldsmith Khnummose (main burial along the north wall) and an anonymous female, presumably his wife (second burial in the entrance area).

The titles of Khnummose as given on the faience vessels (fig. 6) and the shabti are gold worker/

goldsmith (Egyptian *nhj*) and overseer of goldworks (Egyptian *jmj-r'-nhjw*) (see Auenmüller in this volume). The stone shabti SAC5 350 (fig. 5) falls into a group of five stone shabtis from Egyptian officials, found at Aniba, Toshka and Sai, which share similar stylistic and palaeographic features. Ann Minault-Gout (2012) proposed that they all originate from one workshop, dating to the mid-18th Dynasty. A common origin might explain one specific detail on SAC5 350: the name of Khnummose was inscribed by a different hand than the remaining text which comprises Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead. Obviously, this piece was not made for Khnummose, but was acquired already with its inscription, adding the name of the person whom it would accompany for eternity at the very last moment. This “off the shelf” purchase is highly significant for understanding the manufacturing and trading of elite funerary objects in New Kingdom Nubia and raises a number of questions (see also Smith and Buzon in this volume). Because of the non-local material of the shabti (serpentinite) a workshop in the north, most probably in Egypt, is likely (for the production of shabtis found in Nubia in Egypt see already Steindorff 1937, 75). The stone serpentinite was common in



Figure 5. Shabti of Khnummose from Feature 6, SAC5 350.



Figure 6. Faience vessel SAC5 353 with name and title of Khnummose from Feature 6.



Figure 7. Heart scarab SAC5 349 from Feature 6, backside with Book of the Dead spell.

Wadi Semna und Wadi Atalla in Egypt.⁹ Another remarkable object from Khnummose's burial equipment was made from the same material (serpentinite) – the high-quality heart scarab with excerpts of Chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead, SAC 349 (fig. 7) finds some parallels in other tombs in SAC5 (Minault-Gout and Thill 2012, pl. 102) and also in Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 120, figs. 170-171, 218, figs. 409-410) as well as more distant comparisons in Aniba (Steindorff 1937, 86-89 pls. 47-48).

The dating of Khnummose's shabti is supported by the ceramics found in Feature 6, originating from the mid-18th Dynasty (most likely the reigns of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV and definitely no later than Amenhotep III). Especially relevant are the so-called flower pots, deep conical bowls with perforated bases and of uncertain function, which are very common 18th Dynasty types both in Egypt and Nubia (see Wolf 1937, 130, pl. 77, 'Form 25'; Williams 1992, 34-35; Budka 2017b, 123). Three flower pots accompanied Khnummose's burial, another one was placed next to the female adult below the entrance of the chamber. They all

⁹ For serpentinite in general see Klemm and Klemm 1993, 376-378; for Wadi Semna as its northernmost attestation see Azer and Stern 2007, 457-472. For proposed shabti workshops in Memphis and Thebes see Minault-Gout 2012, 199, with references.



Figure 8. Gold and silver signet ring SAC5 388 with a scarab still in place from Feature 5.

find close parallels from mid-18th Dynasty contexts in the Pharaonic town of Sai and also in the western chamber of Tomb 26.

The second interment in Feature 6 was placed directly below the entrance and was identified as a female (see Stadlmayr and Wohlschläger in this volume). Most remarkable among its burial gifts is a ceramic dish holding four miniature pottery jugs and two faience vessels which was placed next to the coffin, to the south of the burial, at the height of the shoulder. The miniature jugs find close parallels in Soleb, in particular in Tomb 15, dated by Michaela Schiff Giorgini to the reign of Amenhotep III (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 194, fig. 344, T 15 p9 and p14, and 196, fig. 348, T 15 p20). Likewise, the faience vessels of Khnummose are comparable to vessels from Tomb 11 at Soleb (Schiff Giorgini 1971, 166, figs. 268 and 270).

In 2017, a new discovery was made in the north-western corner of Feature 2 when the entrance to a hidden chamber, concealed by a plastered stone wall, was revealed (see fig. 3). This new western chamber, labelled Feature 5, yielded eleven adults and three infant burials (see Stadlmayr and Wohlschläger in this volume). The burial equipment is Egyptian in style and comprises among others a remarkable gold and silver signet ring (fig. 8; see parallels from Aniba, Steindorff 1937, 111, pl. 57, nos. 34 and 36), several scarabs, amulets (including an extraordinary necklace with crocodile pendants in various materials) and pottery vessels as well as some traces of the funerary masks and coffins which are closely comparable to the ones from Feature 6.

Based on the mode of burial (extended position in wooden coffins, funerary masks) and the burial

equipment (scarabs, canopic jars, amulets and jewellery) these burials in Feature 5 seem to be almost contemporary with Khnummose and his wife, suggesting that they probably represent further family members (Budka 2017a, 79; 2017c).

The oldest burials, being located on the chamber floor and sealed by debris from the roof as well as flood levels, were found in the southern part. Two extended burials of probably male adults yielded several objects, including canopic jars in clay, scarabs and pottery vessels, all of which are unfortunately without personal names or titles. At the feet of the individual lying along the south wall, a cluster of pottery vessels was positioned. This cluster comprises six flower pots, all piled up, partly upside down, one large dish with a red rim and a small lid. All vessels are datable to the mid-18th Dynasty (Budka 2017a, 79, pl. 9).

Khnummose and other burials in Tomb 26 as autochthonous individuals on Sai Island

Strontium isotope analyses were conducted on selected individuals from Tomb 26 in order to address one of the most pressing questions – the autochthony or allochthony of the skeletal remains from Tomb 26.¹⁰ The study is still ongoing and will be published elsewhere.¹¹ Very remarkable are the first preliminary data: according to the local “isoscapes”, the range of strontium established using soil samples, water samples as well as modern and ancient animal samples from Sai Island, all tested individuals from Tomb 26 are to be regarded as local. This means that neither Khnummose, nor his presumed wife and potential relatives from Feature 5 spent time in Egypt in their childhood or youth. Also the Ramesside burials from Feature 2 could be identified as autochthonous individuals. These first results – which still have to be treated with caution and need to be compared on a broader basis, e.g. with data from Tombos and Amara West – are very significant for the pressing questions of appropriation and the entanglement of cultures on Sai. It still remains possible that Khnummose was an offspring of an Egyptian ‘colonist’ who came to Sai during the time of Thutmose III, but it is equally possible that a person who seems completely Egyptian based on his burial style and burial gifts in Tomb 26 and has an Egyptian title (goldsmith), has actually roots in the indigenous population of Upper Nubia who were confronted with

Egyptian culture ever since the campaigns of Ahmose (see also Williams in this volume).

Reconstruction of the use-life of Tomb 26

Tomb 26 is remarkable in several aspects: its architecture, rich inventory and complex use-life. With the discovery of Features 5 and 6, much information was gained on the original users of Tomb 26. It is now safe to propose that the monument was originally built in the mid-18th Dynasty (Amenhotep II to Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III at the latest) for the goldsmith Khnummose. Until the late 18th Dynasty the family of Khnummose seems to have used the tomb as burial place, with interments taking place in Feature 5 and also probably in Feature 2 (Individual 10). By the Ramesside period at the latest, the original chamber (Feature 6) was completely sealed by flood levels. Some activity must have happened in the 19th and 20th Dynasties, most probably re-using Feature 2 as burial chamber. It is also likely that the entrance to Feature 5 was concealed and that this lateral room was forgotten – part of its roof must have collapsed soon after the 18th Dynasty. Consequently, interments of the Pre-Napatan and Napatan era used primarily the central room, Feature 2, which remained open and functioning well into the 7th century BC (Budka 2017b, 126, table 1).

The presence of the pyramidion, jambs and lintel of the Deputy of Kush under the reign of Ramesses II, Hornakht, which were found in the shaft of Tomb 26 still needs to be explained. Taking into account the new finds from 2017, there are two possible scenarios regarding the burial of Hornakht:

Since Khnummose is likely to be the original owner of Tomb 26, the structure cannot be interpreted as a new tomb erected for the Deputy of Kush in the 19th Dynasty. Thus, Hornakht was probably buried in a tomb close-by that has until now escaped its rediscovery (but note the large area void of tombs around Tomb 26, see fig. 2). The pyramidion and fragments of the offering chapel of this still unknown tomb then ended up in the shaft of Tomb 26, probably around the end of the New Kingdom.

Considering that most tombs in SAC5 testify a phase of re-use in Ramesside and late New Kingdom times, this modus of interment – usurpation of older structures – seems to represent the Ramesside standard on Sai.¹² As yet, no structure was found that was built as a new tomb *after* the 18th Dynasty. Thus, it is likely that also Hornakht, as Deputy of Kush, chose his burial place according to local contemporaneous traditions. Tomb 26 would have been re-occupied, its superstructure re-designed with a pyramid (including the inscribed

10 For first promising results of strontium signals in skeletal samples both from Egypt and Nubia, suggesting that distinguishing between the two areas is indeed possible with this method, see: Smith and Buzon 2017, 618-619, fig. 5.

11 Many thanks go here to Anika Retzmann and Thomas Prohaska, VIRIS Laboratory of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, to whom I owe all preliminary data.

12 The reuse of older structures as a mode of burial is also well-attested at Soleb, see Schiff Giorgini 1971, 100.

capstone) and a new chapel with inscribed doorways.¹³ At the end of the New Kingdom, this superstructure was dismantled, the tomb was re-used and the stone architectural pieces ended up in the shaft. This would correspond well to other finds (pottery and scarabs) from Tomb 26 dating to the 19th Dynasty.

All in all, Hornakht's burial at Sai represents a particular case, independent from which scenario is more likely: during the reign of Ramesses II, deputies of Kush were usually residing at Amara West and were also buried in this new administrative centre (cf. Binder 2017). But for whatever reason, perhaps because of family ties, Hornakht chose to have his tomb at Sai.¹⁴ In doing so, he followed the local tradition of re-using an older tomb, but equipping it with a new superstructure illustrating his rank as of Kush.

In summary, although no material from the funerary equipment of Hornakht was identifiable as such from Tomb 26, I would propose that the second scenario – the re-occupation of Khnummose's monument by Hornakht – is more likely, taking into account the specific situation during the 19th Dynasty on Sai.

Relevance of Tomb 26 in a broader context

The ceramics and prosopographical data from Tomb 26 are especially important for AcrossBorders' envisaged comparison between necropolis and town. The burial of Khnummose and the accompanying interments of the mid-18th Dynasty enable us to reconstruct a family whose members were engaged in gold mining, one of the main functions of Sai as Egyptian administrative centre during the New Kingdom (see Budka 2017a, 80; for gold production in the area see Klemm and Klemm 2013; 2017, 260-261, 266-267). As Deputy of Kush, Hornakht fits in perfectly and allows stretching the period of interest until the Ramesside era.

With Khnummose, one of the occupants of the New Kingdom town was identified – according to his title it is safe to closely associate his daily activities with the large scale magazine buildings, well known from the southern part of the town, but now also unearthed at SAV1 East by recent excavations of AcrossBorders (see Budka SAV1 in this volume). Large cellars in this sector of the New Kingdom town (like Feature 15, Budka 2015a, 45, table 1) were in use during the lifetime of Khnummose and possibly his offspring. These cellars and magazines are connected with tributes to Egypt, possibly also with Nubian gold and with the Egyptian administration

of Upper Nubia in general (cf. Müller 2013). Thus, combining the respective data with prosopographical information from SAC5 represents further steps in reconstructing both daily life and death on New Kingdom Sai, an Egyptian temple town and administrative centre.

As highlighted, Tomb 26 and its associated finds are of prime significance for understanding life on New Kingdom Sai. AcrossBorders' results from fieldwork at SAC5 nicely correspond to the results of the French Mission, which could rely on a much larger set of excavated tombs with large quantities of various materials. Most importantly, the new work in SAC5 supports my earlier reconstruction of the evolution of the Egyptian town based on the excavations in the city (Budka 2015a, 51; 2017a, 19). During the time of Thutmose III, Sai became an important administrative centre that was equipped with a large Egyptian-style pyramid cemetery. Egyptian architecture and material culture from both the town and cemetery SAC5 testify to the presence of Egyptians, but also to the appropriation of Egyptian style through indigenous elements. This resulted in a lifestyle during the second half of the 18th Dynasty that is very similar, but not completely identical to sites in Egypt proper. The case study of Khnummose, who was probably an autochthonous individual from Sai, illustrates the complex entanglement of cultures traceable for New Kingdom Nubia. Other than drawing artificial border lines between Egyptians and Nubians, ongoing research illustrates that at the local level social, economic and cultural identities were changing, interacting and merging with each other (see Binder 2017, 606-611; Smith and Buzon 2017; in this volume).

Furthermore, the individuals buried in Tomb 26 which should be considered as Egyptian officials with lower and medium ranking titles were partly associated with rich equipment and high quality finds. One possible explanation could be the function of Khnummose as goldsmith who might have had more direct access to jewellery like the gold and silver ring SAC5 388. Another explanation could rely on the fact that perceptions of status may well differ depending whether they are viewed from a micro or a macro perspective. The flourishing families on New Kingdom Sai Island who were buried like Khnummose's in SAC5 were not holding overly significant positions within the administration, but still represent the local wealth, once again underlining the dynamic character of this Egyptian microcosm and its occupants in Nubia (Budka 2017a, 80).

Evidence from Tomb 26 is also relevant for the Ramesside history of Sai Island, together with new finds from the town site (especially sector SAV1 West, see Budka 2015a, 46), the continued importance of the island during the 19th Dynasty – despite the foundation of Amara West as new residence of the Deputy of Kush – can be illustrated. Sai was still used by high officials as

13 Cf. the complex phases of re-designing the superstructure of Tomb 15 at Soleb, Schiff Giorgini 1971, 186, fig. 322.

14 As well as a – at least temporary – residence in the town area; see Budka 2015a, 49.

burial place, including selected Deputies of Kush like Hornakht. Finally, the material from Tomb 26 allows regional comparisons with other Egyptian sites in Upper Nubia. New parallels to another major Egyptian site in Upper Nubia, Soleb, can be highlighted and remarkable matches were noted between the new tomb on Sai and Tomb 15 at Soleb, implying either a close connection between the sites or – maybe even more likely – stressing the almost identical status of both sites as administrative centres (Budka 2017a, 79). In this respect, the stone shabti of Khnummose is also highly relevant (fig. 5); it falls into a homogenous group of funerary figurines attested for various officials of the Egyptian administration of Nubia, who were buried at major sites of the mid-18th Dynasty like Aniba, Toshka and Sai (Minault-Gout 2012).

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