

## THE ROYAL AND PRIVATE NECROPOLIS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH DYNASTIES AT DRA' ABU EL-NAGA

Daniel POLZ

Almost exactly fifteen years ago, in the spring of 1990, a first survey of the plains and hillside of Dra' Abu el-Naga was conducted by the present author on behalf of the German Archaeological Institute Cairo. The survey's main purpose was to test the feasibility of a larger archaeological project which would focus on the remains of the badly neglected burials and tombs of the little known Second Intermediate Period and early New Kingdom necropolis in the Theban area. Until the time of our survey, the Dra' Abu el-Naga site had only occasionally received interest from Egyptologists and archaeologists, and in most cases their particular interest in the area focused on the documentation and subsequent publication of decorated private tombs of the New Kingdom period.

Over the past 100 years, only very few attempts<sup>1</sup> were made to look at this huge site at the entrance to the Valley of the Kings as what it actually is: a gigantic necropolis with literally hundreds of rock-cut tombs of various architectural types, chronologically ranging from the Middle Kingdom through to Ptolemaic and Roman times. Exactly this approach of exploring a necropolis rather than isolated single tombs formed the basis of an application for a larger concession area at Dra' Abu el-Naga, submitted to the (then) Egyptian Antiquities Organisation (EAO) in the fall of 1990. The concession area applied for covered almost the entire accessible northern part of Dra' Abu el-Naga, deliberately excluding tombs with official numbering (TT-numbers according to Porter/Moss I, 2)<sup>2</sup> since these were outside the main focus of the proposed project. Generously, the EAO granted the German Archaeological Institute the concession area, and the first season of archaeological work started in January of 1991.

Meanwhile, fourteen years and fourteen seasons of work later, the German Institute's project at Dra' Abu el-Naga has yielded a substantial amount of results, both in terms of the development of private tomb architecture and in the location and identification of one centre of the royal necropolis of the Second Intermediate Period and the early New Kingdom at Thebes. It is an honour to be able to present a selection of these results to Professor Ali Radwan in this *Festschrift* dedicated to his achievements in Egyptology. Since Professor Ali Radwan has always had a deep interest in historical and religious phenomena of the Second Intermediate Period and the early New Kingdom,<sup>2</sup> it is my hope that this small contribution will also meet his interests.

<sup>1</sup> In 1898/99: Northampton, W. Spiegelberg, P. E. Newberry, *Report on some excavations in the Theban Necropolis* (London, 1908); in 1906: H. Gauthier, *BIFAO* 6 (1908), 121-171; in 1907-11: Lord Carnarvon and H. Carter, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes* (London, 1912); in 1921-23: C. S. Fisher, in: *Pennsylvania Museum Journal* XV (1924), 28-49.

<sup>2</sup> A. Radwan, 'Zur Stellung des Königs in der Zweiten

Zwischenzeit', in: *FS Beckerath, HÄB* 30 (1990), 223-233; Radwan, 'Einige Aspekte der Vergöttlichung des ägyptischen Königs', in: *Ägypten-Dauer und Wandel, SDAIK* 18 (Mainz, 1985), 53-69. Compare also: *Die Darstellungen des regierenden Königs und seiner Familienangehörigen in den Privatgräbern der 18. Dynastie, MÄS* 21, 1969, and Radwan, 'Der Königsname. Epigraphisches zum göttlichen Königtum im Alten Ägypten', *SAK* 2 (1975), 213-234.

### A. Shaft tombs and tomb chapels in Area A and Area H

During the first three seasons from 1991 to 1993, excavation work was concentrated in an area at the northern end of Dra' Abu el-Naga (Area A, location see Fig. 1), close to the road leading to the Valley of the Kings. As a result of the survey of 1990, this area was selected mainly because its overall surface appearance seemed to indicate a less disturbed and plundered state than the rest of the concession area.<sup>3</sup>

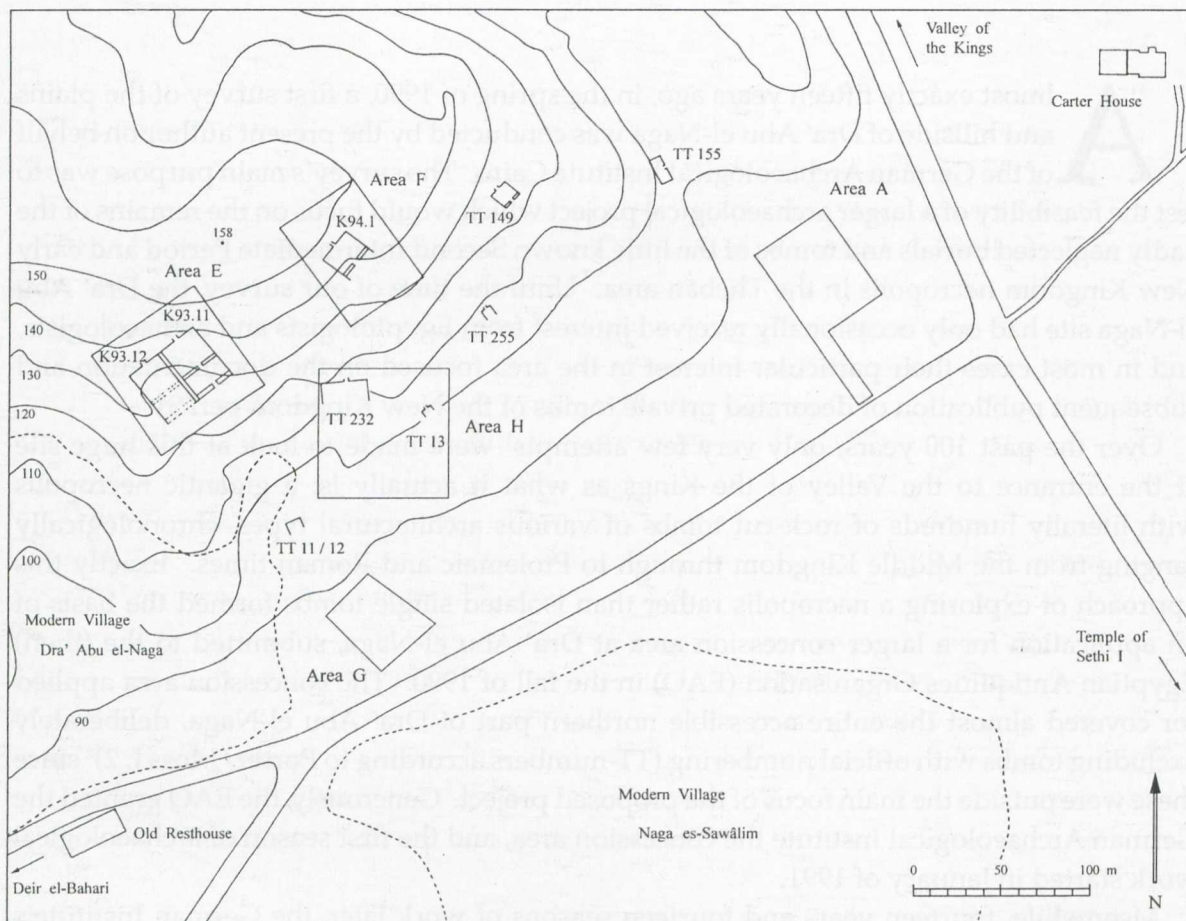


Fig. 1. Dra' Abu el-Naga/North, sketch plan with excavation areas.

The results of the excavations in Area A contribute both to our understanding of funerary equipment and cult practice: several shaft tombs were discovered undisturbed by human hands but partially destroyed by natural forces such as rainwater. Thus, most of the objects of the funerary equipment made of organic material had suffered badly or were destroyed entirely (e.g. wooden coffins and canopic boxes). Objects of non-organic material, however, were found in almost perfect condition, and very often at the place where they were deposited during the interment (e.g. ceramics, canopic jars, stone vessels, or the inlaid eyes of wooden coffins).

<sup>3</sup> For details, see the preliminary reports: D. Polz/A. Seiler, 'Bericht über die erste Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra' Abu el-Naga/Theben-West', *MDAIK* 48 (1992), 109-130; Polz, 'Bericht über die zweite und dritte Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra'

Abu el-Naga/Theben-West', *MDAIK* 49 (1993), 227-238; Polz/ Seiler/ S. T. Smith, 'Bericht über die vierte und fünfte Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra' Abu el-Naga/Theben-West', *MDAIK* 51 (1995), 207-225.

It is evident from the tombs excavated so far, that each of them contained not only the burial of a single individual, but in some cases as many as 20 to 25 burials. Interestingly enough, the burials and their respective equipment show a great variety and difference in quality. On the one hand, there were 'rich' burials in wooden painted, human-shaped coffins with inlaid bronze eyes, a number of perfectly manufactured and polished stone vessels, or canopic jars with stoppers in the form of human heads, and other valuable grave goods. On the other, there were a number of rather 'poor' burials, some of which shared a wooden coffin of lesser quality and whose grave goods consisted of only a couple of pottery storage jars. Other individuals, mostly children, were not buried in coffins but merely wrapped in mats or linen. Interestingly, a large percentage of the human bones have also survived the high humidity in the burial chambers. This fact enabled our physical anthropologists to reconstruct the number of individuals buried in each chamber which in some cases was unexpectedly high.<sup>4</sup>

One other important result of the excavations in Area A was the discovery of a number of superstructures related to the shaft tombs. Altogether, the ruins of ten of these funerary chapels were found, all of which had been constructed above one or more contemporary shaft tombs (Fig. 2). The excavated tomb superstructures provide important information about the architectural structures for funerary ceremonies of private individuals. The freestanding structures are built of air-dried mud bricks and all follow the same architectural layout: Facing east there is a large entrance wall 'pylon', sometimes with sloped sides. To the west follows an open court flanked by walls probably less than man-size in height to the north and south. In the middle of this court lies the tomb shaft with two chambers at the bottom. Opposite the entrance there is the chapel proper, which was once roofed by a brick vault (see the reconstruction in Fig. 3). In some of these chapels the remains of a small brick pedestal for an offering plate were found, behind which a decorated and inscribed limestone stela of the tomb owner once stood.

Beyond doubt, these superstructures with their chapels formed the stage for the funeral rites and burial ceremonies for all of the interred individuals, probably regardless of social rank. The different social levels of burials in the chambers of the tomb complexes indicate that not only the close relatives of the nucleus family, but also other members of the tomb-owner's household found their last resting place in these complexes.

A closer look at the general plan of Area A (Fig. 2) reveals that there are far more shaft tombs in the area than there are tomb superstructures (the ratio being approximately 3:1). This fact can only partially be explained by the archaeological record: naturally, some of the once existing superstructures may have disappeared entirely (on the plan, the possible location of these destroyed superstructures is indicated by a question-mark). On the other hand, there is not enough space between and around some of the shaft tombs to allow for the construction of additional superstructures (e.g. in the cases of K91.2, K91.11, and K91.12, or around K91.25A/B). A possible interpretation of this phenomenon may be that the superstructures were not only used by the relatives of their owners, but also by those who buried their dead in the shaft tombs around the superstructures.<sup>5</sup>

On the basis of pottery, of a few royal names, and of iconographic criteria, all the chapels discovered in Area A can be dated to the very late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth dynasties. The fact that this type of private funerary chapel has a long tradition in the

<sup>4</sup> In two connected shaft tombs (K91.5 and K91.7), the overall number of individuals buried was 34, their ages at death ranging from fetuses to adults, see Polz, *MDAIK* 51, 208-210 and Tabelle 1.

<sup>5</sup> See Polz, in H. Guksch/E. Hofmann/M. Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten 'FS Jan Assmann'* (München, 2003), 75-87.



Theban Necropolis was proved by the 2001 discovery of another example in Area H (for the position, see Fig. 1). The chapel lies immediately to the south-west of the pyramid complex of king Nub-Kheper-Re Intef; it is fairly small, measuring only 1 by 0.75 meters (Fig. 4), but remains of the original decoration on its north, south, and west walls are preserved. This decoration included a depiction of the tomb owner on the north wall with two horizontal lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions, and another line of inscription on the south wall. In these inscriptions the titles and name of the tomb owner are perfectly preserved: he was the *jrj-p't h3tj-ꜥ hmtj-bjtj jmj-rꜥ htmw*, 'Sealer of the King of Lower Egypt, Count, Sole Companion, Overseer of the Seal', his name was Teti. On a small mud brick pillar in front of the niche in the west wall, remains of a large cartouche were preserved, which contains the name of Nub-Kheper-Re. The tomb's owner Teti was, therefore, a high official of the court of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef.<sup>6</sup>

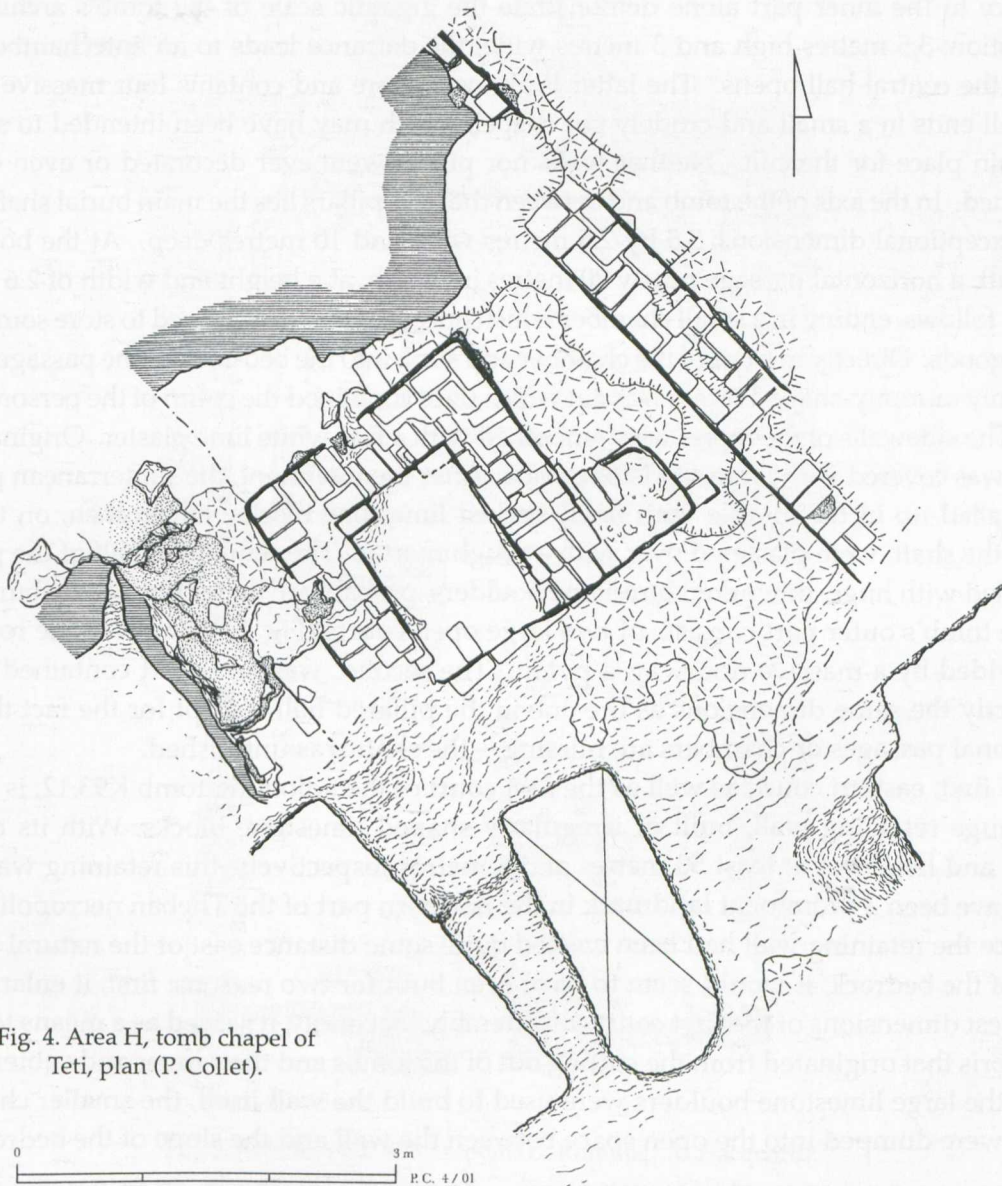


Fig. 4. Area H, tomb chapel of Teti, plan (P. Collet).

<sup>6</sup> Polz/Seiler, *Die Pyramidenanlage des Königs Nub-Cheper-Re Intef in Dra' Abu el-Naga*, SDAIK 24 (Mainz, 2003), 10-13, Abb. 3-4, Taf. 1b-c.

### B. K93.11 – A royal tomb of the early Eighteenth Dynasty (Area E)

From 1993 to 2000, a large rock-cut tomb in the hills of Dra' Abu el-Naga was excavated (Area E; for the location, see Fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> Tomb K93.11 was chosen because of its unusual position in the necropolis, its architecture, and size, all of which excluded its interpretation as a private burial place from the beginning. In addition, tomb K93.11 is only the northern one of two neighbouring rock tombs, which share the same basic architectural layout and are separated from each other by a massive rock-cut wall. To date, only K93.11 has been completely excavated, its southern counterpart, K93.12, still awaits further excavation. When work began in 1993, it was assumed that these two rock tombs were among the long-lost final resting places of the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty. During the course of our work on the site, however, we gradually came to change our original assumption.<sup>8</sup>

The architectural layout of tomb K93.11 is exceptional (Fig. 5). The dimensions of the entrance to the inner part alone demonstrate the gigantic scale of the tomb's architectural conception: 3.5 metres high and 3 metres wide, the entrance leads to an antechamber, from which the central hall opens. The latter is almost square and contains four massive pillars. The hall ends in a small and crudely cut chapel, which may have been intended to serve as the main place for the cult. Neither walls nor pillars were ever decorated or even entirely smoothed. In the axis of the tomb and between the four pillars lies the main burial shaft, again with exceptional dimensions: 3.5 by 2.5 metres wide and 10 metres deep. At the bottom of the shaft, a horizontal passage nearly 20 metres in length, at a height and width of 2.6 and 2.4 metres follows, ending in a small chamber which once may have been used to store some of the burial goods. Directly in front of the chamber and sunk into the bed-rock of the passage's floor, a roughly mummy-shaped recess was cut which once contained the coffin of the person buried here. The sidewalls of the recess were smoothed with a fine white lime plaster. Originally, the recess was covered with large sandstone slabs. After the interment, the subterranean passage was walled up in the middle with finely carved limestone blocks, which then, on the side facing the shaft, were plastered over with a rough mortar. The remaining half of the passage was filled with huge, unworked limestone boulders, probably to better protect the burial.

The tomb's outer part consists of two large open courts (Fig. 5), cut out of the rock, and subdivided by a massive doorway, a pylon. The second, western court contained a shaft of exactly the same dimensions as the one in the pillared hall, except for the fact that any additional passages or chambers are missing -- the shaft was unfinished.

The first, eastern court, as well as the first court of the adjoining tomb K93.12, is limited by a huge retaining wall, built of irregularly shaped limestone blocks. With its original length and height of at least 50 metres and 8 metres respectively, this retaining wall must once have been a prominent landmark in the northern part of the Theban necropolis.

Since the retaining wall had been erected quite some distance east of the natural sloping edge of the bedrock, it would seem to have been built for two reasons: first, it enlarged the east-west dimensions of the first court considerably. Secondly, it served as a means to dump the debris that originated from the cutting out of the tombs and their inner and subterranean parts: the large limestone boulders were used to build the wall itself, the smaller chips and flakes were dumped into the open space between the wall and the slope of the bedrock.

<sup>7</sup> For details see: Polz and Seiler, *MDAIK* 51 (1995), 211-223; D. Polz/W. E. Gordon/A. Nerlich/A. Piccato/U. Rummel/A. Seiler/S. Voss, 'Bericht über die sechste, siebte und achte Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra' Abu el-Naga/Theben-West', *MDAIK* 55 (1999), 343-410; D. Polz/E. Mähltz/U. Rummel/A. Seiler, *MDAIK* 59,

317-388; D. Polz, *SAK* 25 (1998), 257-293; U. Rummel, in: *Egyptian Archaeology* 14 (1999), 3-6.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of the ownership of tombs K93.11 and K93.12 see Polz, 'Der Beginn des Neuen Reiches. Zur Vorgeschichte einer Zeitenwende', chapter 3.4 (in preparation).

Dra' Abu el-Naga  
Area E  
K93.11

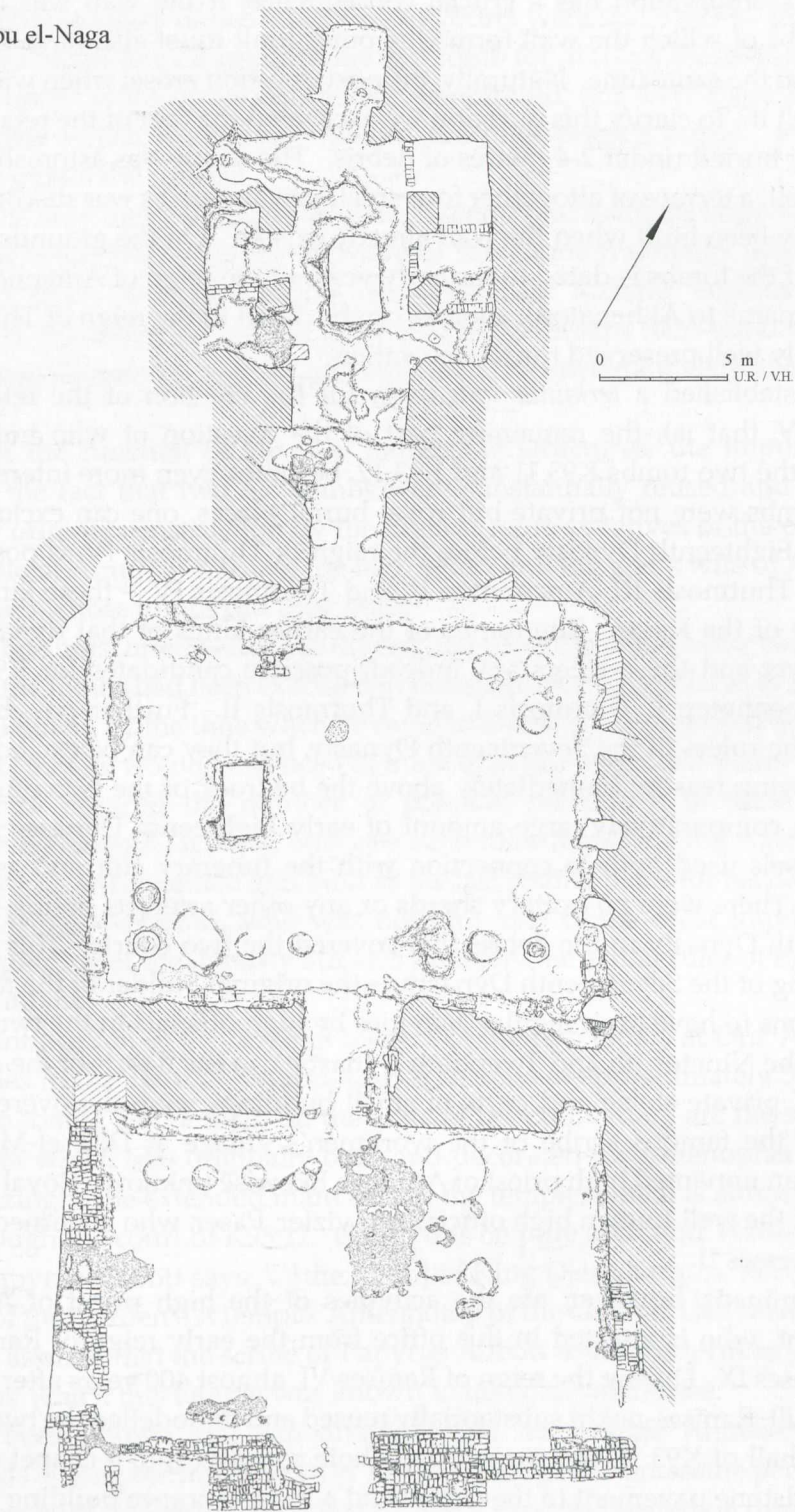


Fig. 5. Area E, tomb K93.11, plan (U. Rummel/ V. Hacquard).

A most important observation here is that the wall in its entire length was planned and executed in one piece, covering the eastern area in front of both tomb K93.11 and tomb K93.12. This observation has a crucial consequence: if the wall was built in one step, the two tombs of which the wall forms the outer limit must also have been planned and constructed at the same time. Naturally, the next question arose: when was the wall erected and who built it? To clarify this question we excavated the foot of the retaining wall, which was partially buried under 2-4 metres of debris. The result was astonishing: immediately below the wall, a terrace of altogether four small private tombs was discovered all of which had definitely been built when the wall already existed. On the grounds of stamped mud bricks, one of the tombs is dated to the early years of the reign of Amenhotep IV (before he changed his name to Akhenaton), another can be dated to the reign of Thutmose IV, based on its partially well preserved mural decoration.

Having established a *terminus ante quem* for the erection of the retaining wall (pre-Thutmose IV, that is), the remaining part of the question of who built the wall, and, accordingly the two tombs K93.11 and K93.12, becomes even more interesting. Assuming that both tombs were not private but royal burial places, one can exclude the following kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty before the reign of Thutmose IV as possible candidates: Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, and Thutmose IV -- these kings' tombs are all in the Valley of the Kings. The tombs of the earlier kings of that dynasty, however, are not known yet and these rulers are, indeed, possible candidates for K93.11 and K93.12: Ahmose, Amenhotep I, Thutmose I, and Thutmose II. Further possible candidates, of course, are the rulers of the Seventeenth Dynasty, but they can be excluded as candidates for the following reason: Immediately above the bedrock of the two courts in K93.11, we discovered a comparatively large amount of early Eighteenth Dynasty pottery sherds of jars and vessels used both in connection with the funerary cult and as part of a burial equipment.<sup>9</sup> There were no pottery sherds or any other artefacts dating to a time prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty in the debris that covered the two courts. This fact alone would exclude a king of the Seventeenth Dynasty as the original builder of the tombs.

There seems to have been regular activities by high officials in the two courts of K93.11 throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties: in the debris of the courts, numerous fragments of private stelae and parts of small buildings were discovered. Among them are those of the famous scribe of the workmen's village at Deir el-Medineh, Ken-her-Khepeshef, an unnamed high priest of Amun, a likewise unknown Royal Scribe, and, most interestingly, the well-known high official and vizier, Paser, who governed during the early reign of Ramesses II.

Most prominent, however, are the activities of the high priest of Amun in Karnak, Ramses-nakht, who is attested in this office from the early reign of Ramses IV until the reign of Ramses IX. During the reign of Ramses VI, almost 400 years after tomb K93.11 was originally built, Ramses-nakht substantially reused and remodelled the two courts and parts of the inner hall of K93.11 and turned the whole complex into a chapel or sanctuary. He added a sandstone pavement to the courts and a huge entrance building (a pylon) in front of the eastern court. In both courts of K93.11, he erected altogether 34 sandstone columns a part of which was crowned with double-sided capitals, depicting in round relief the face of the goddess Hathor -- quite an unusual type of capital for any building on the Theban West Bank and absolutely unique in the context of a non-royal building. In addition, Ramses-

<sup>9</sup> Seiler, *MDAIK* 59, 338-351.



nakht had the walls of the second, inner court cased with sandstone blocks which were decorated in raised relief.<sup>10</sup>

So substantial were his additions and alterations that during his lifetime hardly any traces of the original surface of the tomb's outer courts were still visible. But yet, there is no sign of Ramses-nakht having used the ancient tomb for his own burial place: during the excavations, no traces of his burial equipment were found, nor were there any additional shafts or chambers which could have housed the high priest's burial. Why then, did Ramses-nakht remodel the courts?

His was not the only remodelling in the area: it seems that a similar large-scale reshaping took place in the adjoining tomb K93.12: several sandstone fragments found during the excavations and three decorated blocks discovered by Richard Lepsius immediately above the tomb in the 1840s, seem to indicate that this southern twin-tomb was reused by a daughter of king Ramses VI, named Isis, who held the important clerical office of 'god's wife of Amun'.

Regardless of the function of the two Ramesside structures, the important thing to observe here is the fact that two old tombs were substantially reused and reshaped 400 years after their original construction by the highest representatives of the country's most important Temple of Amun in Karnak, the high priest and the god's wife of Amun. Again, the question arises whose tombs did they reuse?

At this point, one must briefly return to the original planning phase of the two structures: if, as stated above, the tombs had been executed in one stage, one would have to look for a ruler who must have known, by the time when he came to the throne and started the construction of his royal tomb, that he would be in need of more than just one burial place.

Having already reduced the number of possible candidates to those kings at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, only one such ruler remains: king Amenhotep I. The second tomb, K93.12, was planned and built as the last resting place for his likewise famous mother, queen Ahmes-Nefertari, who was not only one of the most important political figures at the beginning of the dynasty but also probably the acting ruler of Egypt when her son was still an infant.

With this identification of the original owners of the two tombs at Dra' Abu el-Naga, a few other puzzles in the Theban Necropolis can be solved: approximately 500 metres due south of the two tombs, in the plain on the edge of the cultivation, are the scanty remains of a stone temple which was originally built and decorated for Amenophis I and Ahmes-Nefertari. Amazingly, the extended main axis of the temple, which is almost exactly north south, runs through the court of K93.11. Could this be pure accident? Hardly: the relevant paragraph in Papyrus Abbott says: '...[the tomb] of King Djeserkara, ..., north of the house of Amenhotep of the Garden'. A temple 'Amenhotep of the Garden' is otherwise unattested and we have to assume that the scribe of Papyrus Abbott used this term as some kind of a popular name by which this temple was known to his contemporaries.

It has long been known that Amenhotep I and his mother Ahmes-Nefertari were venerated as gods among the inhabitants of Thebes during the Ramesside period. In several dozen private tombs of the period, the royal couple is depicted seated on thrones in shrines, and being offered to by the tomb owners. In the field of Egyptology, it was always taken for granted that the reason for the Ramesside tomb painters to include the royal couple in the

<sup>10</sup> See Rummel, *MDAIK* 55, 350-364; Rummel, in: *Egyptian Archaeology* 14, 3-6; Rummel, *MDAIK* 59, 319-334; Rummel, in: M Eldamaty/M. Trad (eds), *Egyptian Museum Collections around the*

*World. Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum* (Cairo, 2002), 1025-1034.

scenes of the tombs' decoration was simply the fact that both were regarded as patrons of the necropolis; Ahmes-Nefertari would have been included because of the eminent role she played in ruling the country at the very beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Seen against the background of tombs K93.11 and K93.12 in Dra' Abu el-Naga, however, it seems much more likely that the Ramesside depictions of the royal couple also reflect the point that they 'shared' a temple and were buried close to each other, in tombs which were certainly landmarks throughout the New Kingdom, presiding over the entire Theban Necropolis and guarding the tombs of both royal and private individuals.

### C. The pyramid of king Nub-Kheper-Re Intef (Area H)

In the spring of 2001, after the excavation of tomb K93.11 was completed, an attempt was made to verify an old hypothesis of Herbert E. Winlock who identified the area around the rock-cut tomb of Shuroy (TT 13) as the place where the pyramid of king Nub-Kheper-Re Intef of the Seventeenth Dynasty had once been erected.<sup>11</sup> Although Winlock himself never tried to verify his hypothesis archaeologically, it was widely accepted by the Egyptological community. Still, the question of whether or not the tombs of the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty were once crowned by pyramids, remained unanswered.

Therefore, a new excavation area in the plain of Dra' Abu el-Naga was designated - Area H (see Fig. 6) - and a number of test trenches were laid out in the immediate vicinity of the tomb of Shuroy.<sup>12</sup> These trenches resulted in the discovery of several rock-cut tombs and shaft tombs and of the small funerary chapel of Teti described above. Immediately north of Teti's chapel the lower layers of a large enclosure wall and, even further north, the southern side of the mud brick pyramid itself appeared.

After the remains of the pyramid had been completely cleared, its architectural construction became apparent: the pyramid had been built against the natural slope (of ca. 22%) of the hillside in this area with no substantial foundations. It had been built with a casing technique, i.e. only the outer 1 to 1.5 metres were constructed with mud bricks and the core was then filled up with rubble and small limestone flakes. In several places on the northern, western, and eastern sides of the pyramid the mud bricks had disappeared down to the first layer. Only the southern side is entirely preserved in its lower part ranging from a minimum height of 40cm to a maximum of 95cm. On all four sides there are, however, enough areas that remained preserved to allow measurements of the original angle of the pyramid's inclination. Based on a total of 26 measurements, the average angle of inclination was 67, 81°, which may correspond to the ancient intended angle of 2 palms recess at 5 palms height (i.e. 66, 66°). The calculated angle also allows for a reconstruction of the pyramid's original overall height: it stood approximately 11.50 metres tall on its eastern side, 9.90 metres above its centre, and 8.25 metres on the western side.

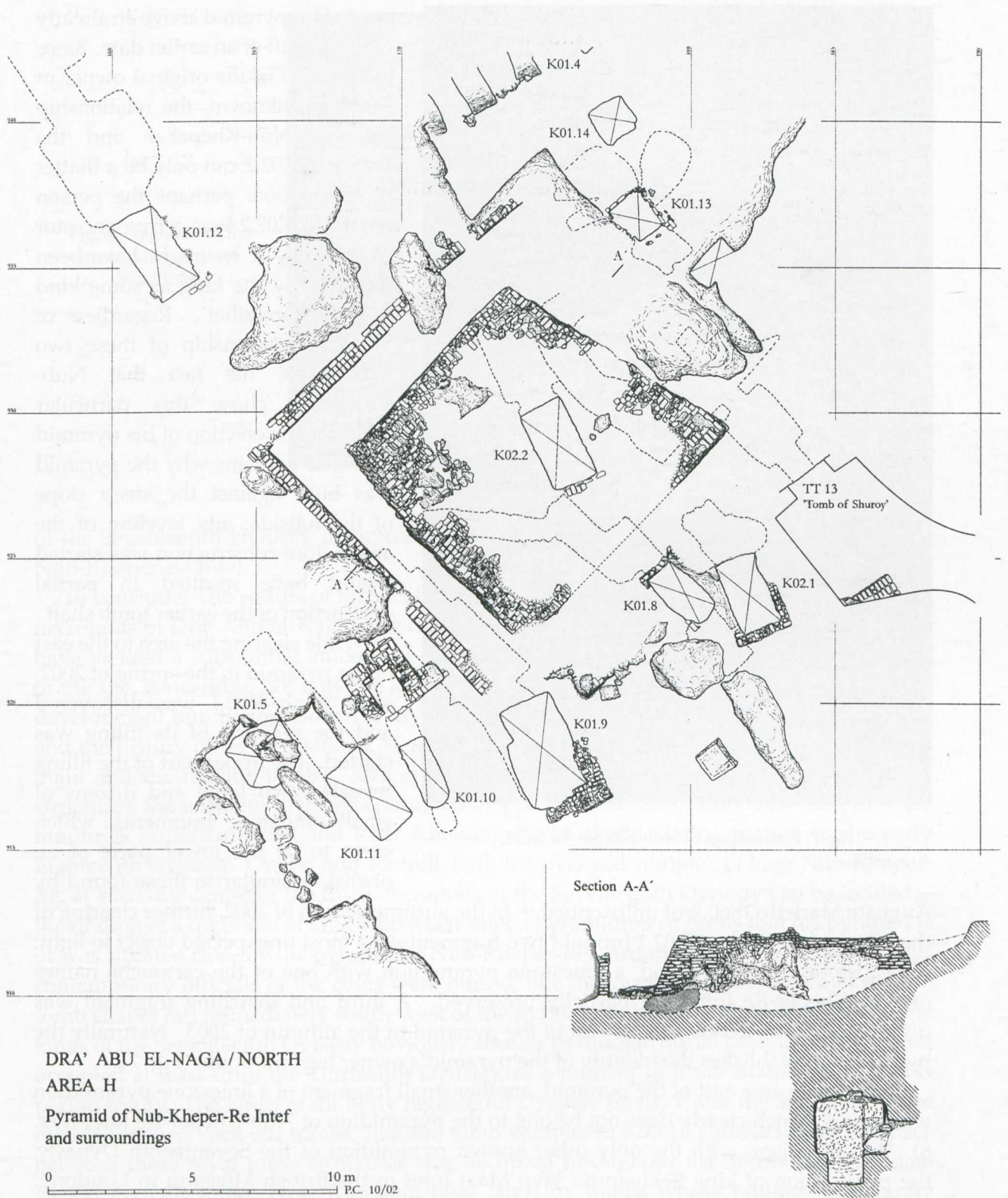
The pyramid was surrounded on three sides by an enclosure wall, which was covered on both sides with a fine white lime plaster. The clearing of the pyramid's core resulted in the remarkable discovery of a tomb shaft (K02.2), which was almost exactly in the centre of the building.<sup>13</sup> This shaft has no apparent architectural connection to the pyramid and was inaccessible once the pyramid had been erected above it. The contents of this tomb's chamber were even more interesting since it can be dated to a period preceding the construction of the pyramid, i.e. the Thirteenth Dynasty. In other words, Nub-Kheper-Re Intef intentionally

<sup>11</sup> H. E. Winlock, *JEA* 10 (1924), 217-77.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed description of the work in this area up to the fall of 2002, see D. Polz/A. Seiler, *Pyramidenanlage*, passim. For other

results of previous seasons at Dra' Abu el-Naga, see: D. Polz/E. Mähltz/U. Rummel/A. Seiler, *MDAIK* 59, 317-388.

<sup>13</sup> D. Polz/A. Seiler, *Pyramidenanlage*, 33-37, Taf. 10.



DRA' ABU EL-NAGA / NORTH  
AREA H

Pyramid of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef  
and surroundings

0 5 10 m  
P.C. 10/02

Fig. 6. Area H, Pyramid of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef and surroundings, general plan (P. Collet).

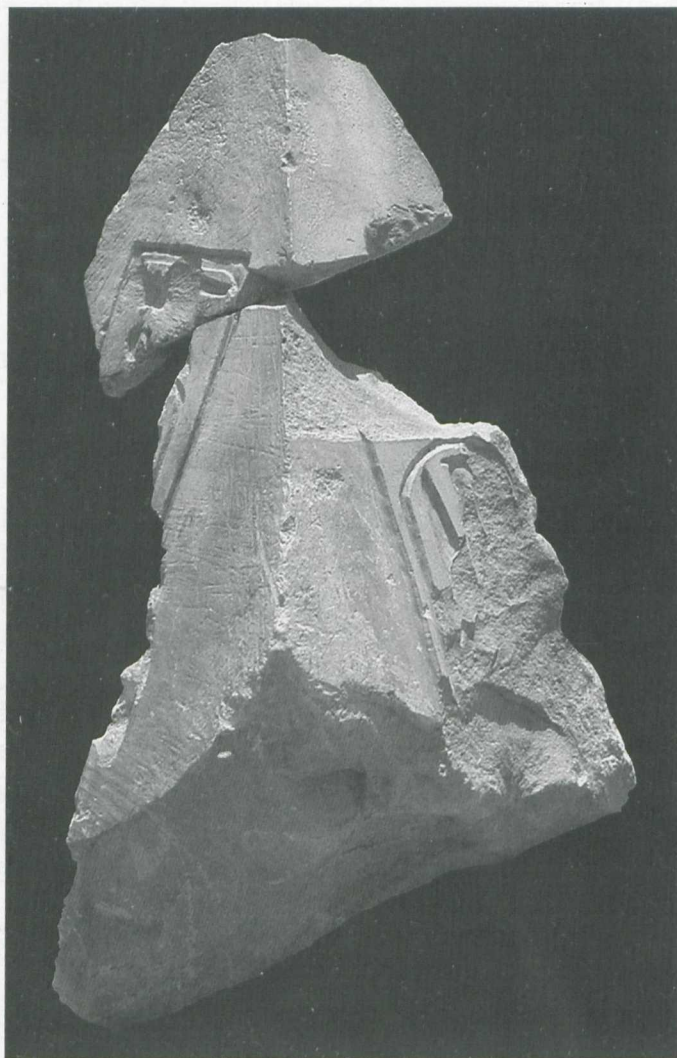


Fig. 7. Pyramidion of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef.

Auguste Mariette 1860, but uninscribed.<sup>14</sup> In the autumn season of 2002, further clearing of the filling of tomb shaft K02.1 brought two fragments of a most unexpected object to light: the capstone of the pyramid, a limestone pyramidion with one of the cartouche names of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef still partially preserved. A third and matching fragment was discovered in the debris further east of the pyramid in the autumn of 2003. Naturally the pyramidion establishes the identity of the pyramid's owner beyond doubt (Fig. 7).

In the same area east of the pyramid, another small fragment of a limestone pyramidion was found, which clearly does not belong to the pyramidion of Nub-Kheper-Re Intef (Fig. 8). A comparison with the only other known pyramidion of the Seventeenth Dynasty, the pyramidion of king Sekhem-Ra Wep-Maat Intef in the British Museum in London,<sup>15</sup> revealed that our fragment is a part of this pyramidion. The consequences of the discovery of this fragment, however small it may be, are quite substantial: first, the pyramidion in London (currently labelled as coming 'from Thebes') now has a provenance-Area H in Dra' Abu el-Naga. Secondly, we now have to assume that the pyramid of king Wep-Maat Intef

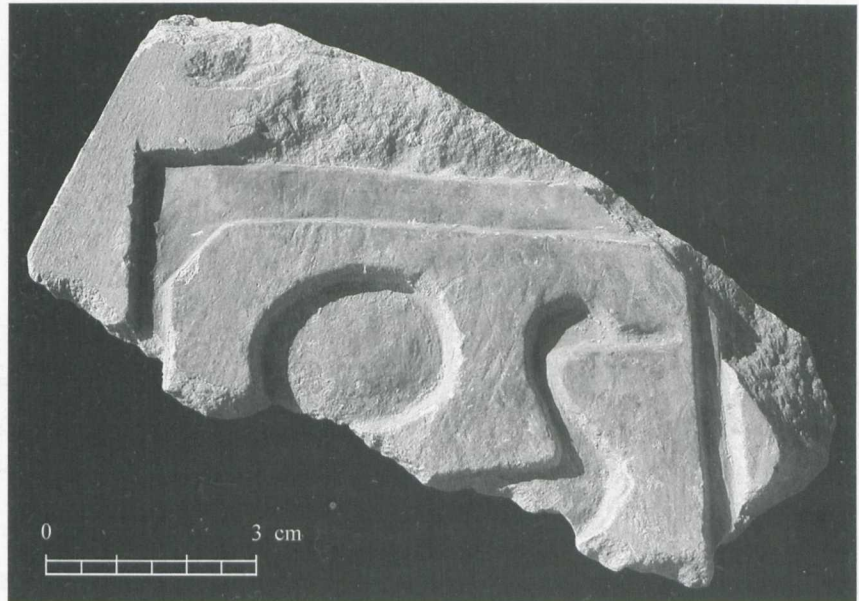
erected his pyramid above an already existing shaft of an earlier date. Since the identity of the original owner of K02.2 is unknown, the relationship between Nub-Kheper-re and the owner of K02.2 can only be a matter of speculation: perhaps the person buried in K02.2 was a true ancestor of the king or he might have been regarded by the king as some kind of local 'forefather'. Regardless of the true relationship of these two individuals, the fact that Nub-Kheper-Re chose this particular place for the erection of his pyramid now also explains why the pyramid was built against the steep slope of the hillside: any leveling of the area before construction was started would have resulted in partial destruction of the earlier tomb shaft.

While clearing the area to the east of the pyramid in the spring of 2002, shaft tomb K02.1 was discovered and the removal of its filling was started. The upper part of the filling revealed two large and dozens of small sandstone fragments, which seem to be the lower parts of an obelisk -- similar to those found by

<sup>14</sup> For the obelisks found by Mariette, see A. Mariette-Pacha, *Monuments divers recueillis en Égypte et en Nubie* (Paris, 1889), pl. 50a; cf. D. Polz /A. Seiler, *Pyramidenanlage*, 19-20, Abb. 7.

<sup>15</sup> E. A. W. Budge, *BMHT IV* (London, 1913), pl. 29; D. Polz/A. Seiler, *Pyramidenanlage*, 22-24, Abb. 9.

Fig. 8. Fragment of the pyramidion of Wep-Maat Intef.



of the Seventeenth Dynasty is located somewhere in the vicinity of the pyramid of king Nub-Kheper-Re Intef.

To conclude: The results of archaeological investigations of the German Institute in the necropolis of Dra' Abu el-Naga over the past 15 years, which have been presented above have yielded a substantial amount of information that contributes to our understanding of the site, concerning not only the layout of single tomb complexes and their typological development but, furthermore, the layout of an important part of the Theban Necropolis and the history of its occupation. Meanwhile, we are able to outline a picture of both the plain and the hillside of Dra' Abu el-Naga, by observing the following distribution of structures: the northern plain was occupied by private tomb complexes consisting of small mudbrick superstructures and their adjoining burial shafts, dating mainly to the early Eighteenth Dynasty. On the mid-foothill, with the pyramid complex of king Nub-Kheper-Re, at least one centre of the royal necropolis of the Seventeenth Dynasty can be located -- the finding of a fragment of king Wep-Maat Intef's pyramidion suggests that his pyramid is or was situated close by the pyramid of Nub-Kheper-Re. Around the tombs of these kings, contemporary officials of the court were buried, like the 'overseer of the seal' Teti, whose tomb chapel lies immediately south-west of the pyramid of his king Nub-Kheper-Re. The kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty obviously chose a traditional burial ground that has been occupied at least since the Thirteenth Dynasty, as a number of tomb shafts dating to this period testify. The kings of the early Eighteenth Dynasty finally chose the area close to the hilltop for their rock-cut tombs, like the tomb complexes K93.11 and K93.12. The space between these royal tomb structures was occupied throughout the Second Intermediate Period and the entire New Kingdom (and later) by tombs whose builders apparently intended to participate in the cultic activities of the area.

The picture we can sketch today is still far from being complete. Further long-term archaeological investigations in different areas of Dra' Abu el-Naga are necessary to add to its completion -- not only in terms of important additional information on the SIP in general, but also and especially of Dra' Abu el-Naga as the Theban royal necropolis, which immediately precedes the Valley of the Kings.