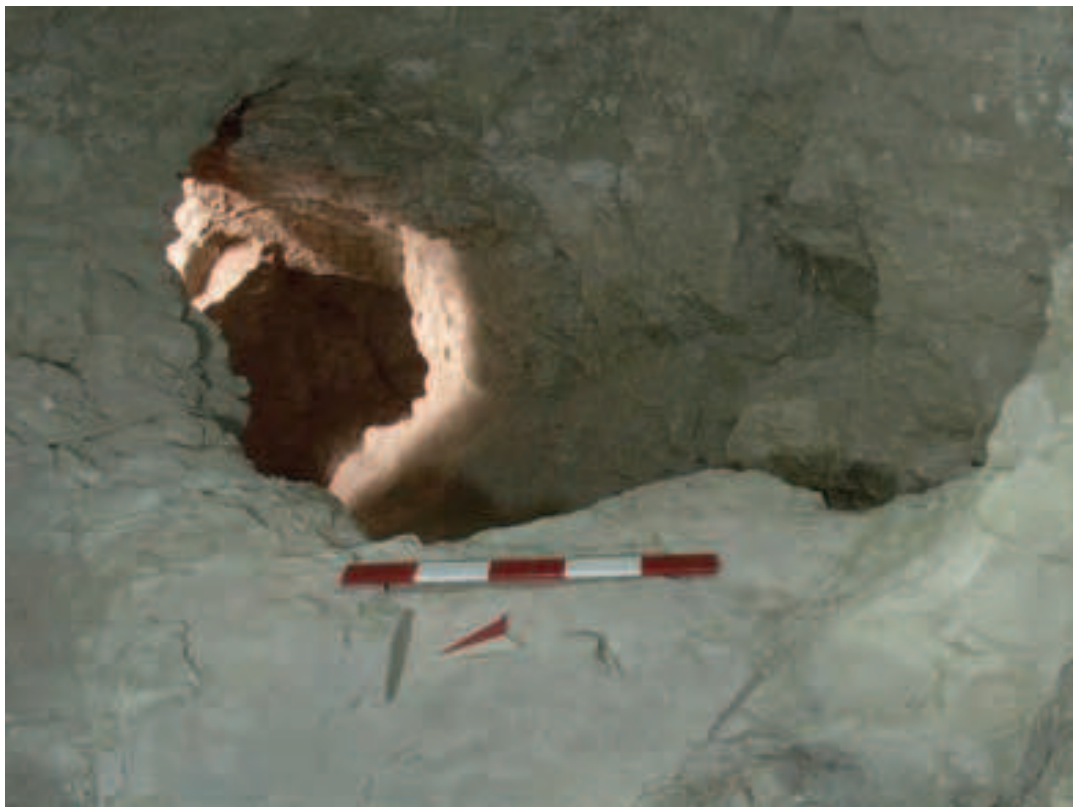


Archaeological context: formation processes

Paolo Del Vesco

TT 14 and MIDAN.05 must be set in their proper environment and considered in tight connection with it. This area of Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis, likewise many other spots of the Theban region, are known to have suffered from ancient times the devastating effects of occasional flash-floods. These ruinous events arise from the rare but vigorous and sudden rain storms which sometimes strike the desert situated West of the area of the Theban necropolis. The waters collect on the desert highlands and flow into the various natural channels (*widian*) which pour the floods onto the rocky slopes and the plain of the necropolis¹. The big *wadi* known as Khawi el-Alamat², which cuts the hill of Dra Abu el-Naga slightly to the north of TT14 and MIDAN.05 (Fig. 5), is the main responsible for the flooding and the damages occurred in many tombs of the area, especially those situated at the

Fig. 120 - The passage connecting TT 14 and MIDAN.05 from room "C" (TT 14).



base of the hillside. Modern and ancient evidence³, as well as archaeological and geological observations⁴ agree on the violence and strength that these floods were able to, and still could, express, washing away whatever is in their path and dragging great amounts of mud, limestone chips and debris. The discovery of the passage which connected the two tombs in ancient times (Fig. 120) affected and slightly modified our first evaluation of the deposits which we found inside the rooms of TT 14. The existence of new burial spaces on a higher level than those of TT 14 must of course be taken into serious account. In fact, part of the materials discovered in the funeral chambers of TT 14 were carried by the waves of mud and rubble flooding first into MIDAN.05 and from there down the passageway and into TT 14. The inner rooms of the latter therefore contain what had been intentionally laid there as burial equipment for the original interments, part of the funerary materials of MIDAN.05 as well as items coming from the outside which were washed through the access points to the two tombs.

The great strength of the flooding mud waters in this low-lying sector of the necropolis was not, however, the only disturbing and damaging event suffered by the archaeological deposits of the two tombs. As is almost always the case in the Theban necropolis, and in many other Egyptian historical sites as well, in this funerary complex too the human activity has changed, often extensively, the way things had been in the preceding periods. The two original rock-cut tombs have been reused as burials for long time, and that often involved deep changes to their original architectonic layout. In addition to this “internal” disturbance factor, as we may call it, there is clear evidence of the upsetting changes brought about by “external” disturbance elements, namely the recurring plunders, both ancient and modern.

The robberies

Traces of ancient robberies, very close in time to the last burials⁵ and of course earlier than the sealing of the tomb openings by the mass of deposits transported by the repeated flash-floods, have so far been identified in a number of specific areas. In TT 14, for instance, the narrow passage “G”



Fig. 121 - Skull, mud bricks and pottery shards in the easternmost part of room "D" (TT 14).

– which housed a number of interments between the end of the Ramesside period and the 22nd dynasty – was clearly ransacked by ancient looters and all the funerary equipments were smashed and mixed up. In room "D", as well, the Late Period burials were completely upset and when the flood came, the deposit covered a layer of scattered broken bones, mud bricks, small ushabtis and fragments of wood and pottery (Fig. 121). In the other tomb, MIDAN.05, conspicuous traces of plundering were recorded near an incomplete sloping passage ("b")⁶, in the transversal hall "a", but, above all, in chamber "d" next to the shaft mouth, at the end of corridor "c" and in the whole of the funerary rooms situated at the bottom of the shaft "f". In "c", for instance, a structure of limestone chips and pink mortar, originally plastered with a thick layer of brown coating and intended to be the rear wall of the corridor (Fig. 122), had been partially demolished by pick strokes in ancient times, well before the coming of the first flash-flood and of the alluvial mud which completely covered the remains of the structure and overflowed into the rear cavity. Traces of ancient looting are often accompanied by clear signs of combustion on materials (objects or human remains) found nearby and on the surrounding rock walls, which point at the method the thieves commonly used to plunder mummies⁷, or even perhaps at accidental fires which their torches could have easily set off among so much



Fig. 122 - Remains of the plastered stone wall at the western end of room "c" (MIDAN.05).

dry and flammable material. In room "d" we found the remnants of a mummy (Fig. 123) which was brought up from the bottom of the shaft and burnt: the remains clearly show bandages and resins destroyed by the fire which left the skull underneath completely charred (Fig. 124). Similarly, from room "j", in the shaft, many fragments of skull appear to be even strongly contorted owing to the prolonged exposure to very high temperatures⁸.

Modern robberies presumably took place during the 19th century, until the access to TT 14 was closed off with an iron gate in 1909. At that point, MIDAN.05 must have been, since long, completely buried under a huge amount of rubble and limestone chips and only accessible from TT 14. Unlike earlier robbers, modern thieves had to force their way through the thick compact layers of mud and limestone flakes which had been carried into the tombs by the strength of the floods. The path of the plunderers was easily detectable during our excavation, thanks to the difference in consistency of the deposits filling each room and to the traces left by the cuts, holes and tunnels dug in the solid agglomerate of the original sediments.



Fig. 123 - Remains of a plundered and burnt mummy in room "d" (MIDAN.05) next to the shaft "f" NE corner.



Fig. 124 - Burnt skull of individual ? from room "d" (MIDAN.05).

In environments with low ceilings or narrow passages, the remains of the original compact sediment that we could find during the exploration, were rather scarce, fragmented and still adhering to the walls. The robbers had in fact to make their way as broad as required for the passing of a grovelling person and that resulted, where the space were smaller, in the almost complete removal of the sediment. From these tunnels, usually dug along one of the side rock walls, they executed, at floor level, further horizontal random borings in order to test the content of the deposit. When we explored the sloping passage of TT 14 only less than half of the original compact filling of room "C" was still in place, stuck, as it was, to the ceiling and the western wall of the chamber (Fig. 125). In the larger and higher chambers of MIDAN.05 the thieves were able to act differently and to adopt a more rapid and practical technique. They could enter the rooms and reach any inner spot just crawling on the surface of the fillings. The deposit was dug in several places starting from the upper surface and making vertical pits (Fig. 126) in order to reach the rock floor of the chamber. Then, from the bottom of the pits they dug their way through a series of narrow and dangerous tunnels going radially in every direction as far as the side rock walls were detected. An outstanding example of this technique was found in room "c" of MIDAN.05: digging one of their vertical robbery pit the thieves found some steps cut into the rock floor and leading down to the small side chamber "e". In order to safely and easily loot its contents they even built two dry stone walls on the sides of the pit (Fig. 127) as retaining structures for the loose filling produced during their own digging work.

Not all the chambers of the two tombs were ransacked in modern times by this second wave of plunderers. In TT 14, for instance, the narrow chamber "G", as well as the south-eastern section of the sloping passage situated after room "F", remained completely sealed by the amassed compact sediments brought by the last floods intruded into the tomb. In the northern half of the transverse hall "a" and in part of room "d" of MIDAN.05 the deposit was found intact and preserved to a height of more than two metres. The main entrance to this tomb was completely blocked up by the gradual burial of the tomb facade and of the external courtyard, and traces of the attempts of the modern robbers to get into MIDAN.05 were found during the excavation of the outside area. The main door remained sealed and the looters dug their way in through an opening giving access to room "E" and through a breach in the wall between the chambers "A",



Fig. 125 - The original alluvial compact deposit still adhering to the western wall of room "C" (TT 14).

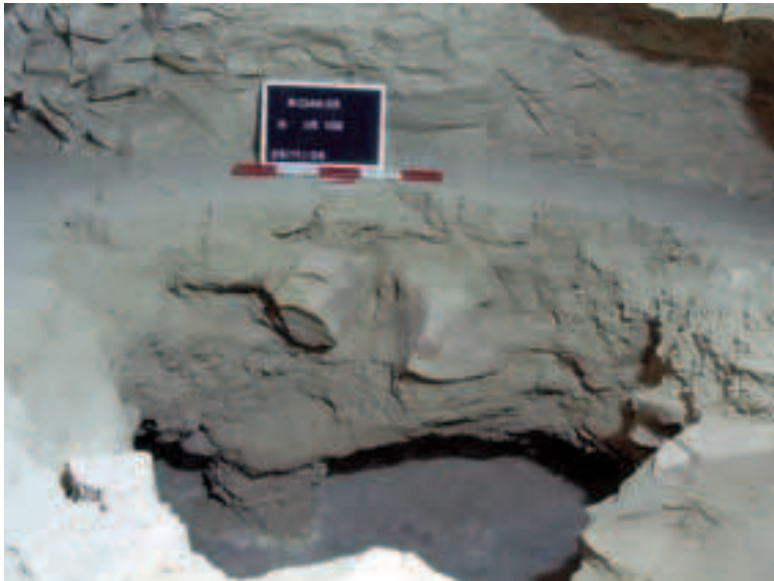


Fig. 126 - Robbery pit dug into the compact alluvial deposit.

of TT 14, and "E". Interestingly, a small piece of fabric containing a few fragments of faience ushabtis (Fig. 128), presumably forgot or hidden by a thief, was found during the excavation of the tomb court near the robbery pit going into room "E".



Fig. 127 - Retaining stone wall built by robbers in a pit dug through compact alluvial deposits in room "c" (MIDAN.05).

The flash-floods

As stated above, the tombs TT 14 and MIDAN.05, since their last use as burial place, were repeatedly flooded. At the moment, the only realistic *terminus post quem* for the dating of the first flooding event can be fixed by the dating of the latest grave goods found inside the tombs, to which one must add an unknown time span during which the tombs were deserted and left to the mercy of the indiscriminate pillages of the "ancient" robbers. No traces of human activity were in fact recorded for the period between the phases of the "ancient" and the "modern" looting, that is to say during the period



Fig. 128 - Robber's booty: a piece of fabric with fragments of faience ushabtis found outside the tombs.

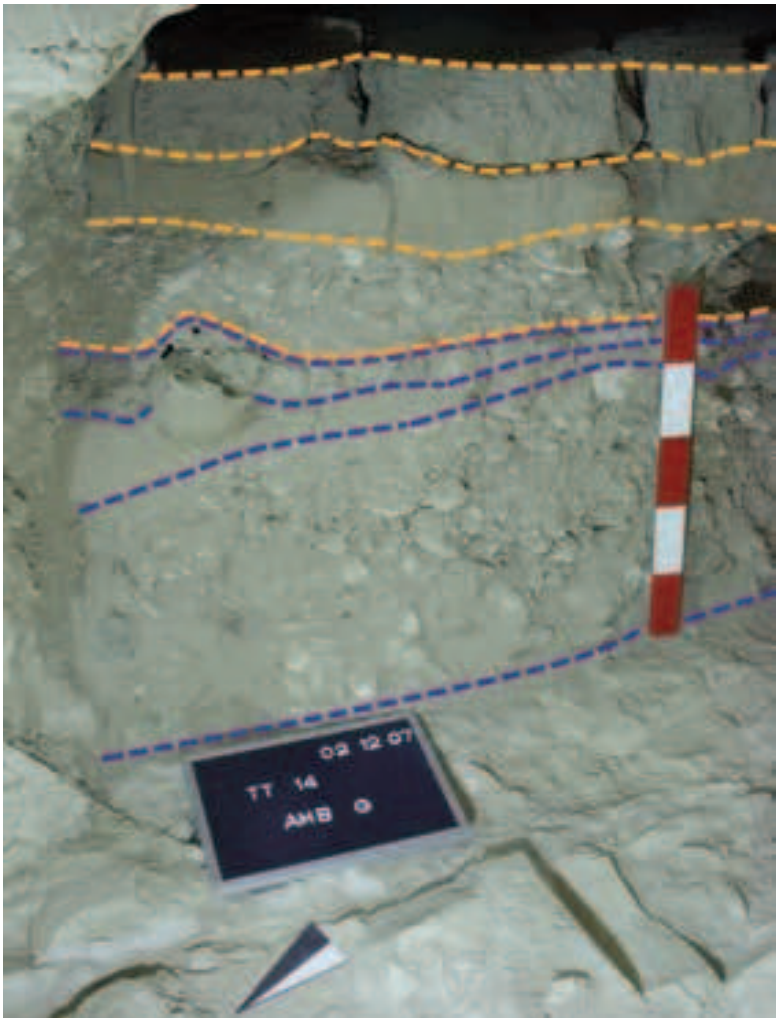


Fig. 129 - The typical structure of a flood deposit: superimposed sediments laid according to a vertical granulometric gradation process.

which saw the slow but inexorable burial of the rock cut structures by the floods. For that reason we can also assume that the last alluvium took place some time before modern thefts began, namely some time before the 19th century⁹. Defining the starting point of the period that we could then designate as the “flooding phase” of the tombs, is nevertheless rather difficult as we have two different dating for the latest use of the two tombs: in TT 14 the term is given by the Saitic Period burials found in chamber “D”, while in MIDAN.05 an occupation dated to the first centuries A.D. is attested by a set of inscribed embalming cups found in the rooms at the bottom of the shaft “f”¹⁰. In respect to this discrepancy, a dissimilar planning of re-use of the funerary spaces of the two tombs, as well as an unequal pattern of filling of the two structures due to differences in the internal or external conformation can be assumed, but not certainly stated.

The common pattern of the vertical granulometric gradation could be clearly identified almost everywhere in the layers of sedimentary deposits which filled the two tombs. A depositional arrangement of this kind is considered typical of sediments which have accumulated as a result of materials carried by muddy fluxes¹¹. Actually, a clastic selection occurring during the depositing process causes that, relative density being equal, larger pieces are laid lower down and smaller, finer pieces on top. In this specific case, the alluvial deposits found in the two tombs were generally laid over three main levels: the lowest was a sandy layer rich in mid- to small-sized limestone chips, covered by a stratum of fine limestone sand and by a hard layer of compact sand¹² (Fig. 129). This fixed sequence of three layers identifies a single alluvial event, thus a stratigraphy showing a repetition of this scheme can be usefully employed in the counting of the subsequent floods. Furthermore, the uppermost layer of compact fine sand almost invariably showed a hard crust with the polygonal fracturing typical of a desiccation process (Fig. 130), involving a prolonged exposure of the mud surface to the air and a gradual evaporation of water, and turned out to be a helpful means for distinguishing between subsequent groups of alluvial layers. Together with the typical vertical granulometric gradation of the sediments, the compact filling found inside the tombs was also characterized by a kind of horizontal gradual selection of materials, which led to a diversification of the deposit by typology and thickness along the directions of the flow of the flooding streams. A great amount of different factors¹³ affected the deposition process of each successive flood and the diversified distribution of the transported materials ac-

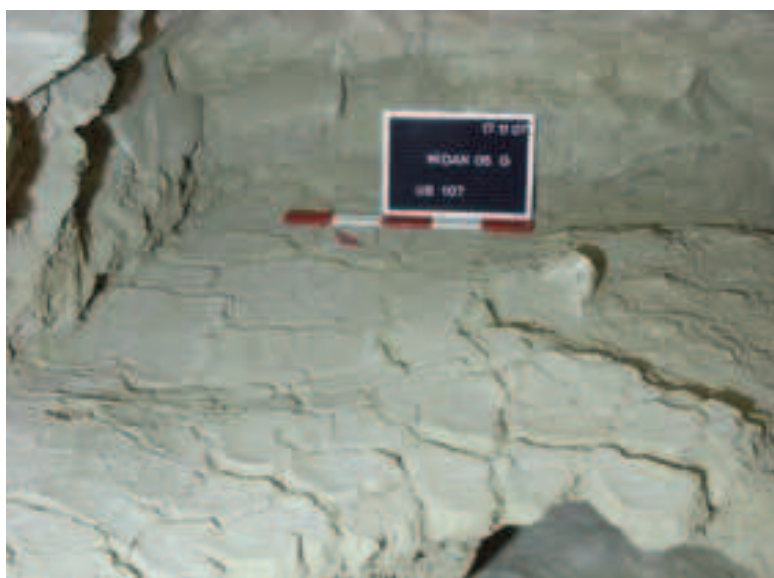


Fig. 130 - Polygonal fracturing typical of a desiccation process.

cording to size, shape and relative density, starting from the entrances of the tombs towards the innermost spaces. All these variables are ultimately responsible for the succession of horizontal layers of sediment which we found progressively finer, the more that we drove inwards our exploration. The thickest layers of fine compact muddy sand were always located at the end of the sedimentation cone, accumulated against the rear walls of the chambers¹⁴.

A preliminary study of the damages visible on the wall paintings in chamber “A” of TT 14, the condition of the small chamber “B” (whose walls and vault were once painted or prepared for painting, as shown by the traces of sketches in red) and a series of remarks based on the observation of the filling dynamics show that Huy’s tomb chapel suffered a first alluvial events only after the space had already been partly occupied by sand, stone chips and debris. This deposit probably derived from the collapse or landslip of rubble which accumulated in the tomb courtyard area and subsequently penetrated the room through the main door. The slow accumulation of this kind of “dry” deposit against a part of the painted walls, protected the decoration against the later floods. The much more destructive effects of the muddy waters are today clearly visible on the East and West walls, but appear to be rather confined to a sloping strip varying in thickness and height. The upper edge of this strip marks the



Fig. 131 - Sloping strip of muddy water erosion on the painted decoration of chapel “A” (TT 14).

height reached by the layers of mud which penetrated “A” and covered the earlier rubble filling (Fig. 131). As one can surmise from the relatively good conditions of the painted decoration immediately above the damaged strip, a new landslide or maybe the same accumulation of flood sediments in the outer courtyard, must have partially covered the access to the tomb and blocked any later alluvial material¹⁵. All this can only be inferred from the scanty above mentioned traces left by the water on the painted walls, since, when our exploration of the tomb started, the chapel “A” appeared completely free of any deposit.

As resulted from the dissimilarities in number and nature between deposits found in different rooms, the flash floods did not affect the two tombs in the same way or to the same extent. According to all the data collected during the first seven seasons of exploration, a preliminary sequence of the alluvial episodes can be reconstructed as follows.

The first flood which entered tomb TT 14 was, for unknown reasons, of very modest extent. It was recognizable in a low layer of brown mud laid on the floor of room “C” and formed a thin compact fine sand crust only at the very end of passage “G”. It carried a rather limited amount of small size stone flakes which it deposited throughout the first part of “G”, collided with the mummy remains, the wooden fragments and the objects abandoned on the floor by the ancient robbers, pushing them against the rear wall (Fig. 132).

The deposit originated by the second flooding event was of a different nature. It reached a notable thickness in all the

Fig. 132 - Mummy remains, wooden fragments and mud-bricks pushed against rear wall of “G” (TT 14).



chambers and along the western wall of room “C” the sediments were clearly laid according to the characteristic granulometric gradation: the lower layer was made up of mid-to large-size limestone shards¹⁶, mud bricks¹⁷ and bones; above it, a layer of sand and small size stone flakes was visible and higher up the filling showed a thin layer of fine brown sand (Fig. 133). This flood was also clearly discernible in “G”, in room “F” and in the sloping passage continuing beyond “F”. In “G” the muddy sand spread among the mummy and wooden coffin fragments, causing a violent displacement of the materials and reaching one third of the height of the passage. It was there also responsible for the pushing of the mummified remains, which were in some cases lifted by the wave onto the fluid mud surface, against the rear walls of the passage. During the excavation a number of mummy skeletons were found lying on the compact mud crust of the flood (Fig. 134) and the hollow surface which appeared after the removing of the remains clearly indicated that the mummified skeletons were floating on the mud when the surface hardened. The lifting of mummified bodies to a height of about 50 cm must be imputed to the elevated density of the flooding stream of sediments and muddy sand¹⁸ roughly penetrating the passage and to the heaped up position of the funerary materials¹⁹ upon the arrival of the wave. The sediment layer left by this alluvium reached a thickness of about 35-40 cm in the northern part of room “C”, thus resulting insufficient to climb over the step leading to room “B” or “A”.

The arrival of material is also documented in MIDAN.05, but the deposit here was definitely modest in relation to those brought by later floods²⁰ and it accumulated above all in the lower level chambers, namely the unfinished sloping passage “b” and the small lateral burial room “e”.

A third flood came very soon after the previous one²¹. It deposited abundant material in the funeral chambers of TT 14, completely obstructing the sloping passage section beyond “F”, almost completely filling chambers “F” and “G”, saturating room “C”, and lastly even overflowing into “B”²², “D”²³ and in all likelihood into “E”.

With the fourth flood breaches probably began to appear, chiefly in the thinner section of the rock walls, already well soaked by the early floods²⁴. This maybe caused the opening of a narrow gap between chambers “A” and “E”, finally resulting in the big breach accurately noted by Davies during his visit and subsequently closed by the Egyptian Antiquities Service with a patch of plaster. The thin dividing wall between chambers “d” and “c” of MIDAN.05, instead, must have fallen

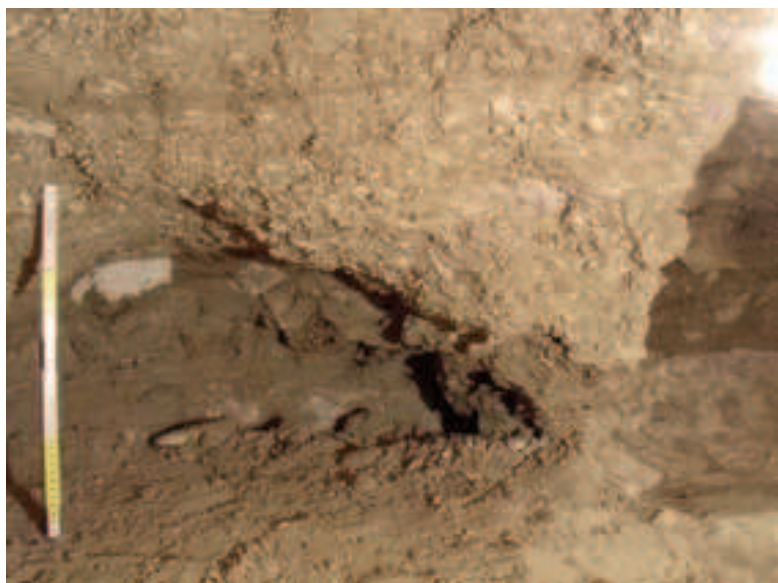


Fig. 133 - Alluvial deposit of the second flood along the western wall of room "C" (TT 14).

some time after the tomb had been abandoned and, perhaps, during, or shortly after, the ancient robberies, but surely prior to the beginning of the floods: the large limestone shards, coming from the collapsed dividing wall, were found on the nearby floor, buried under the alluvium sediments and lying on a thin whitish layer. A layer that appeared to contain numerous painted plaster fragments, probably fallen from the tomb decorated walls, and to lay directly on the bedrock floor of chamber "c" (Fig. 135). According to the thickness of the preserved deposits, this was not a large-scale flood. In TT 14 only chambers "A", "B" and "D" were affected, because "C" and the inner spaces had already been completely obliterated and cut off. In MIDAN.05 the flow came in through the main entrance located in "a", deposited material in "c" and "d" and formed another level of fine compact brown sand in "E".

The subsequent alluvial event saw the muddy water wave reaching the level of the south wall of room "B" neatly indicated by the preservation state of the red signs sketched on the white painted vault coating., all the lower part being completely washed away (Fig.). For yet unexplained reasons no more mud or sediments got into TT 14, whose access was probably blocked off until it was re-discovered by the modern robbers. In MIDAN.05 the sediments also got in through the opening present in the north wall of "E". The flow broke down a dividing wall of mud bricks which had probably



Fig. 134 - Skeletal remains lying on the compact mud crust of the flood in "G" (TT 14).

Fig. 135 - Remains (after modern robbers excavation) of collapsed wall stone shards and whitish layer lying on room "c" floor (MIDAN.05).





Fig. 136 - Collapsed mud-bricks wall dividing room “a” from secondary tomb “E” (MIDAN.05).



Fig. 137 - Layers of fine sand deposited in chamber “c” (MIDAN.05) against the stone chips and pink mortar wall.

been built, during the last phases of use of the funerary complex, in order to restore the division between chambers “a” and “E” after the original rock wall had collapsed. The mud bricks were found fallen into “a”, lying on top of the previous flooding deposit and covered by the layer of sand and limestone shards left by the new flood (Fig. 136). Another layer of fine sand was deposited along the south and east walls of “E” and it completely obliterated the breach between “E” and “A”²⁵. If we assume that this flooding event was responsible for the fairly uniform layer of sediment deposited in “a”, “c” and “d”, which was high enough to cover the lower remains of the collapsed dividing wall between “c” and “d”, forming a single alluvial deposit in both chambers, we must admit that the shaft “f” was already completely filled and buried. We unfortunately lack the data connecting the flood levels recorded in the bottom shaft chambers and those present in the upper rooms of the tomb because of the complete destruction, effected by the modern looters, of the original sedimentary layers filling the shaft. Anyway, a sequence of eight alluvial events has been documented for the lowest part of the shaft²⁶ to which a likely figure of four more must be added to reconstruct the complete filling of the shaft, which, as we said, represents the essential condition enabling to make sense of the depositional situation recorded in the upper level rooms. Hence, according to all available data, a sequence of about twelve flooding events must be assumed to precede, of an unknown time span, the fifth flood registered for the upper chambers of MIDAN.05.

Subsequent floods only penetrated MIDAN.05 from the main entrance on the eastern side of the transversal hall “a” and through a small window opening at a certain height in the southern half of the same wall. MIDAN.05 surely remained accessible from the outside much longer than TT 14, as it is clearly testified not only by the greater number of floods it suffered but also by the abundant wasps nests on the walls and ceilings of its chambers, the latter being an almost completely absent feature in TT 14. A very thick layer of fine sand was deposited in chamber “c” against the stone chips and pink mortar wall originally intended as a straight rear wall for the chamber (Fig. 137). Similar sediment layers deposited along the western wall of room “d”, while the deposit of sand and limestone flakes of room “a” grew considerably high, especially nearby the main entrance.

The huge mass of sediments repeatedly brought by the water torrent ultimately blocked off the access to the tomb and concealed its presence up to the arrival of the modern plunderers.

It is clear that the two tombs cannot be analyzed separately. They constitute a single stratigraphical basin, albeit provided with multiple articulations, whose understanding appears to be strictly connected to the reconstruction of the overall picture of how the natural and anthropic dynamics interacted. The data obtained from a careful archaeological survey and from the finds collected during the excavations must be set and studied within the context of this interaction.

The relative importance of finds for the reconstruction and the understanding of the history of the funerary complex obviously varies in accordance with the possibility of distinguishing between the material assuredly pertinent to the original burials and those extraneous to them, which were carried, deposited and displaced inside the tombs by the various “disturbing factors” briefly outlined. In order to distinguish between the original and the intrusive elements it is necessary to reconstruct the history of the contexts they come from, and then analyze how the deposits, filling the spaces of the burial complex, formed. By associating an index of contextual reliability to every layer it is hence possible to attribute a degree of documentary importance to the finds. This is why the overall analysis of all finds must be postponed until the final publication and the completing of the archaeological investigation of the two rock-cut tombs. In the following chapter, only a brief presentation of the materials deemed significant on the basis of the above criterion is provided, together with a comprehensive catalogue of the objects found and a selection of photos and drawings.

Notes

¹ Recent furious flooding events were registered in October and November 1994 and May 1995. For ancient attestations of floods in the Theban necropolis and for the phenomenon in general see LEBLANC C., «Thèbes et les pluies torrentielles. A propos de mw n pt», *Memnonia* VI (1995), p. 197-214; WEEKS K.R., «The Work of the Theban Mapping Project and the Protection of the Valley of the Kings», in WILKINSON R.H. (ed.), *Valley of the Sun Kings. New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs*, Tucson (AZ) 1995, p. 122-128; RYAN D.P., «Further Observations Concerning the Valley of the Kings» in WILKINSON R.H. (ed.), *Valley of the Sun Kings. New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs*, Tucson (AZ) 1995, p. 157-161, with bibliography on unpublished contributions by the Brooklyn Museum Royal Tombs Project (1977-1979) in note 6.

² See the general introduction to the area in Ch. 1.

³ On epigraphic ancient Egyptian attestations see LEBLANC C., «Thèbes et les pluies torrentielles. A propos de mw n pt», *Memnonia* VI (1995), p. 197-214 and SADEK A., «Varia Graffitica» *Varia Aegyptiaca* 6/3 (1990), p. 109-120.

⁴ GUILLAUME A. - EMERY-BARBIER A. - CERVILLE-ZONCA N., «Le remplissage sédimentaire de la tombe de Ramsès II» *Memnonia* VI (1995), p. 147-173; CURTIS,

G.H., «Deterioration of the Royal Tombs», in WILKINSON R.H. (ed.), *Valley of the Sun Kings. New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs*, Tucson (AZ) 1995, p. 129-133, and RUTHERFORD J. - RYAN D.P., «Tentative Tomb Protection Priorities, Valley of the Kings, Egypt», in WILKINSON R.H. (ed.), *Valley of the Sun Kings. New Explorations in the Tombs of the Pharaohs*, Tucson (AZ) 1995, p. 134-156.

⁵ See a similar situation for the New Kingdom tombs at Saqqara (RAVEN M.J., *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt II. Objects and Skeletal Remains*, London 2001, p. 9-11) where the looting begun a few years after the last use of the funerary structures. It is also true that the reuse of a tomb often represented the best pretext for the plundering of equipments of previous occupants, as actually noted by Winlock: “*Four women had been buried there successively, and as each new-comer was brought down the pit for her everlasting rest her undertakers had taken the occasion to drag her predecessor out of their coffins and break up their furniture in the search for valuables. Finally the last occupant was brought down, a spot cleared out in the corner of the room, baskets, wigs, coffins, and pitifully maltreated mummies brushed aside, and his coffin left there*” (WINLOCK H.E., «The Egyptian Expedition 1920-21. Excavations at Thebes», *BMAA* 16/11 (1921), p. 35).

⁶ The chambers of MIDAN.05 were given a separate nomenclature in small letters in order to distinguish them from those of TT 14 which are designated in capital letters.

⁷ As explicitly stated by a robber in papyrus Amherst: “<We> found the burial-place of the royal wife Nubkhaas his royal wife in the place ... its (2) side[...] (8) <We> found the royal wife just (?) likewise and we appropriated all that we found on her too. We set fire to their inner coffins” (PEET E.T., *The Great Tomb-robberies of the Twentieth Egyptian Dynasty*, Oxford 1930, p. 48-49).

⁸ I thank the anthropologist Barbara Lippi for these data.

⁹ As we have stated, the *terminus ante quem* of these plunders is represented by the year of the fixing of the iron gate at the main access of TT 14, the 1909.

¹⁰ BETRÒ M. *et alii*, «Vasi con iscrizioni demotiche e ieratiche dalla tomba M.I.D.A.N.05», *EVO* 31 (2008), forthcoming.

¹¹ DEVOTO G., *Geologia applicata all'archeologia*, Rome 1985, p. 174-175.

¹² A similar situation is described in GUILLAUME A. - EMERY-BARBIER A. - CERVILLE-ZONCA N., «Le remplissage sédimentaire de la tombe de Ramsès II» *Memnonia* VI (1995), about the sediments carried by raging streams which filled the tomb of Ramses II.

¹³ Among the main ones to be considered for a detailed reconstruction of how tomb filling actually occurred are the volume and the speed of flow at the moment when the flood reached the external courtyard of the two tombs, its direction, the morphology of the courtyard, the morphology and layout of the interior of the tombs, the different floor levels of the chambers or of previous sedimentary deposits, obstacles of different types and lastly the roughness of the chamber walls.

¹⁴ This phenomenon was clearly visible along the rear walls of passage “G” and room “D”, in the chamber “E” (in particular along the eastern and southern walls), in the western half of “d”, in the whole lateral chamber “e” and against the plastered stone wall that closes chamber “c” to the West.

¹⁵ As already said, the entrance of TT 14 must have been subject to sliding debris problems, maybe by reason of a particular morphology of the surroundings, if around 1913, only a few years after the fixing of the main iron door and some maintenance works, Ernest Mackay reported: “Courtyard of tomb requires clearing out. At present it is difficult to get into this tomb owing to lack of space to enable the door to swing”.

¹⁶ Probably in part originated from the collapse of the thin dividing wall between rooms “A” and “C”.

¹⁷ The doorway between “A” and “B” was originally closed off by a mud brick wall: the lower line of bricks and the remains of another on top of it were still

in situ on the threshold against the jamb. The numerous mud bricks found in the deposits of “C” and “D” (see below in Ch. 5) could have been dragged there by the stream of water coming from “A”.

¹⁸ The floating propriety of sparse bones in such a fluid mixture appeared interestingly well attested throughout the tomb deposits.

¹⁹ That the mummies and wooden fragments were originally piled up throughout the passage “G” appears ascertained by the relative positions of the remains which was recorded during excavation.

²⁰ This could be linked to the different orientation of the tomb compared to that of TT 14 and to the direction of the torrential flow as well as to the presence of natural or artificial obstacles near the entrance to the tomb in the external courtyard.

²¹ This can be affirmed because the uppermost layer of fine sand from the pre-

vious flood showed no sign of the typical hardening and desiccation processes.

²² Traces of the deposit here, however, had been completely removed by the modern plunderers and the first archaeologists digging activity.

²³ The sediment brought by this flood formed the thick layers of fine sand discovered against the eastern rear wall of the big niche.

²⁴ This resulted from the great elastic stress the limestone was subjected to and to which this material is far less resistant in presence of water (GUILLAUME A. - EMERY-BARBIER A. - CERVILLE-ZONCA N., «Le remplissage sédimentaire de la tombe de Ramsès II», *Memnonia* VI (1995), p. 167).

²⁵ The mark of the level reached by the water is clearly visible on the wall exactly at the upper limit of the breach.

²⁶ BETRÒ M. - DEL VESCO P. - GHIROLDI A., «Preliminary Report on the University of Pisa 2007 season in TT 14 and M.I.D.A.N.05», EVO 30 (2007), p. 24-25.