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SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

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**THE “CLIFF TOMBS” IN THEBAN NECROPOLIS:
*STUDY OF A FUNERARY STRUCTURE IN THE XVIII DYNASTY***

**“SKALNÍ HROBKY” NA THÉBSKÉ NEKROPOLI:
STUDIE POHŘEBNÍ STRUKTURY DYNASTIE XVIII**

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Aim of the thesis:

The study of some particular funerary structures of the Theban Necropolis commonly called as “cliff tomb” attested from the beginning of the 18th Dynasty. These are graves with attached ritual elements (stelae and niche chapels) located on hills and served by artificial paths. In the texts of the New Kingdom and Late Period these structures are often linked to the term *Kay* “top, hill, high” (Wb.IV.4.6); the use of “Kay tombs” is attested at Thebes from the beginning of the New Kingdom to the Late Period; at the end of 20th Dynasty, these structures were reused as royal caches. The experience gained by the present author on the study of Theban necropolis makes it possible to start new and more complete research to classify these structures and to identify the different stages of the building life cycle, through the study of its original features and subsequent transformations.

The cliff tomb features

The cliff tombs are structures that exposed a new and particular style of funerary concept which became familiar at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty. These cliff tombs are present in different sectors of the necropolis, but mainly in the Southwestern valley, as a burial place for queens and princesses until the middle of the 18th Dynasty. In the Southwestern valley, there are the tombs of Princess Hatshepsut in Wadi Sikkat Taget-Zeid (Fig.1), the tomb of the Asian wives of Tuthmosis III in Wadi el Gabannat Gourud and the tomb of Princess Neferure in Wadi Siqqat el-Agala. In the Valley of the Kings the most well-known tomb is the KV 34 (Fig.2), while another tomb in the same cavity is KV33, roughly exhibits the same features. Other known cliff tombs are the KV39, the KV41, the WN A, The VC no.1, the MMA 1021, the TT320 and TT358, the VP nos.1-2, and WV no.1; some of these were reused as caches and royal caches during the III Intermediate Period.

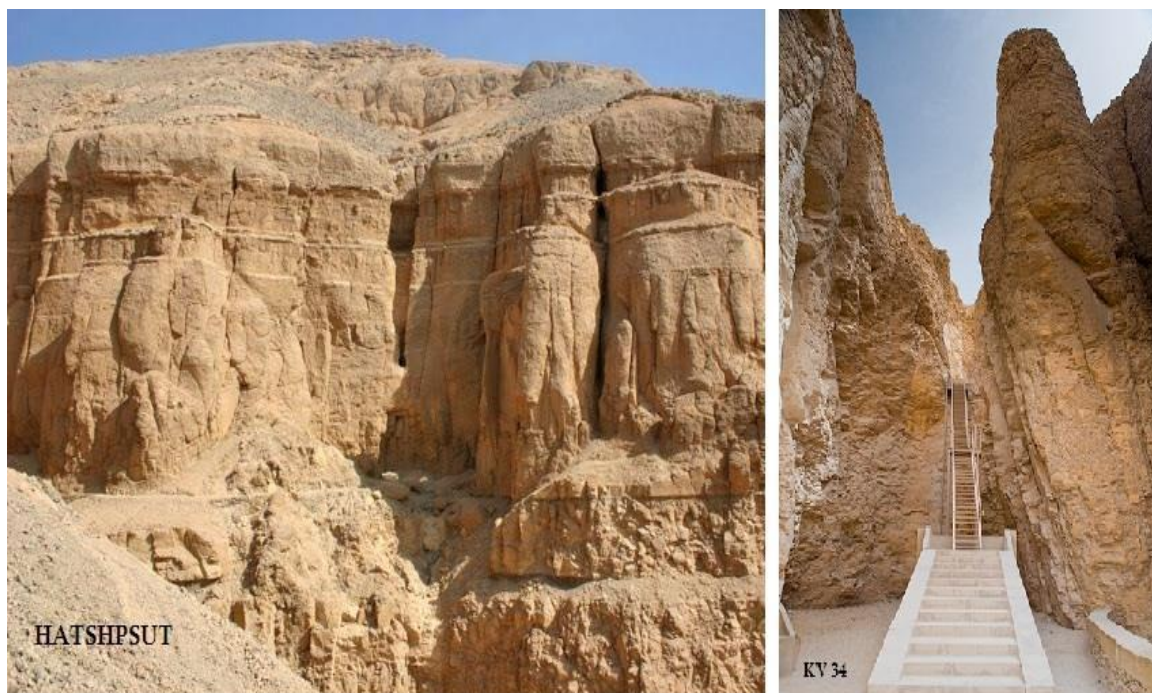


Fig.1-2. (1) the tomb of Hatshepsut; (2) the KV 34 (Photo Author)

The first common factors that relate to the cliff tombs are their height and the inaccessibility of their location (Fig.3); this was not only connected to the security and safety of these structures but to the cultural elements linked to the Middle Kingdom funerary tradition in the necropolis in the area of Deir el-Bahari. From the end of the 17th Dynasty and the middle of the 18th Dynasty, there were some changes and developments in the plan and features of cliff tombs. The first example of this kind of tomb is the KV39, probably the “*k3y* of queen Inhapi”, very simple in plan, followed by TT320 and TT358 more complex also for the presence of more internal rooms; the last and more

developed example of cliff tombs must be related to the queen of Hatshepsut, the tomb of princess Neferure and the tomb of Asiatic wives of Tuthmosis III in the southwestern desert wadis as well as the KV33 and KV34 in the Valley of the Kings.

These tombs reflect a new concept of funerary architecture through some interesting features: the entrances to the tombs are carved inside a wide platform hidden by the external cliffs, while, above the tomb, outside, on the rock wall there is a carved “niche” similar to a “false-door”; the niche seems to be connected with a short semi-circular “channel” carved outside the cliff rock walls used to guide rainwater down as a proper “cascade” (Fig.3-4). Apart from the need to expel rainwater that is dangerous to the integrity of the tomb, it should be pointed out that the relationship between the position of the tomb in the middle of the high rock cliff and the ritual concept of “cascade” must be connected with Hathor “sacred waters” well known in the goddess “grotto” found in the Valley of the Queens.



Fig.3-4. The cliff-tombs features and position (Photo Author)

The opening in the rock face is elliptical and, in addition to being a suitable access breach, probably had the function of draining rainwater to prevent its infiltration into the tomb¹. A possible cultic significance of this element can be discerned if we relate it to the creation of the South-Western necropolis and the Valley of the Queens, whose origin is linked to the concept of the “Grotto Cascade” (Fig.5a-b): *“At the western end of the main wadi, during torrential rains the valley of the Grand Cascade feeds a waterfall and pools of water at the Grotto Cascade, which was held sacred during the pharaonic era, and has been suggested to be the reason for the creation of a royal necropolis at this location”* (Demas-Agnew 2012, 20).

This peculiar rocky structure also has a cult value: *“Its association with Hathor and the rejuvenation of the deceased may be one reason for selection of the Valley as a royal necropolis. Within this complex of features, the place known as the Grotto, a sheltered recess at the top of a natural rock platform, Hathor is depicted as a cow in rock paintings, drawings and engravings. Other engravings dating from the 19th dynasty record occasions of torrential rains (Peden 2001, 225)”. Flowing water represented fertility, apparently imbuing burial at the Valley with a tangible symbol of rebirth in the afterlife (Weeks 2005, 354, 553)”* (Demas-Agnew 2012, 293).

¹ - The harmful effects of rain on the preservation of Theban tombs have been known since antiquity and have been observed also in modern times by Carter on 1921, October 1994, October 2001 and January 2008; see Romer 1989; James 1992, 202; Brock 1996; Cross 2008. On graffiti attesting to these events in the necropolis see Peden 2001, 178-179 notes no.285-286.

The vertical rock walls where the cliff tombs are carved are strictly connected with the ritual sunset and the sun rays that illuminate the access only during this process (Fig.6). Under the security profile, it should be noted that the position of the tomb does not allow it to be identified from the bottom of the wadi, from the surrounding heights, or the top of the hill². The corniche (or false door), the most visible structure on the wall is perfectly camouflaged with the surrounding rocks and can be seen only when illuminated by the setting sun. It follows that the planning of the tomb has certainly combined the safety factor with the cultic and funerary ones.



Fig.5 – a. the cascade (in the red square the elliptical opening of the cascade);
b. Rock painting of Hathor as a sacred cow (photos Demas-Agrew 2012, 297).

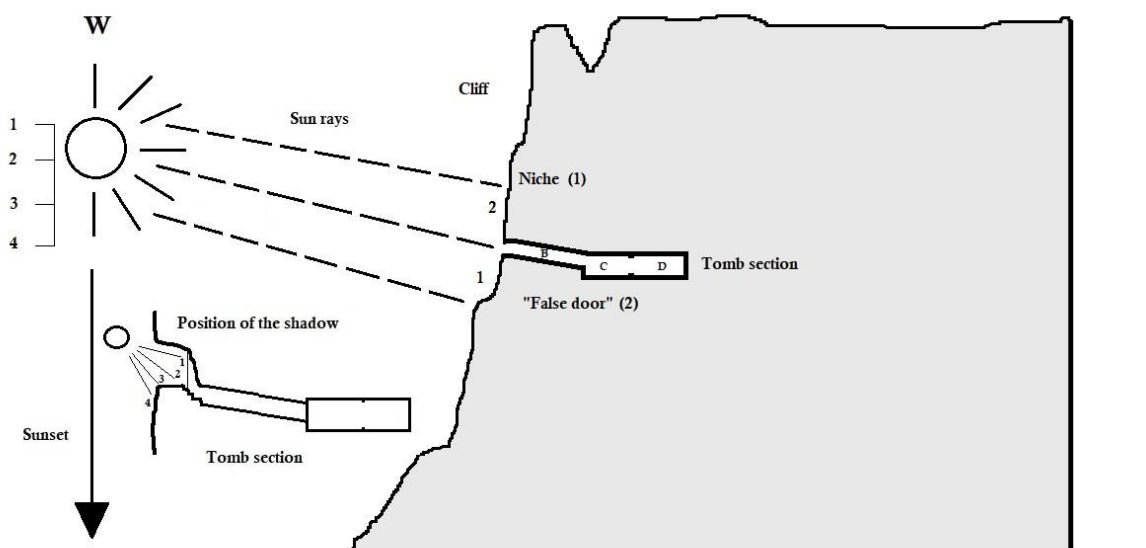


Fig.6 – The light at the entrance of the cliff of Wadi A tomb of Hatshepsut before sunset (drawing author).

Another essential element of this research is the presence of a “pathway system”- designed and implemented by the royal necropolis scribes and workers settled in the village of Deir el-Medina -that could connect each tomb with the administrative headquarters.

² - In fact, to identify the access to the tomb it is necessary to climb to the top of an opposite hill that is not easily passable due to the absence of paths and with an inclination of 27%; now the modern path allows to reach the base of the tomb.

Every cliff tomb, from the simplest to the most complex in terms of layout and location, turns out to be well embedded in this system. If, therefore, we interpolate the available data on the location of the graffiti and that of the cliff tombs in the Southwestern valleys, of which WAD is the one closest to the Valley of the Queens and Deir el-Medina village, it is conceivable that the necropolis administration used two paths, the “high” one to the peak and the “lower” one close to the Valley of the Pilgrims of Spain and the wider plain that includes the sites of Malkata and Medinet Habu (Fig.7).

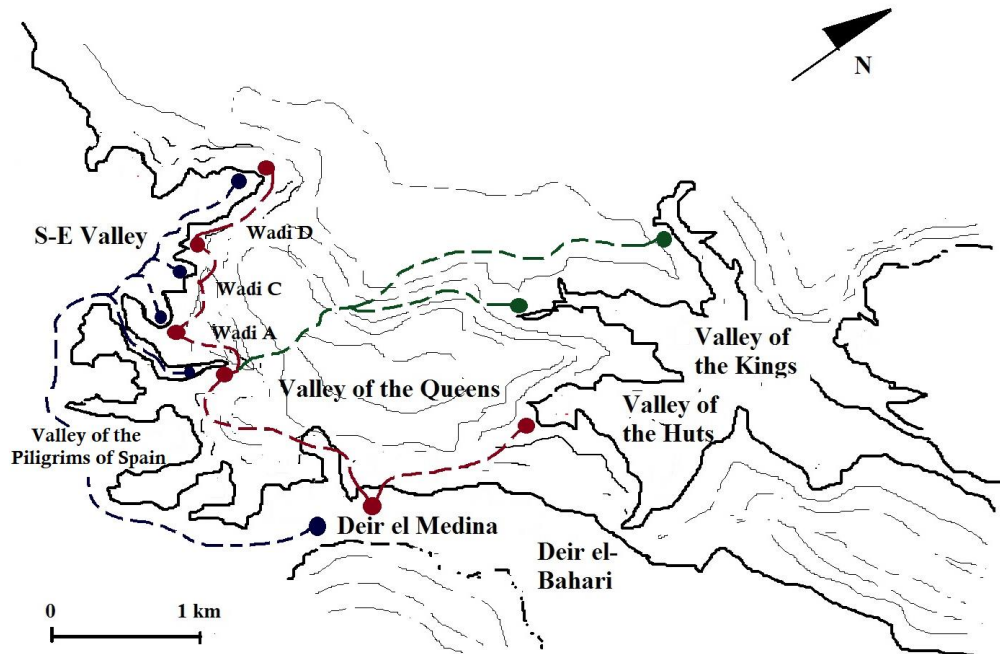


Fig.7 – The “path system” to and from the Southwestern valleys (drawing author).

All these peculiarities about the Hatshepsut cliff tomb make clear that this funerary structure in Wadi Sikkat Taged Zeid must have served as an “advanced” model for the subsequent construction of higher funerary structures in Theban necropolis. The orientation, the internal layout of the rooms, and the presence of some features such as the opening for rainwater drainage and the “corniche” or false door are the architectural and cultural elements that distinguish this type of structure.

If we observe the other cliff tombs known in Theban necropolis in Deir el-Bahari (WN A, VC no.1, MMA 1021, TT320, TT358) and the Valley of the Kings (KV39, KV41, VP no.1), all simpler in plan and concept because dated before, it is clear the Hatshepsut's cliff tomb was influenced by the previous experiences gained for high-profile queens such as Ahmose-Inhapi, Ahmose Nefertari and Ahmose-Meryetamun.

If the external architectural elements of the Hatshepsut model seem to continue to be used subsequently, it is equally true that the internal plan seems to change as seen in WD A, KV33, and KV34, in the latter we then witness a progressive transformation and decoration. From the reign of Amenhotep II the tombs were built at ground level and the cliff tombs, including Queen Hatshepsut's advanced “model”, seemed definitively abandoned and a sign of a funerary concept from a bygone era. These are the main features of these funerary structures, started shortly before the reign of Hatshepsut and lasting until the end of the reign of Tuthmosis III, that help us to understand this interesting phenomenon and the complexity of relations between natural and human factors in Theban Necropolis in this historical period.

The thesis structure

The thesis is divided into an introduction, three sections (I-III), the final considerations, and the bibliography. The idea is to subdue the work in three sections and this layout traces the areas of the necropolis where the cliff tombs are located: southwest sector (I), east sector (II), and northwest sector (III). The analysis of the funerary structures was schematically divided into inner part, outer part, and finds; for completeness, the records of late New Kingdom scribes who inspected and reused the cliff tombs as suitable caches were taken into account. Among them is the well-known royal scribe Butehamun who lived in Thebes between the end of the reign of Rameses XI and the end of the reign of Smendes I and was responsible for the evacuation of royal mummies from the Valley of the Kings on behalf of the High Priest of Amun Paynudjem I. Some graffiti left by Butehamun and his collaborators in these sectors have been reported in hieroglyphic with transliteration and translation throughout the three sections, while an appendix includes photographs taken by the author during in situ research and drawings made by field specialists since the early 1900s (Fig.6).

The necropolis sectors with cliff tombs

Section I: Southwestern Valleys

In the **Wadi A** (Sikkat Taget-Zeid) the two significant cliff tombs are those built for Hatshepsut (Baraize 1921, 184; Carter 1917 n.21-22; Thomas 1966 C-D, Figs.18 and 6b); the first tomb (here WA D, Fig.8) consists of a straight corridor that opens right onto a series of rooms roughly on the axis: a square room, a descending passage, a large square room, deeply descending corridor, and a square burial chamber.

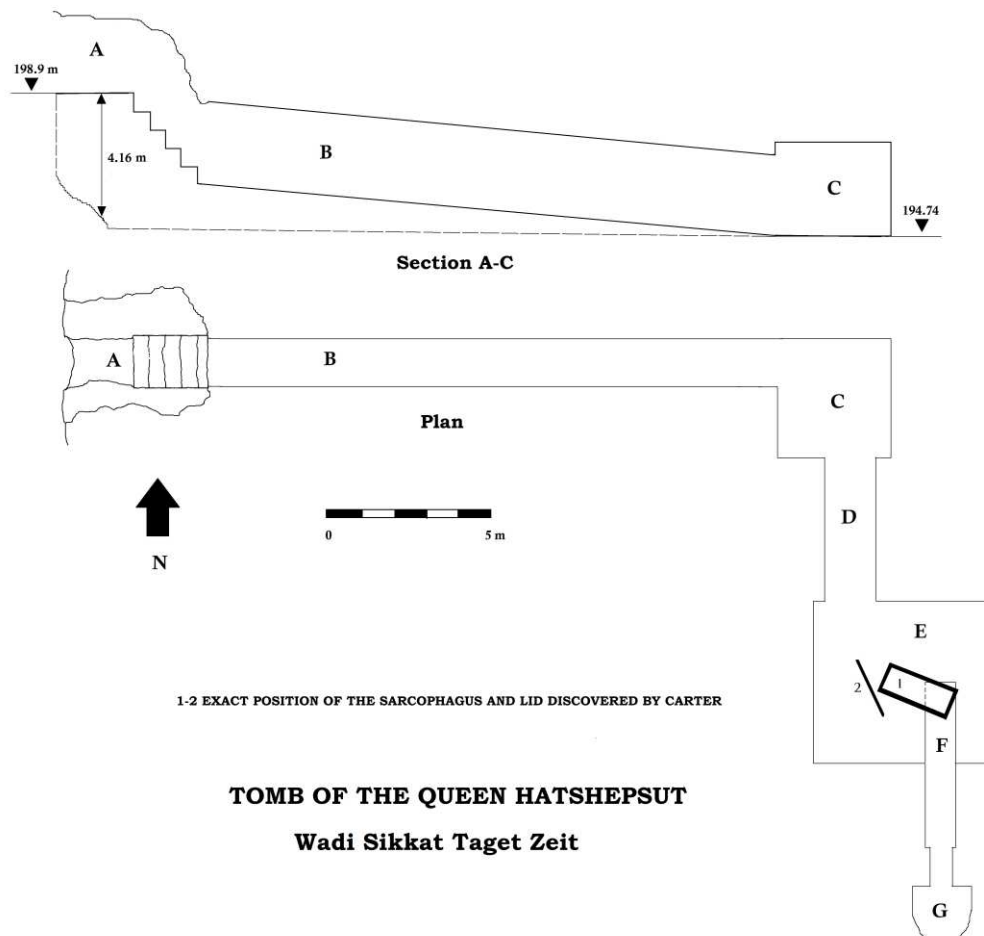


Fig.8 – The tomb of Hatshepsut plan and section after the survey in 2018 (drawing author)

The second tomb called “Baraize-tomb” (here WA C) is simpler than the first one and it is located in a rock crevice only a short distance from the queen’s cliff tomb. It consists of a descending passage with steps that opens onto a large room of 7.8 x 5.15 m; opening off the left is a small room of 3.8-4.2 x 2.5 m.

In the **Wadi C** there is a “*bab* tomb” along the inner face of the wadi built probably for Neferure and dated to early Eighteenth Dynasty (GI Carter MSS ID.187, fig.6c; Thomas 1966, 196-98; Romer 1984, 242; Gabolde et al. 1994, Fig.6b-c; Lyliquist 2003, 4, Fig.6). The tomb (here WC A, Fig.9) consists of a corridor leading to an elongated chamber of 2-2.5 m, a second corridor leading off to the right with a bay and niche.

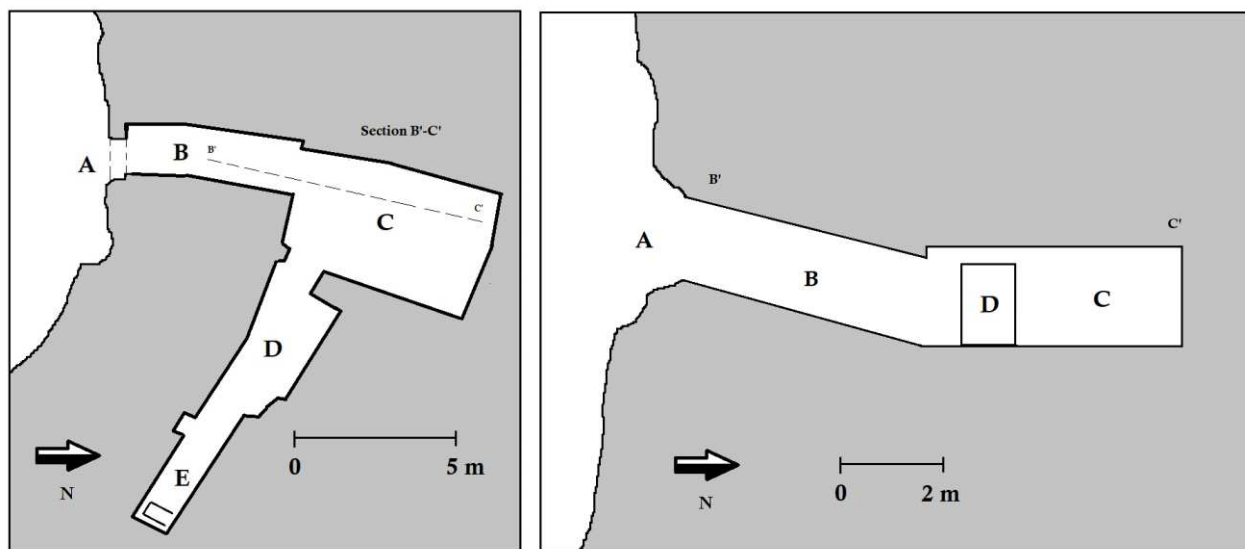


Fig.9 – The WC A plan and section in 2019 (drawing author)

From a preliminary observation, it is clear that the original layout of the tomb appears to be that of Hatshepsut’s cliff tomb with the descending entrance A, the long corridor B, the large antechamber C, and the sarcophagus chamber D; it is to be suspected that the latter room was further lengthened to accommodate the sarcophagus, similarly to what is seen in corridor F of the queen’s tomb. The subsequent alternation of irregularly shaped rooms (C-D) and the excavation of the opening in the floor to place the sarcophagus in a small space (E) suggests that the tomb was not completed³.

The orientation of the presumed tomb of Neferura turns out to be to the south, probably due to the natural position of the ‘cave’ plus a different conception related to the setting of the sun and the necropolis. If, therefore, Hatshepsut’s cliff tomb seems to have been conceived on a selected rock face within an ideal “natural amphitheater”, here the present morphology was employed; here, it was precisely the conformation of the cliff crack and the steep wall with no inlets that did not allow for the niche above or the opening of the “cascade”. The cornice/false door cut is raw and only sketchy, 1.67 m wide and 2.62 m high (Fig.10)

In **Wadi D** (Wadi el Gabannat Gourud, “the Apes’ Cemetery”), a narrow valley adjacent to Wadi C, triangular in shape, whose acute angle is formed by the crevice in which there is the cliff tomb is built for the Asian wives of Tuthmosis III (Thomas 1966, 197; Lilyquist 2003, 57-130); the

³ - Nothing excludes the possibility that this structure may have been planned for Neferure, but then left unfinished in conjunction with her mother's abandonment of the cliff tomb. Indeed, following her mother's accession to the throne, the princess assumed the role of queen in public life with the titles “Lady of Upper and Lower Egypt”, “Mistress of the Lands” and “Wife of the God Amun” (Tyldesley 2006, 98). Following this important event, it is conceivable that another tomb was planned for her in the necropolis (Valley of the Kings?) or before his death in the Regnal year 11 of his mother.

tomb (WD A, Fig.11). The tomb consists of an entrance A with steps roughly carved into the rock, a long corridor B (1.76 m wide, 1.89-90 m high, and 13.8 m long) leading to a wide square chamber C (5.2 m wide, 7.5 m long, 4.40 m high); the layout seems to suggest that the tomb consists of a long corridor with several slight recesses leading directly into the burial chamber.

The access to the tomb is on the southern and more hidden side of the deep gorge and is served by steps roughly carved into the rocky floor. The plan differs from those of Hatshepsut (WA D) and it can be considered in a stage after the queen's rule after Tuthmosis III accession to the throne. On the cliff face, there are two elements similar to those observed in the cliff tombs of the Wadi Sikkat: the ‘cascade’ opening and the “cornice” (or false door); the latter is 2.07 m high and 1.45-68 m wide and is carefully done.

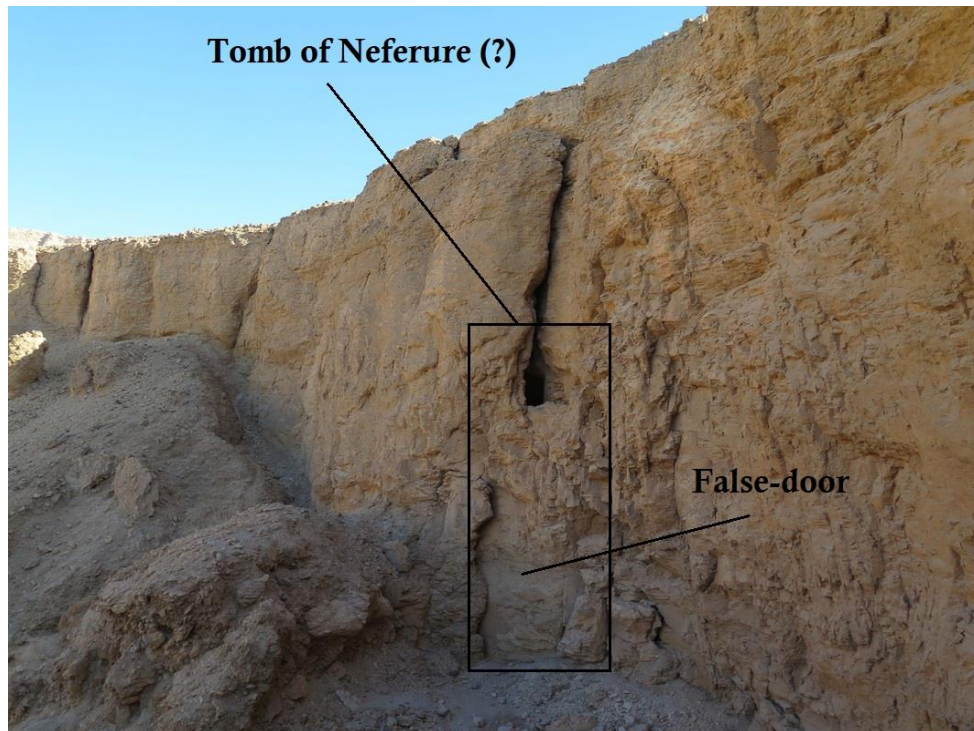


Fig.10 – The tomb of Neferure in 2019 (photo author)

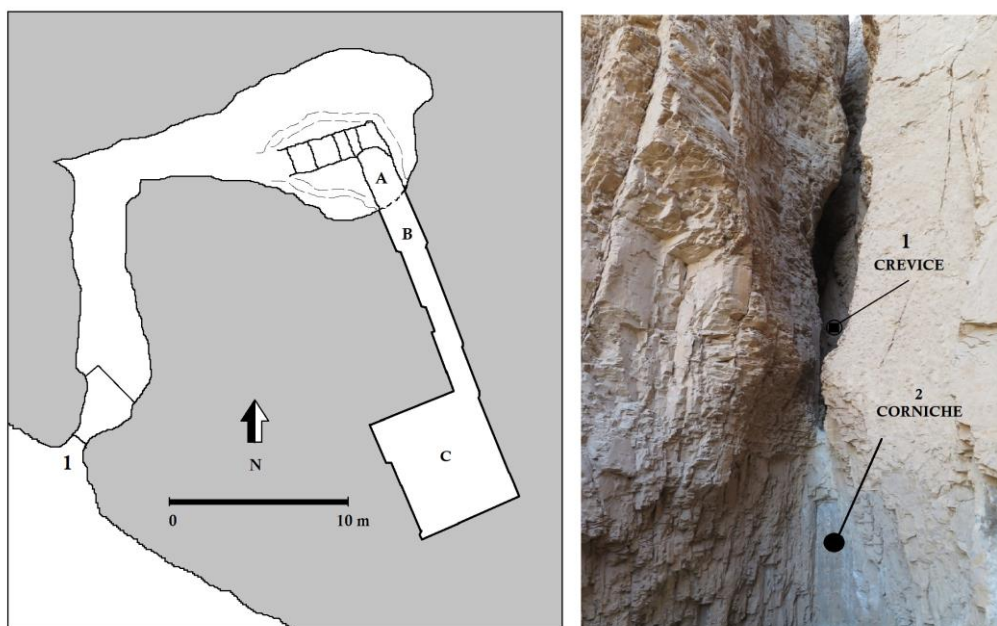


Fig.11 – The WC A plan and section in 2019 (drawing author)

Section II: Deir el Bahari

In the Deir el-Bahari-Qurna area, there are four wadis: Wadi en-Nisr, Valley of the Last Montuhotep (also called “Valley of the Colors”), Valley of Heqanakht, and Valley of the royal Cache; it consists of four valleys in succession.

Under the historical profile, it should be noted that, unlike other sectors of the necropolis in which no activities before the New Kingdom are attested (as said in Section I), that of Deir el-Bahari boasts a millenary tradition since the beginning of the Middle Kingdom until the end of II Intermediate Period; it is a fact to take into account for the analysis of the cliff tombs, as structures that are influenced by this tradition, in whole relationship with the Theban mountain and with its cultic and cultural context. The tombs located within the wide circle of Deir el-Bahari (Fig.12) and under the hill of el-Qurn constitute the first nucleus of a necropolis destined for the court and the royal family; the whole has as its center of attraction the funerary temple *Akh-sut-Nebhepetre* of Montuhotep II.

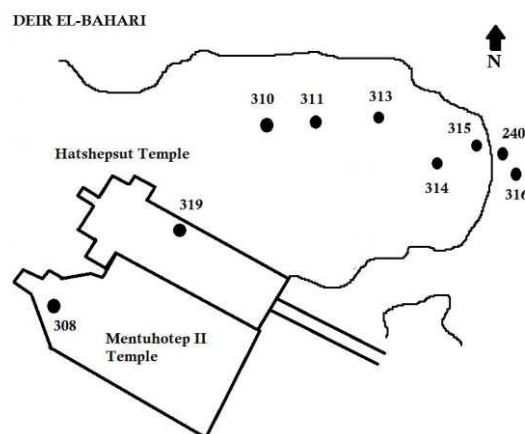


Fig.12 – The Deir el-Bahari circle tombs of the Middle Kingdom (drawing author)

Its rising elevation with successive terraces evokes the solar creation myth (Arnold 1971), and its orientation was where the sunrise at the middle-winter solstice (Gabolde 2015, 148; 153-154) and aligned with the structures of the nascent temple of Amun at Thebes (first small temple or chapel for Amun erected by Antef II: Polz 2001, 384). This was an ideal combination of royal and divine worship; the choice of the pharaoh to carry out his building program in the Deir el-Bahari site by exploiting the Theban heights and abandoning the flat area of el-Tarif from the 1st Intermediate Period symbolizes the new way of conceiving the cult concerning the divinity itself of the sacred mountain (Polz 2001, 386).

The construction of the temple and tomb intended for the ruler in the wide rocky circle of Deir el-Bahari, seems to have triggered the development of the necropolis intended for high officials and members of the court; dating to this period are the tombs of nobles made in the western part of Gurna Hill and oriented toward the temple of the ruler. Between the end of the 11th Dynasty and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, the construction of the temple of Amenemhat I in the Valley of Colours marks a different orientation of tombs toward this important complex.

The elevated development of the temple of Montuhotep II, in addition to constituting an important innovation in the temple architecture of the period, seems to have had notable effects on Theban funerary architecture; as already mentioned, in addition to the traditional use of the royal necropolis of El Tarif with tombs built on the plain at the level of the Nile, the sovereign opted for a solution that valorizes the elevation as a morphological and cultural factor linked to the solar cult. Gabolde's (2015, 148-152) hypothesis on the presence of a monumental solar altar on the top of Montuhotep's temple seems to be confirmed by Hatshepsut's idea of installing a similar one on the high terrace of her temple.

Thus, if this event is associated with the creation of “elevated” royal and noble tombs throughout the Deir el-Bahari valley and then in the neighboring ones oriented towards the temple of Amenemhat I, it is therefore in this phenomenon that the origin can be traced to the cliff tombs at the beginning of the New Kingdom. One “link” with the funerary tradition of Dynasties 11th and 12th linked to the Montuhotep II descendants is the tomb created for Queen Inhapi (KV49) between Deir el Bahari and the Valley of the Kings, on the slopes of the sacred mountain “the peak” which can be dated to the end of the 17th Dynasty.

The creation of the Inhapi tomb, referred to in later texts as *h3i* “high, elevated”, may have been a suitable incipit for the development of the cliff tomb concept; in fact, there is no record of any

activity to create funerary structures in entire Deir el-Bahari area at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty before and even the Deir el-Medina village foundation.

The first important site of the Deir el-Bahari area is known as ‘Wadi en-Nisr’ (GMT, Section 65-66, I/1 Pl.123; Gabolde *et al.* 1994 with bibliography; Cavillier 2016), and the tomb is called Bab el-Maâleg or al-bâb al-Mu’llaq. The tomb (WN A, Fig.13) consists of an entrance directly carved on the rock wall with rough significant steps from 1.65 to 1.85 m; the step has a depth of 4.87 m from the access to the ground of the antechamber, while its length is 7.20 m. This room, the largest of the tomb, is 9.60 x 6.20 m, rectangular, and roughly carved; on the southeast angle of the room is a square unfinished shaft of 1 x 1 m for side and 40 cm depth. After a passage of 1.56 x 1.34 m, and height of 2.04 m, and two rough steps, there is the burial chamber; this irregular rectangular shape room of 4.54-6.08 m to 4.70-5.20 m has dimensions with a height of 2.66 m; like the antechamber, there is on the west side of the room a rectangular roughly carved shaft of 1.50 x 2 m and deep 1.58 m.

Under the internal layout profile, this funerary structure could be compared with the WA C, a simpler cliff tomb probably dated to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty by the absence of pillars in the funerary chamber and the small dimensions; for Gabolde (1994, 227) this was used as a single burial and the finds discovered inside can confirm an early 18th Dynasty date.

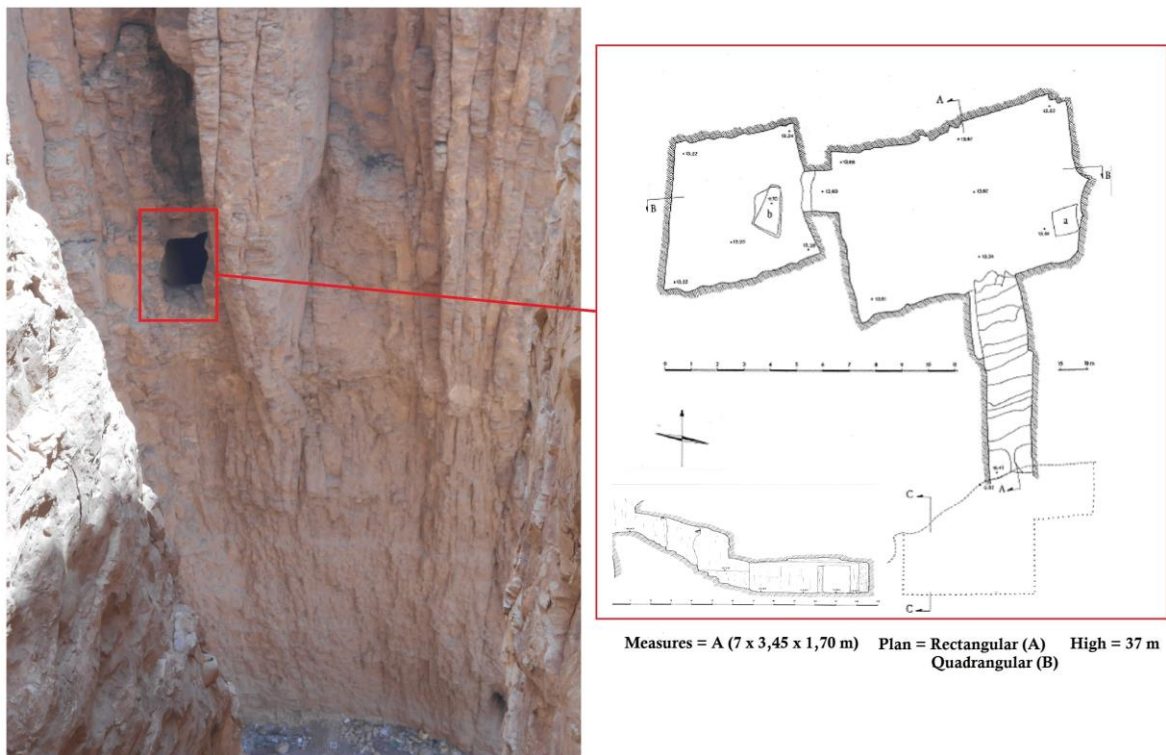


Fig.13 – The WN A tomb access (a), the plan (b) (Gabolde 1994, Pl. III-IV; photo author)

The tomb rises 19.25 m above the ground of the wadi and is excavated within a 32 m high rock face and can be reached either from below or from the upper terrace of the heights; from the latter position, the entrance to the cliff tomb is visible. The cliff tomb is excavated from the exterior within a shallow cavity in the rock face (Fig.14a).

Above WN A is a small “niche” excavated in one of the two rock ridges that form the cliff while below, shifted slightly to the right, is a semi-elliptical excavation of the rocky wall (Fig.14b), probably to be connected with the “waterfall” concept.

The Valley of the Colors consists of two vertical terraces, the higher and the lower (Fig.15); in the first, there is the higher path to the Deir el-Bahari temple, and in the second, the slope ends in a natural “gully” on which there is a round “ball-shaped” rock. Below is an overhanging wall at the bottom of the lower terrace. The VC no.1 is the only cliff tomb attested in the valley; its entrance is at the height of 144 m from the level of the bottom of the valley and excavated on the flat rock

surface of the low terrace; the date of its discovery in modern times is unknown, nor is it known whether it was also open or used in antiquity.

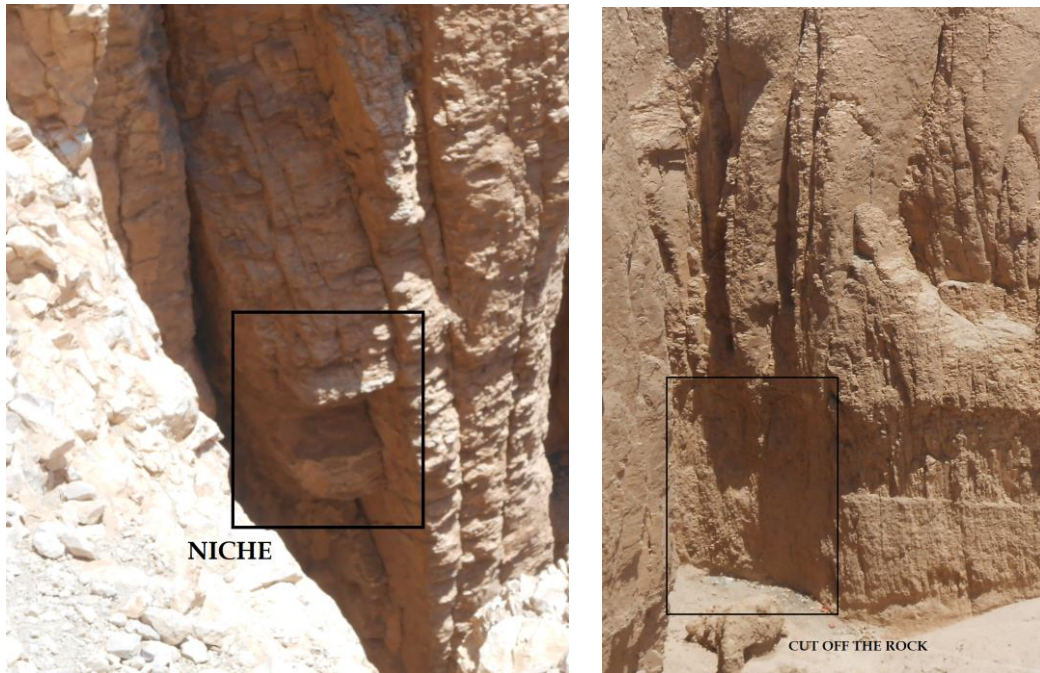


Fig.14 – a) The WN A niche and b) – the cut-off rock (photo author)

The only available source is the brief description written by the CEDAE on the graffiti of the Theban Mountain: “*un puits funéraire a été creusé à l'extrémité Nord de la terrasse, en amont du dernier ravin longeant la Falaise*” (GMT I/1, 50), later accompanied by the 1971 plan (GMT II/3 Section 147, Pl.129). This hypogaeum (Fig.20) consists of a rectangular “oblique” shaft entrance measuring 2.80 x 1.60 m and 1.45-2.40 m in height, which bears traces of two significant, roughly hewn steps at a distance from each other and a kind of smooth ramp between the two; this is followed by a single rectangular burial chamber measuring 5.42-5.20 x 3.85 m and 2.60-3.10 m in height.

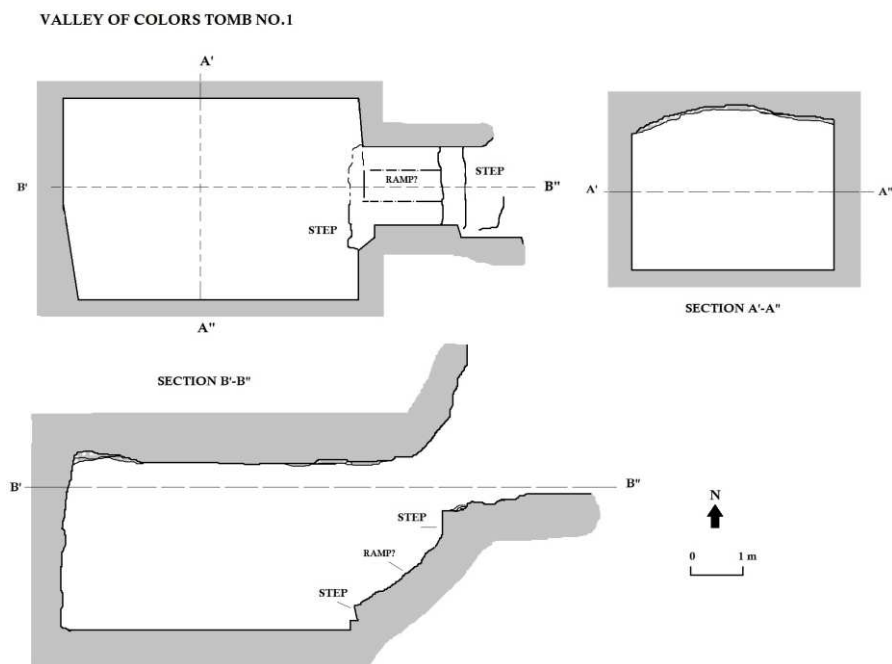


Fig.20. The Valley of Colors tomb, plan, and sections (drawing author)

The element of the structure that appears interesting is the type of the “oblique” entrance shaft, which has an external height of 1.45 m and then widens to 2.40 m with steps and a very steep “rough” ramp. Indeed, a tomb consisting of only one room is widespread in the necropolis. WN A and the Baraize tomb, to which we add KV39, have this architectural element. The typology of the access of VC no.1, therefore, gives one reason to consider that it is a tomb excavated in the rock platform of the lower terrace of the Valley of Colors and not into the vertical surface of a rock face on which it is impossible to carve a shaft as in WN A. We are dealing with a funerary structure designed with a plan similar to WN A and probably coeval.

The third valley is named Hekanakht and is the most difficult-to-access and walk-through sector of the entire Deir el-Bahari area, which consists of a circle of high cliffs, an intermediate terrace, and a broad ramp of pebbles, mud, and sand that slopes down to the valley floor (Fig.21).

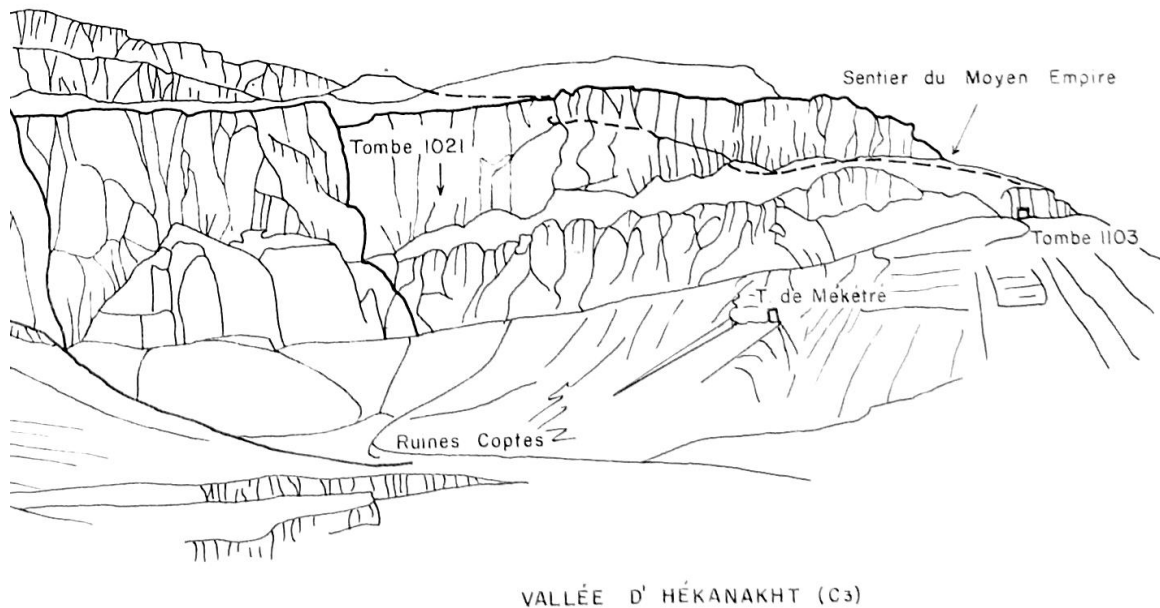


Fig.21 – The Valley of Hekanakht (GMT/1, Pl.114)

In a small bay below one of the highest and most inaccessible rock faces in the valley, there is a shaft tomb (Fig.22); it was discovered by the Gurnawis in the summer of 1918 and then investigated by Lansing in February 1919 (Lansing 1920,7-8). The tomb has an entrance shaft 2.25 m deep and 1.64-1.72 m wide and a burial chamber 4.45 m long, 2.87 m wide, and 1.84 m high; the walls are roughly excavated without decorations, while the south wall and ceiling bear traces of subsidence, the fragments of which are still present on the ground.

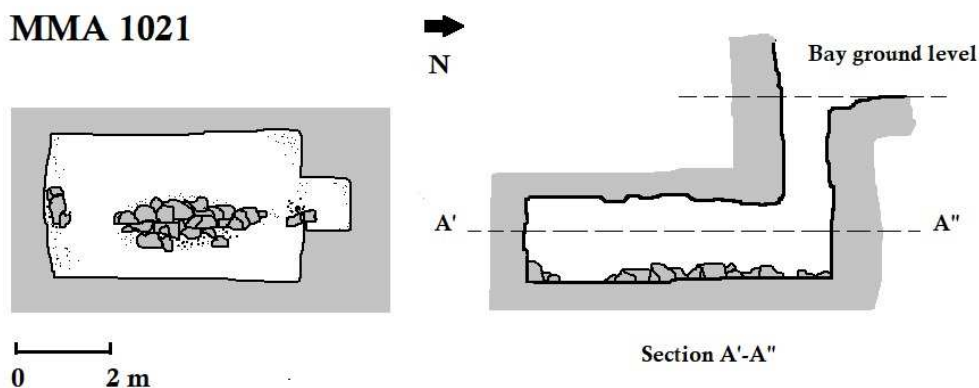


Fig.22 – MMA 1021 plan and section (drawing author)

The archaeologist named MMA 1021 because its owner is unknown; however, outside the tomb and under a large flat stone was found the sarcophagus and the mummy of the newborn prince Amenmhat son of Amenhotep I, called *Amenmhat Q* (Lansing 1920, 10).

However, the mummy of the infant (barely a year old) appears to have been damaged by thieves, probably at the end of the 20th Dynasty, and subsequently rebandaged, adorned with a wooden breastplate with an image of his father and with numerous floral garlands placed inside a “reused” coffin of the 22nd Dynasty (MMA 19.3.212-292); on the lid is the hieratic inscription with the standard titles of the king followed by the name of the royal son (Lansing 1920, 9-10). From this it is, therefore, difficult to say whether MMA 1021 is the original tomb of Amenemhat Q or whether it is a funerary structure reused as a cache by the managers of the necropolis; and the presence of the sarcophagus outside the tomb and covered by debris may have been the result of later or more recent plundering.

MMA 1021 is a tomb with an access shaft and a single chamber whose floor plan is similar to the previously mentioned tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens and can be included among the cliff tombs as it is within a bay (crevice) bordered between two high cliff faces similar in type to those in which WD A and KV34 are found; it is a pit-entry tomb whose dating, as already mentioned by Lansing and Barwick, could date to the early 18th Dynasty.

The last valley takes its name from the discovery, in 1881, of the first royal cache (TT320); as with the other valleys, there are two terraces, the lower and the upper. In the latter is the path that leads to the Hill Village and the Valley of the Kings, while on the lower terrace, the route heads towards TT320 and the valley plan (Fig.23); in a tiny bay on the lower terrace, there is the shaft to enter in the tomb.

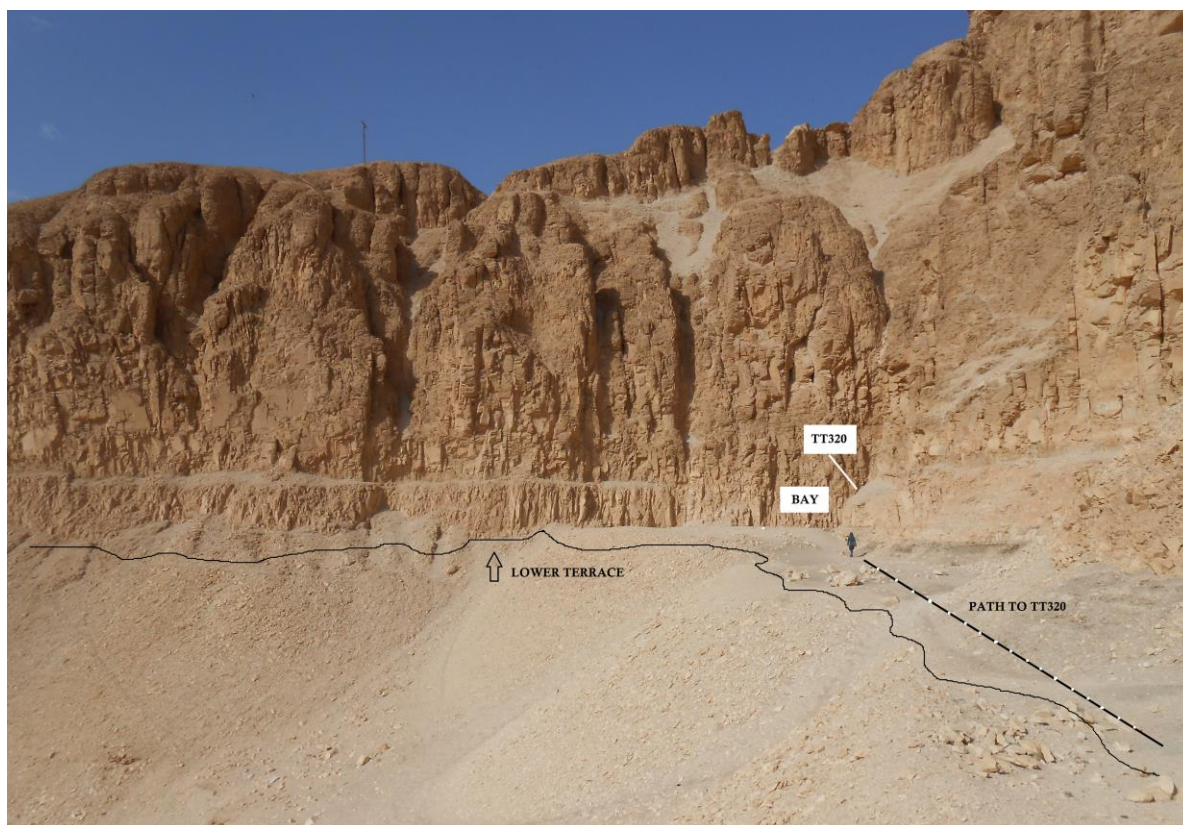


Fig.23 – The Valley of Royal Cache (photo by author)

The tomb was cleared by Brugsch in 1881 (Maspero 1889, 65); the last mission on site was done between 1998 and 2006 by a German–Russian team (Graefe-Belova 2010); it consists of an entrance shaft (A), rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 2 x 2 m and 12.85 m deep, a descending staircase of seven steps (B), 7.40 m long, 1.68 m wide, and 3.92 m high; from this, an

entrance leads into the descending corridor (C), 23.80 m long, 1.40 m wide and 1.80 m high, with a staircase 7.20 m long and 6.40 m high at its end. On the left side of the staircase is a niche (D), 3 m long, 1.80 m wide, and 0.70 m high, cut perpendicular to the corridor in the northwestern direction, while on the right side begins another corridor (E), 30.6 m long, 1.40 m wide and 1.70 m high; at the end of this is a burial chamber (F) of irregular rectangular shape with a bench cut into the rock face. The inner surface is 6.80 x 4.40 m, the outer surface is 8.40 x 5.20 m, and the height is 1.70 m (Fig.24).

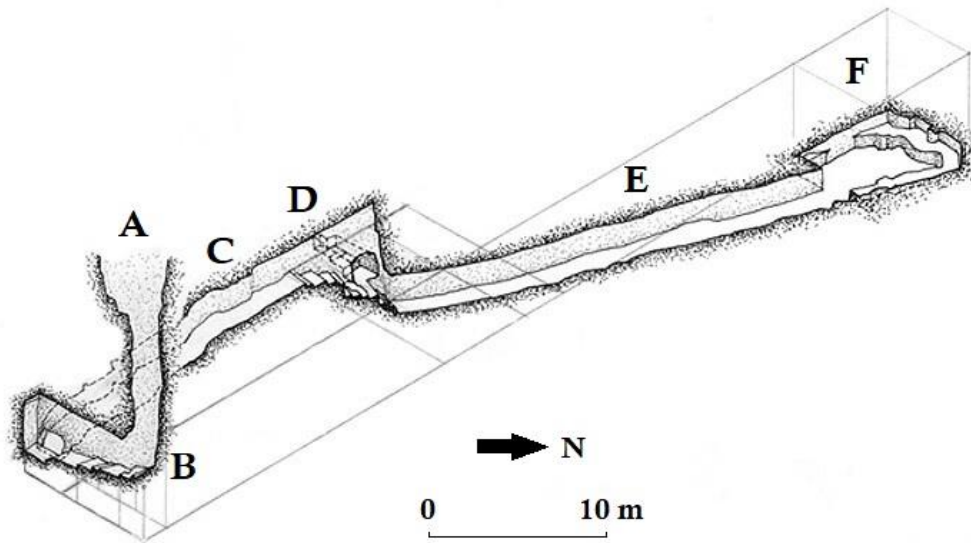


Fig.24 – Isometric drawing of TT320 (drawing by Graefe-Belova 2010, Pl.10 with letters added by author)

Under the internal plan, this tomb appears to be similar to TT358 and ascribable to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty; the planimetric similarities with the TT358 are the shaft entrance (A) and the direction to the northwest of the staircase/corridor B. In particular, the 90° change of direction of the niche seems to be part of the original plan of both tombs and could make a strict connection between them (Fig.25a). Not only do the arrangement of the corridors and the cut of the steps seem to correspond (Aston 2015, 20-21) but the similar planimetric design of TT320 and TT358 suggests a coeval dating and the burial of two queens who lived in the same period.

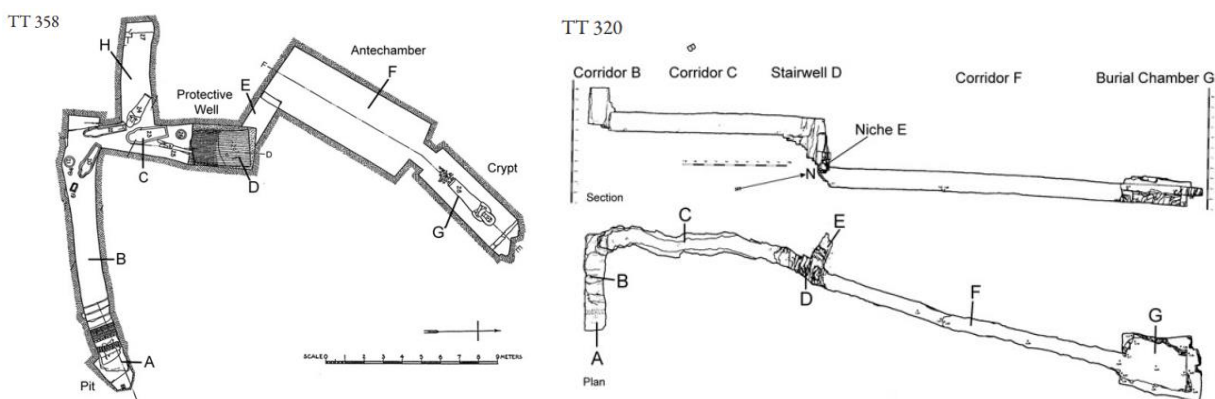


Fig.25a - TT 358 plan and TT 320 plan and section (Winlock 1932, Pl. I; Graefe-Belova 2010, Pl.5)

If one adds to this Romer's hypothesis on the angle of the first corridor on the right, typical for the tombs of early 18th Dynasty queens (Romer 1976, 195), then the attribution of TT320 to Ahmose-Nefertari, as well as, the TT358 to Ahmose Meryetamun suggested by Aston (2015, 37-38) can be the most convincing view.

The mentioned TT358 is the only early 18th Dynasty cliff tomb placed at the middle high of the valley attested in the Deir el Bahari circle (Fig.25b). The tomb, extensively cited and described in the course of the discussion, should be highlighted here as the “twin” of the TT320 and a model for later developments of this type of funerary structure; As already mentioned it was discovered by Winlock in 1938, is located at the average height of the northern side of the Deir el-Bahari circle and, interestingly enough, almost at the same height as TT320. Access to the tomb does not make use of a rocky bay or a back wall like its “twin”, but of the sloping ground level of the rise above the northern side of the temple of Hatshepsut.



Fig.30b – The Deir el-Bahari Valley view with TT358 (photo Middle Kingdom Theban Project with notes by author)

The tomb (Fig.30a) consists of an entrance square shaft 1.20 x1.20 m wide and 2 m deep (A), a 4 m long staircase, wide 1.60 m and 3 m deep with roughly cut steps, a descending corridor (B) 10 m long and 1.70 m wide, a second corridor (C) long 4.5 m, a square shaft (D) of 2 m and 3 m deep, a short third corridor (E) 2 m long and 1.60 wide with a step giving access to the antechamber (or a wide corridor F) 8.20 m long and 4 m wide and the burial chamber (G) 6 m long and 3 m wide with an “unfinished rear wall (m)” (Winlock 1932, 7). Another corridor or a “long niche” (H) is 5 m long and 2 m wide, westwards from corridor C, and is related to the 90° change of direction in the original plan.

Externally, the access to the grave, at ground level, was not distinguishable in the same way as TT320; there are no graffiti, and the path connecting the plain below was connected to those to reach the northern hills and the Valley of the Pits. Winlock's discovery has the merit of having confirmed that TT358 was made for Queen Ahmose-Meryetamun, consort of Amenhotep I, subjected to inspection and restoration in the year 19 of Smendes I and subsequently used to place the Queen Nauny's coffin and funerary objects during the 21st Dynasty. Winlock's (1932, 24-36) skillful work of cataloging and analyzing the finds made it possible to identify and attribute an essential part of her funerary objects to the original burial of Queen Ahmose-Meryetamun, including pottery, canopic jars, a wooden lattice (part of a bed?), a wooden case, fragments of chairs, stuffed meat carefully wrapped in linen, wooden containers, including one in the shape of a duck, various loaves of bread, baskets and wicker containers, some closed with ropes, cordage for transporting objects, an alabaster container (bowl); these are objects whose style and manufacture date back to the beginning of the dynasty.

Now if we consider that some of the fragments of funerary objects discovered in the burial chamber of TT320 during the last investigation, including wooden "knob handles" (Graefe and Belova 2010, 137; 142-144) are similar to those coming from TT358 (Winlock 1932, 28) as well as the pottery and the sarcophagi of the two queens (Ahmose-Nefertari and Ahmose-Meryetamun), of the same make and typology, Aston's hypothesis (2015, 27-31) on the relationship chronology between the two cliff tombs is rightly accepted.

Thus, it is commonly accepted that Amenhotep I and his mother Ahmose-Nefertari had at least two burials, an initial one at Dra Abu el-Naga and a later one probably at Deir el-Bahari, coinciding with the creation of the village of Deir el-Medina; in this view, it is understandable that it is precisely from Deir el-Bahari, from the heights flanking the temple of Montuhotep II and the *k3y* of queen Inhapi (KV39) tradition that the cliff tomb concept seems to have been initiated. Thus, the creation of TT320, TT358, MMA1021, VC no.1, and WN A could be the essential result of a suitable cultural and cultic readjustment for the founders of the new ruling dynasty.

Section III: Valley of the Kings

The Valley of the Kings, can be considered a vast area divided into three wadis, of which the central one, the Valley of the Kings, is the widest and deepest; the other two, the Valley of the Pits and the Western Valley (also called "Valley of the Monkeys") are less large and more inaccessible. The Valley of the Pits path is one of the ancient ways to reach the Valley of the Kings (Fig.31); the valley takes its name from the presence of the "funerary pit" (KV41, Fig.32) which was discovered at the beginning of 19th century by the Coptic excavators Butros Andraos and Chenuda Macarios, at the time were very active in the Valley of the Kings (Thomas 1966, 156 and 171; Gabolde 1992, 173 and 176).

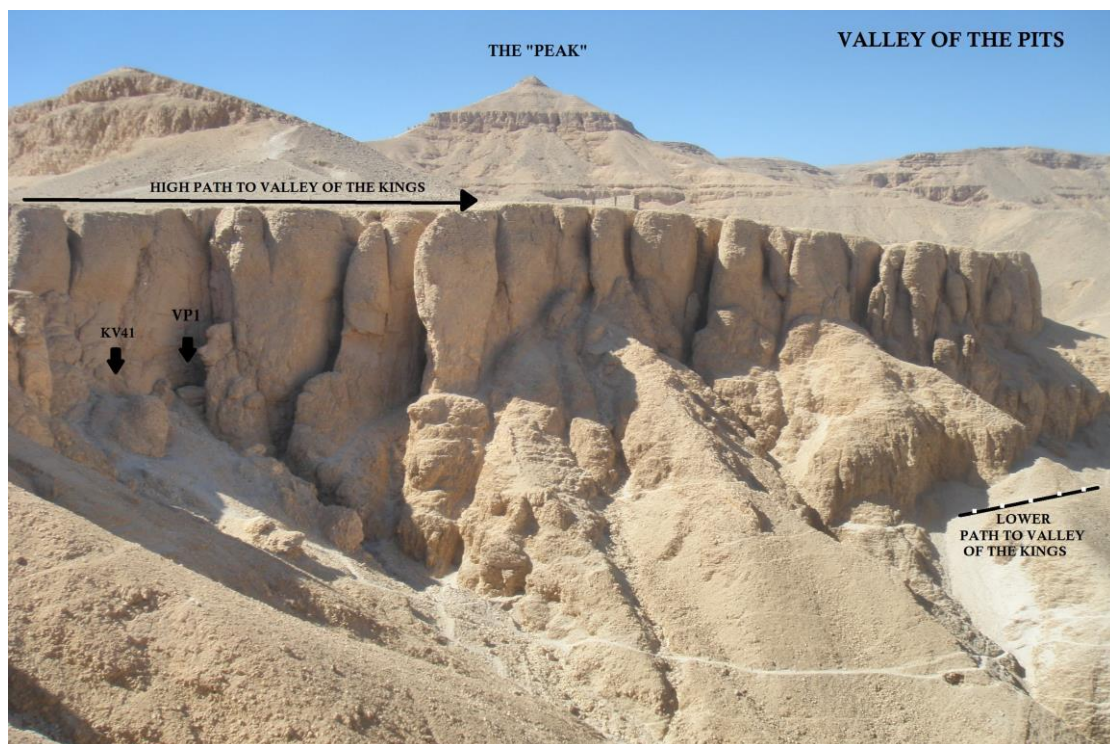
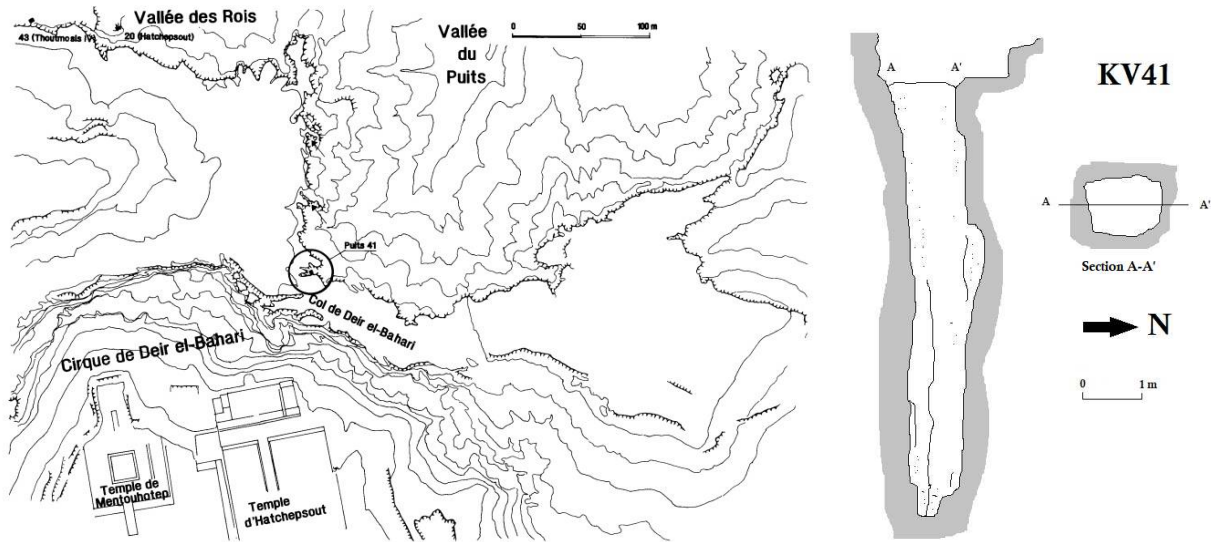


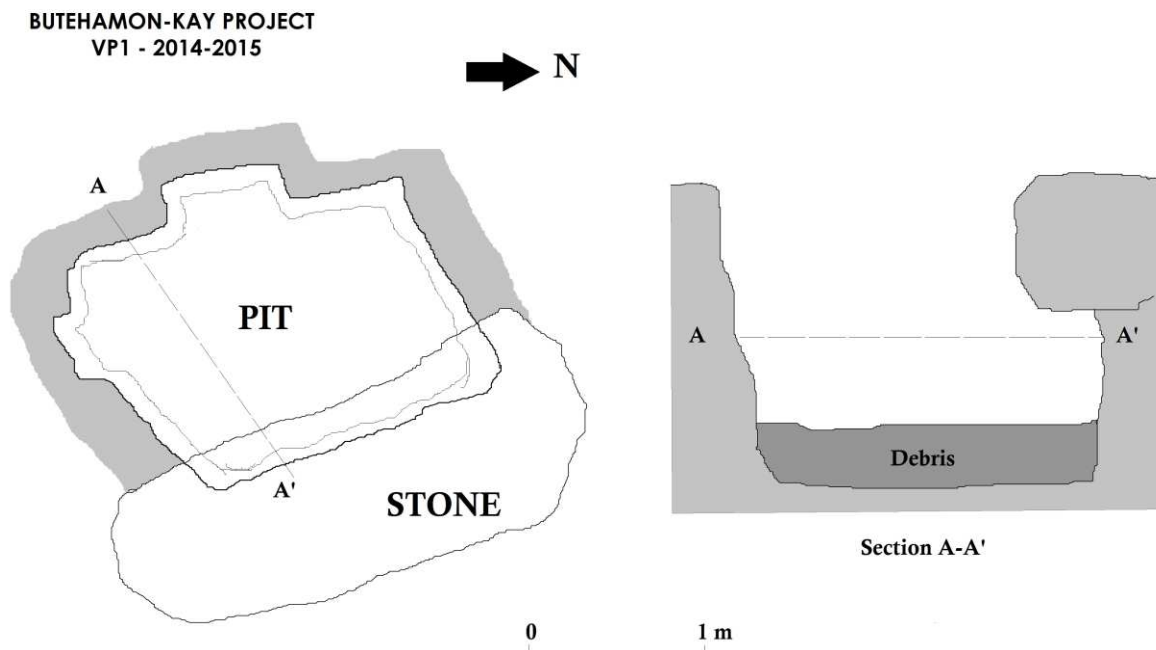
Fig.31 – The Valley of the Pits view from the eastern hill (photo author)

The KV41 consists solely of a 1.10 x 1.15 m quadrangular pit about 11.22-27 m deep; at about 0.50 m from the bottom, the shaft narrows into a funnel shape, and the rock bears no traces of workmanship; in terms of access shaft depth and site morphology, the TT320 may be considered for a similar layout. We can say that the access shaft of KV41 (1 x 1 m and 11 m deep) appears to be a smaller prototype than that of TT320 (2 x 2 m and 12.85 m deep). The access shaft of KV41

appears to be a smaller prototype than that of TT320; the two structures have in common the excavation context, i.e., below a vertical and compact rock face, with access carefully concealed from the outside. Add to this is the area where the funerary shaft was selected, connected to the Valley of the Kings and the Circle of Deir el-Bahari.



during the investigations carried out in the valley by the writer, another well present near the KV41, named by the mission “VP no.1”, was documented and subjected to the investigation (Fig.33). The dimensions of the well of 2.20 x 2.30 m are much larger than that of the KV41 and even slightly larger than the TT320; the eastern side of the wall is partly covered by an enormous boulder detached from the top above, whose relatively regular shape suggests as results of an anthropic work than a natural one. Traces of tool signs left on the internal rocky walls of the pit confirmed that it is an access shaft excavated for a funerary structure; the results of the geological investigation with electrical tomography showed that the cavity has a depth of 7.5-8 m and is entirely covered with debris and non-compact material, confirm this hypothesis.



Regarding the position of VP no.1, it should be noted that it is located below a high vertical wall that forms the corner of the western rocky chain of the valley and the final point of arrival of the path that passes through KV41. Concerning the position of VP no.1, it should be noted that this is located below a high vertical wall which forms the corner of the western rocky chain of the valley and the final point of arrival of the route from Deir el-Bahari which passes through KV41 (Fig.34); even the typology of the rock is the same as the last tomb. Therefore, if the two wells are close and in succession and no other tomb or well is present in the vicinity, it is plausible to hypothesize a close relationship between the two structures in their reuse in the 21st Dynasty if we consider the presence of graffiti very close to the two sites.



Fig.34 - The VP no.1 shaft position with KV41 (photo author)

On the eastern side of the rock circle of the Valley of the Pits, there is a cliff tomb discovered during the archaeological mission in 2011 (Fig.35a-b).

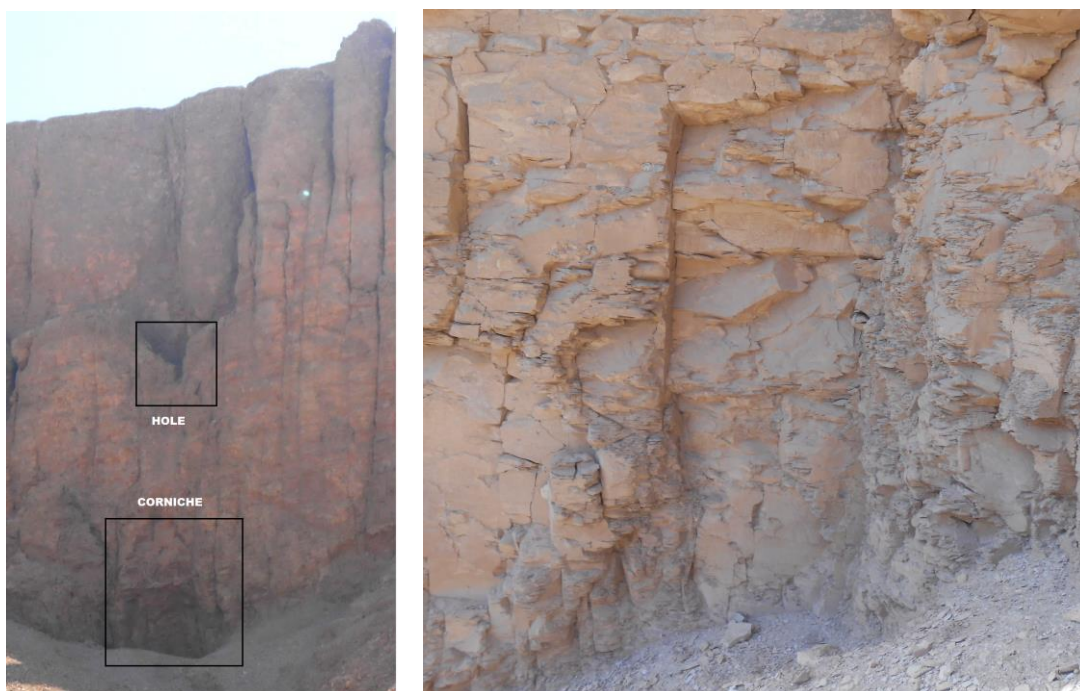


Fig.35 – a. The VP no.2; b. the “corniche” carved on the rocky wall (photo author)

The individuation of the tomb was done by the presence of a “corniche” (or false door) 2.72 m high and 1.60 m wide in the vertical rock face at the foot of one of the hills. On it is a “hole” for water drainage that recalls, *grosso modo*, that was seen in our Hatshepsut cliff tomb. Regular rock cutting of the “corniche” suggests an anthropic activity although, at present, no graffiti was found on the neighboring rock faces of it. The presence of the water drainage hole above and the frame allowed for the identification of a possible cliff grave; the geological investigation with electrical tomography showed that below the inner vertical wall is a cavity approximately 6.70 m deep (Fig.36) entirely covered by sand, mud, and debris. This data allows us to hypothesize a cliff tomb of the period of our interest on this slope.

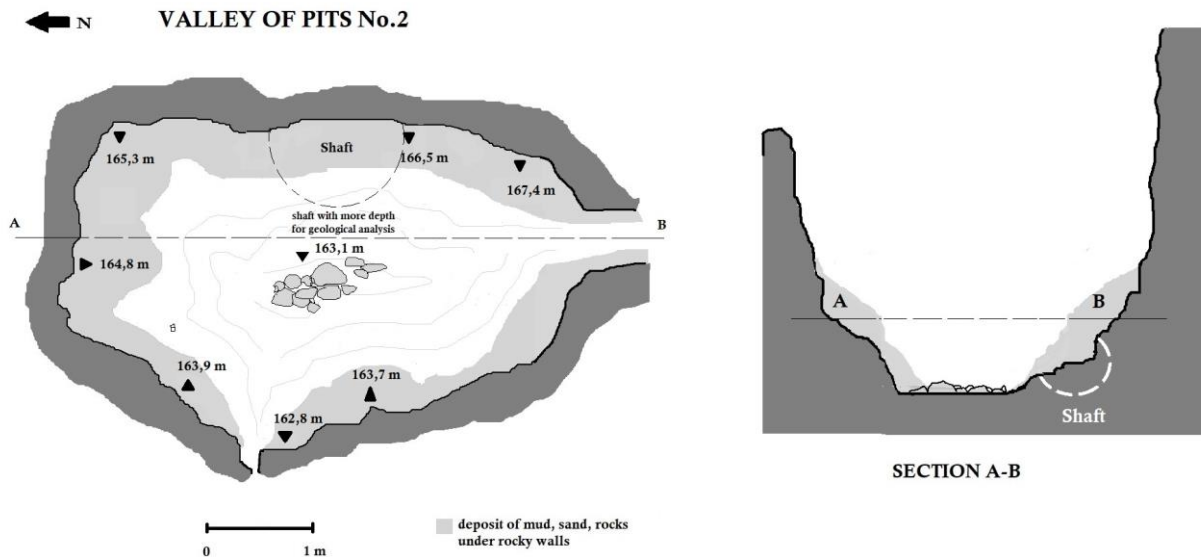


Fig.36 - The VP no.2 plan and section (drawing author)

The Valley of the Kings is a broad rocky circle behind that of Deir el-Bahari with pillar-shaped walls sloping down to the wadi floor, served by various paths that terminate on its southern slope (Fig.37).

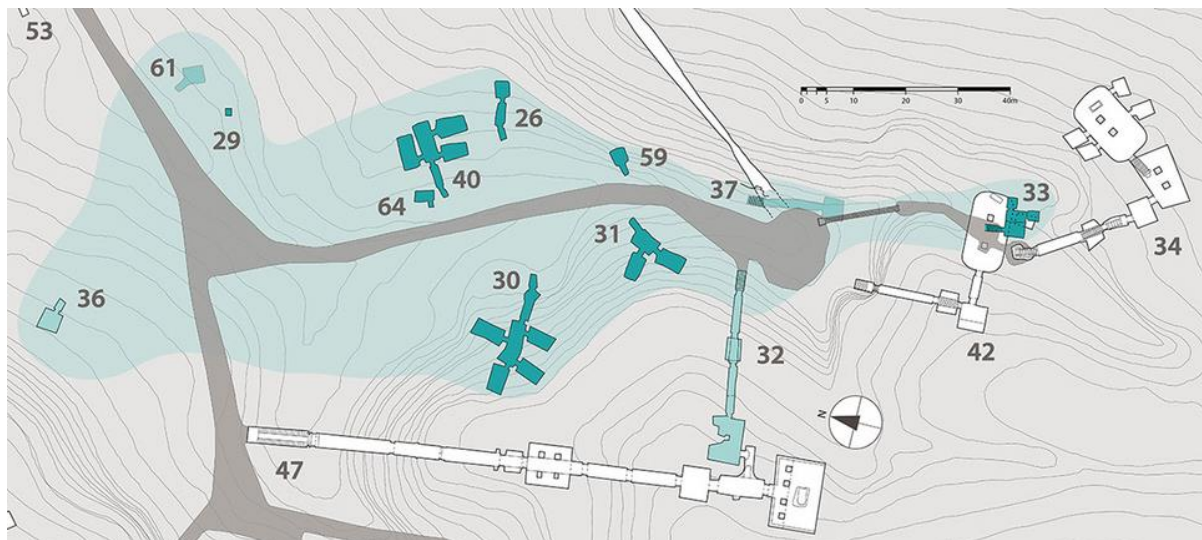


Fig.37 – The southernmost branch of the Valley of the Kings and KV33-34 (<https://daw.philhist.unibas.ch/>)

As already mentioned, access to the valley in ancient times was by the higher paths from the “village du Col”, the terrace overlooking Deir el-Bahari, or the lower way from the bottom of the Valley of Pits. The mouth of the Valley of the Kings is divided into two branches: on the left is the

path into the valley itself, and on the right is the path to the Valley of the Monkeys (or West Valley). In the Valley of the Kings, there are currently two cliff tombs (KV33 and KV34; Thomas 1966, 77-78, 139; Wilkinson-Reeves 1996, 97-99, 183; Weeks 2005, 234-39; Bickel 2018; Willockx 2011b) within a narrow cleft located about 13 m above the wadi floor at the end of the southernmost branch; this cavity finds an interesting parallel with those where is the tomb of the three Asiatic wives of Tuthmosis III (WD A) in Wadi el Gabannat Gourud (Fig.38).

Externally the two tombs were based on a planimetric layout related to the “waterfall” concept and secondarily motivated by the security of the elevated location is evident from the fact that the cleft in ancient times was reached by a flight of steps carved into the left side of the cliff face now replaced by iron ladders. In addition, the opening and the frame/false door under the ascending arch crack, similar to that of WD A 2.75 high and 1.30-63 m wide, confirm our assumption on using this layout. As can be seen from the photo, the cornice/false door is now hidden by the modern metal staircase; the conformation of the right rock face is more inclined than the right vertical on the left. A similar effect is slightly visible in the cornice/false door of WD A; these external elements, as mentioned above, are typical of the cliff tombs of Hatshepsut’s reign.

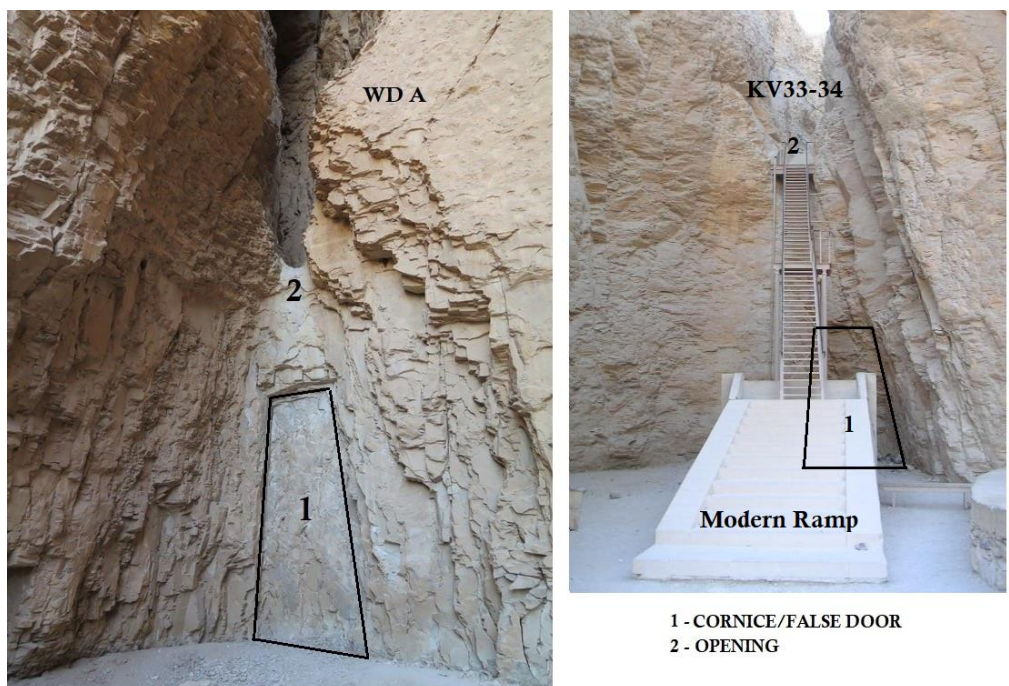


Fig.38 – the WD A and KV33-34 cleft opening and cornice/false door (photo author and web).

Under the internal plan, KV33 consists of an access ramp of ten steps (1) wide 1.70 m, long 4.60 m and high 1.80 m, cut with good precision and still well preserved, a large rectangular burial chamber with a transverse axis (2) of 5 x 4.80 m and high 2 m and two smaller adjacent annexes (3-4) of 1.50 x 1.50 m (Fig.39a).

From a planimetric standpoint, KV33 forms a 90° angle to the access ramp, quite similar to the WA C and WN A, and it should be attributed to a prince or a queen. Everything may point to an early funerary structure designed for Prince Tuthmosis before he acceded to the throne and then later abandoned following the excavation of KV34; this hypothesis could explain the presence of the two tombs in the cleft and the reuse of KV33 during the KV34 realization and completion in the reign of Amenhotep II.

KV34 (Fig.39b) consists of an entrance stairway of 10 steps (A) long 3.03 m and wide 2.12 m, followed by a sloping corridor (B) long 8.35 m and wide 2.16 m, which gives access to a chamber, unfinished and irregularly shaped crossed by a stairway (C), long 3.61 m and wide 1.62 m, which leads to a second sloping corridor (D) long 4.38 m and wide 2.04 m; at the end of the corridor is the ritual shaft of about 5.06 m x 4.16 m and 6.71 m deep (E) only partly decorated, which is followed by a trapezoidal chamber with two central pillars (F) long 11.35-12.35 m and

wide 5.35-6.59 m in the corner of which is a staircase that gives access to the burial chamber (G) 14.64 m long and 8.53 m wide, with two central pillars and four small adjoining compartments (nos.1, 2, 3 and 4) all rectangular with a length from 2.86 to 3.8 m and width from 2.56 to 3.67 m to contain funerary equipment.

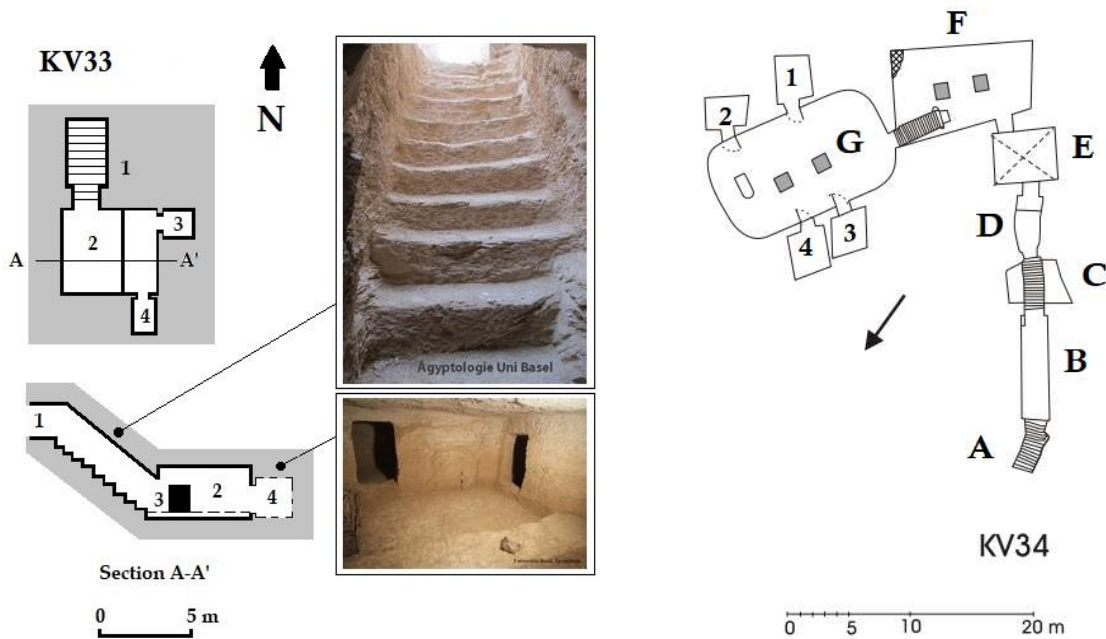


Fig.39a)– KV33 (drawing author, photos: <https://daw.philhist.unibas.ch/>); b) KV34 (from Willockx 2011a, Fig.III.10)

Now if one then compares the earliest example of a royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings, KV20 attributed to Hatshepsut (or Tuthmosis I), with KV33 (Fig.40), the earliest example of a cliff tomb in the same valley, one realizes a possible similarity in the presence of the attached compartments 1 and 3 (KV20) with those 3 and 4 (KV33).

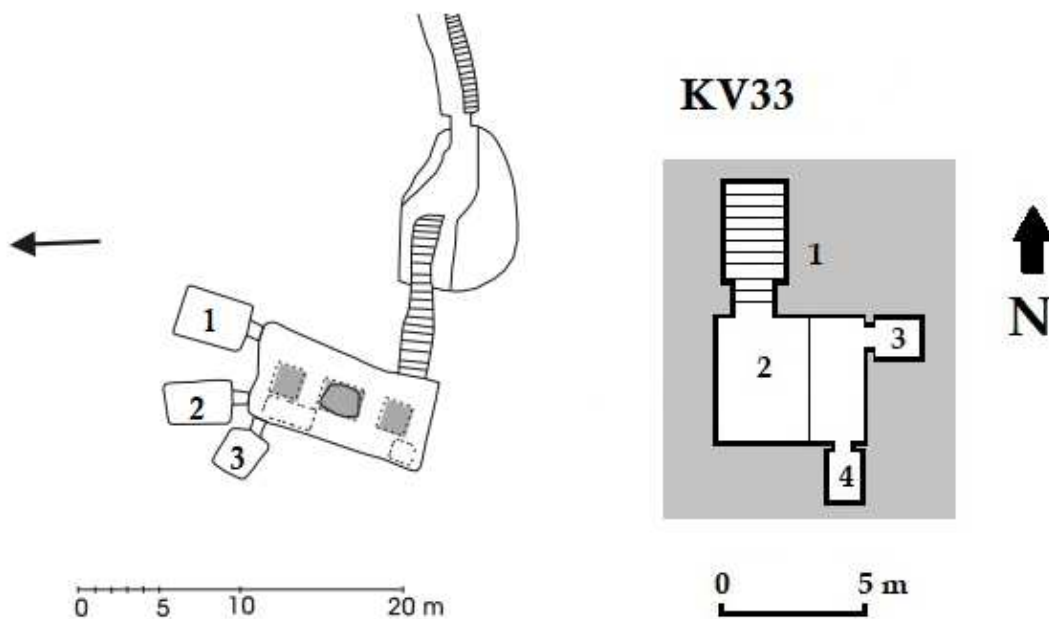


Fig.40 – KV20 burial chamber plan and KV33 plan (drawings: extrapolated from Willockx 2011a, Fig.III.10; author)

The presence of the three annexes in KV20 is also because we are dealing with a “double” tomb designed to contain the burials of Hatshepsut and her father; this tomb also seems to have had two construction phases, the last of which, near the end of female pharaoh’s reign, involved the exemplary arrangement of the pillared burial chamber (Willockx 2011a, 76-77). Moreover, the broken axis toward the left side of the burial chamber concerning the access ramp in KV33, as well as KV34, may be further confirmation that these are tombs intended for royal male members, while in KV20, the right side of the broken axis confirm the planning for a female king.

The only tomb that is higher than KV34 but outside the Valley of the Kings (Fig.41) is KV39 (see below), whose plan and position places it among the cliff tombs (but not as *Bab tomb*) but datable to the early 18th Dynasty and probably identified with the *k3y* of the Queen Inhapi.



Fig.41 – KV39, KV33-34, KV38 and KV42 positions (photo TMP modified by author)

This is the third cliff tomb of the Valley of the Kings and is located on a terrace at the foot of El-Qurn below the Hill Village, a temporary way station for the workers of Deir el-Medina; it lies at 215 m upon the KV33-KV34 narrow cleft. It was discovered probably by Loret workers in 1899, but the excavation was done by the well-known Coptic explorers/inspectors Chenouda Macarios and Boutros Andraos in 1900 (Willockx 2010, 61).

The tomb has three phases of construction; the first one (Fig.42) could be dated to the early 18th Dynasty when the structure was probably planned for a queen (Inhapi?) and consists of an entrance staircase (A) of 12 steps roughly carved long 6 m and wide 2 m, a corridor (B) long 6.70 m and wide 2 m which descends into a rectangular room (C), probably the funerary chamber, of 8.2 x 4.4 m. In the second phase of construction, on the

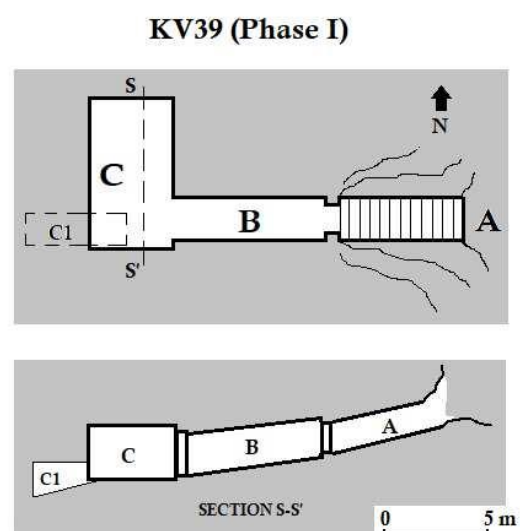


Fig.42 – KV39 plan and section (drawing author)

southwestern side of this room, the excavation of a staircase (C1) to add new rooms was probably started but was never completed (Rose 2000, 34). The excavations of Rose (2000, 144–148) shed more light on the possible origin of the tomb and allowed the scholar to attribute it initially to Queen Inhapi and then to be modified to become the burial of Amenhotep I

The presence of a simple burial chamber and its elevated position leads one to think of a structure traditionally linked to the Middle Kingdom models already seen in the Deir el-Bahari area because it was built before the Valley of the Kings was chosen as a necropolis for sovereigns and members of the royal family; the fact that it is a tomb for a queen or princess is evident first of all from the shape, size, and orientation of the burial chamber (C) about the corridor (B), similar to what is seen in some early 18th Dynasty tombs in the Valley of the Queens. Most of these funerary structures consist of an access shaft and a single rectangular or quadrangular room arranged on an axis with the direction of the entrance; the only three tombs anonymous and undecorated with funerary chambers perpendicular to the direction of access are QV64 (Agnew *et al.* 2016, 98-99), QV21 and QV22 (Agnew *et al.* 2016, 62-65) which show similarities with KV39 in its first phase when the excavation of the staircase is carried out.

In the second phase of construction (Fig.43), there is an extension of the tomb with the creation of a southern passage and a burial chamber; the lower part of the existing corridor B was enlarged to create a small square vestibule (D) of 3.50 x 3.50 m and a staircase (E) of 3.40 x 1.60 m running south perpendicular to corridor B. The stairway leads to a long corridor (F1) also interspersed with two other staircases (F2-F3); it is 19 m long, 1.60 m wide, and 1.80 m high, leading to the burial chamber (G), rectangular in shape, 3.25 x 7.50 m and 2 m high, in a direction perpendicular to the access stairway. This second modification does not seem to attempt to undo the first layout of the structure, but is a kind of “addiction”; if one looks closely, this layout is similar to WD A in Wadi Gabannat el Gouroud and this could confirm its use for one or more queens burials during the reign of Tuthmosis III. The third phase could be ascribed to the reign of Amenhotep II because the plan is similar in plan to the KV32 of Queen Tiaa, a minor wife of the king (Preys 2011, 322-324; Aston 2015, 23).

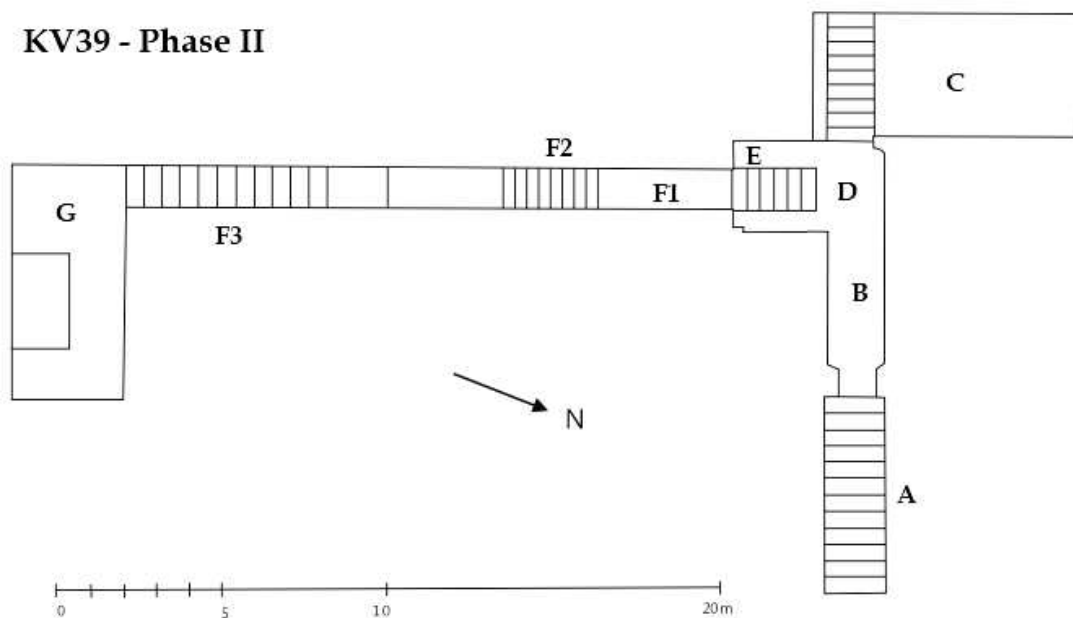


Fig.43 – KV39 Phase II plan (from Willockx 2010, Fig.III.15 modified by author)

If, therefore, it is accepted that Inhapi was initially buried in KV39, the idea of making two more tombs during these following two reigns might have something to do with the idea of burying queen mothers or consorts with this important female figure of the 17th Dynasty, and this could be interpreted as an essential “reference” to the glorious Theban rulers which Thutmose III probably promotes. Tuthmosis III’s idea of using the KV39, the *k3y* of Inhapi for his first wife Satiah or mother Isis, could be inserted in his wide program of construction tombs in the Valley of Kings for the royal family members (Roehrig 2006, 248-251) and could have effectively reinforced, from a political point of view, his link with early Theban dynastic lineage.

The West Valley (in Arabic *Biban el-Gourud*, Fig.44) is like the Valley of the Pits, a minor and lateral artery of the larger Valley of the King’s Wadi; it is the narrowest valley, about 2 km long and enclosed between massive and very high (300 m) vertical rocky walls, which are difficult to access and traverse. At the bottom, the valley is divided into two branches called “Hay’s Tomb” and “Hay’s Chamber” by a massive cape. No cliff tombs are attested in the valley; it should be noted that in the area facing WV23, within a very elevated natural amphitheatre, there is a crevice similar to those in Wadi Sikkat Taget Zeid, Wadi Gabannat el Gourud), Valley of the Kings (KV33 and KV34) and the Valley of the Pits (Fig.45).



Fig.44 – The West Valley and the Cliff Tomb position (photo web modified by author)

This is a narrow, triangular-shaped inlet in the face, 1.90 m wide, equipped with the well-known opening for rainwater drainage (Fig.45 no.1), and with a small circular-shaped bay inside with an approximate diameter of 9 m. Below the cleft, there are two crudely excavated false doors/corniches (Fig.45 no.2), 2.92 m high and 1.74 m wide and well visible; beneath these two is an opening in the rock concealed by large limestone blocks (Fig.45 no.4) and still downward traces of another false door/corniche 1.65 m high and 1.55 m wide, only slightly hinted at in the excavation (Fig.45 no.3).

The circular plan of the cavity (Fig.46), which is 8.90 m wide with vertical rocky walls 38.70 m high, has a pavement of pebbles, sand, and mud; the geological investigation carried out inside the cavity with electrical tomography showed the presence of a shaft with a depth of 6-7 m entirely covered with debris and unconsolidated material. The geological results indicate that the position of the tomb is quite similar to those of the WD A, KV33, and KV34. make possible the presence of a cliff tomb based on the Tuthmosis III period.

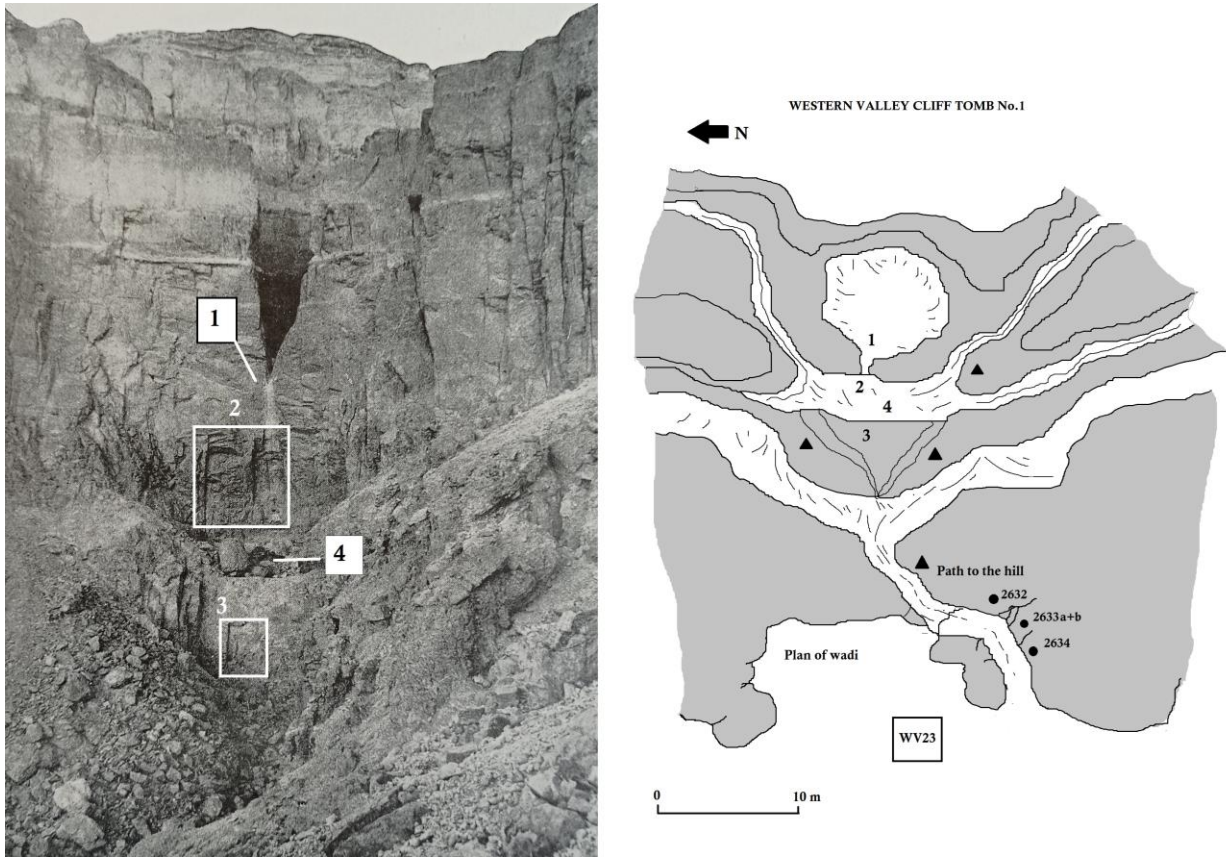


Fig.45 – The circular cavity position (GMT I/2 Pl.CLXI; drawing author)

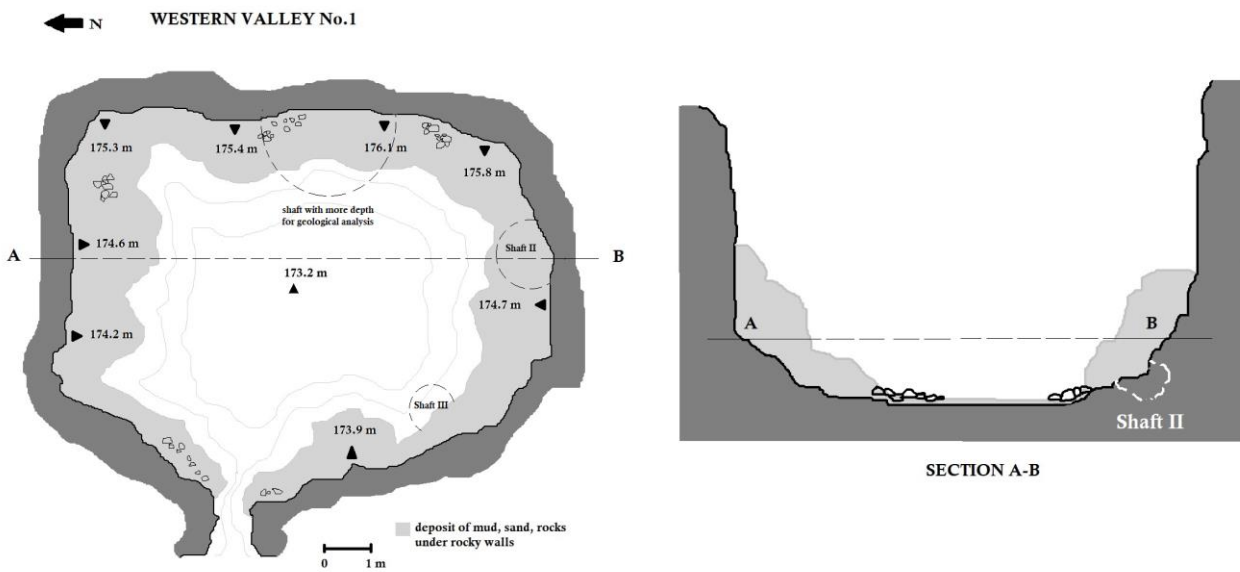


Fig.46 – The narrow circular cavity plan and section (drawing author)

Final considerations

In conclusion, the results of this research can permit the formulation of new hypotheses about the origin and development of the cliff tombs until the reign of Tuthmosis III. In the three sections of this study, all burial structures that can be defined as cliff tombs, i.e., “elevated” burials have specific characteristics, regardless of their location, the type, and the morphology of the rock (Fig.47).

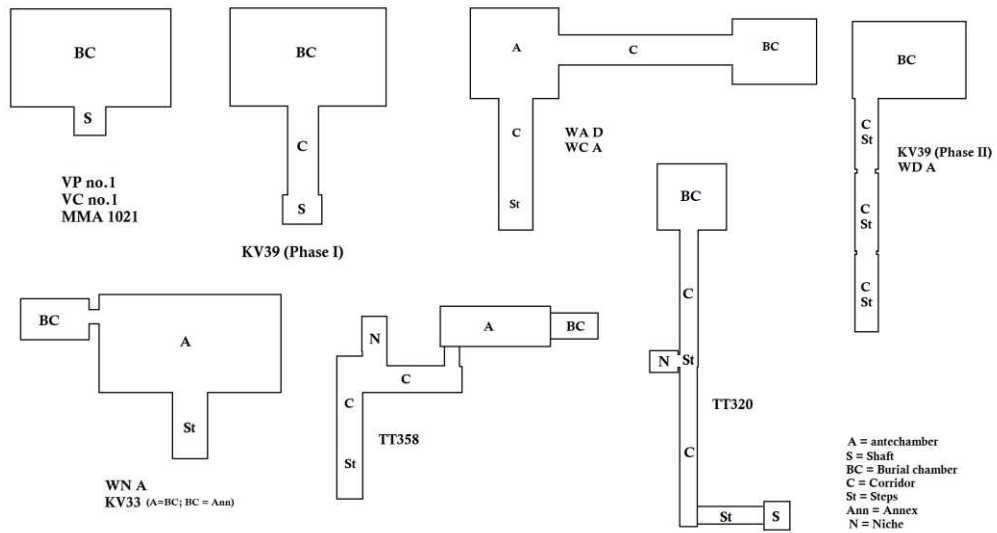


Fig.47 – A synthetic layout scheme of cliff tombs (also with TT358) (drawing author)

Certainly, there may be slight differences between the various structures, conditioned by the availability of space and the quality of the rock to be excavated; then take over for reasons related to functionality and the development of new ways of conceiving the tomb. This would explain, for example, the change of direction carried out in the second phase of KV39 or the failure to complete WA C, WC A, KV33, and KV41 due not so much to the difficulty of carrying out interventions on structures in such high positions, but to a different development of the burials at the end of the reign of Tutmosis III which tend to be located at the bottom of the Valley of the Kings.

To follow an ideal line of the development of these structures we can make a first model use of an access shaft inside a small rocky bay or beneath a vertical wall, while those built later are positioned inside deep cavities and inlets. There is also a “cascade” wall with a drainage hole and a “corniche” (or false door) dug at the base of the rock that could be considered the cultic elements of the “advanced model” visible in the Hatshepsut’s cliff tomb WA D.

The following diagram shows the architectural elements present in the cliff tombs analyzed (Tab.I) concerning their complexity in terms of planning.

Tomb	E1	E2	E3	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
WAD	x	x			x	x	2	x	x	1
WAC	x	x			x	x	1		x	1
WCA	x				x	x		x	x	
WDA	x	x	x		x	x	2		x	
WNA	x				x	x	1	x	x	
VC1				x					x	
MMA1021				x					x	
KV33	x	x	x		x	x			x	1
KV34	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	x	x	4
KV39 Ph.1				x		x	1+1?		x	
KV39 Ph.2					x	x	3 (x1)		x	
KV41				x						
VP1				x						
VP2	x	x	x	x						
WV1	x	x	x	x						
TT320				x	x	x	2	x	x	
TT358				x	x	x	2	x	x	

E	EXTERNAL
1	“FALSE DOOR”
2	“CHANNEL”
3	“CREVICE”

I	INTERNAL
1	ACCESS SHAFT
2	STEPS ACCESS
3	TURN RIGHT/LEFT
4	N. CORRIDOR/PASSAGE
5	ANTECHAMBER
6	BURIAL CHAMBER
7	ANNEX CHAMBER

Tab.I – The cliff tombs feature scheme.

As can be seen, there is a strong correlation between the complexity of the internal layout and the external cultic elements (niche, cornice/false doorway); all the simpler and older cliff tombs have an entrance and burial chamber, while the later ones have a vestibule, corridors, and annexes to the burial chamber. TT320 and TT358 stand out in this context, both of which have these internal elements and, as already noted, were the result of *ad hoc* planning for two prominent figures from the early 18th Dynasty. To say in general, simpler or more complex in plan, each cliff tomb, is the result of a very specific choice on the part of those responsible for the necropolis and justifies such a laborious and expensive activity in terms of time and resources.

We are dealing with a phenomenon that originated at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty and which, as already mentioned, can find its inspiring model in the burial models of the Middle Kingdom in Deir el-Bahari. It should, however, be considered that in the same period, the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, the tombs intended for queens, princes, princesses, and nobles in the Valley of the Queens seem to follow the same model (an access well and a quadrangular-shaped burial chamber) but made at the bottom of the wadi. In other sectors of the Theban necropolis (Deir el-Bahari, Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, Dra Abu El-Naga, Asassif, El-Tarif, Qurnet Murray), there are tombs of the same type built at ground level too, and all conceived in the tradition of the 17th Dynasty tradition.

Therefore, if Aston's (2015) hypothesis is believed, the first construction phase of KV39, built for Queen Inhapi, should be considered the first "elevated" tomb of the necropolis. The queen's *k3i* would therefore constitute an architectural *unicum* among the tombs of the 17th Dynasty and this characteristic has distinguished its name in subsequent eras; KV39 is not only the tallest of the known cliff tombs but, also from a planimetric point of view, it must have constituted a model for the tombs of a subsequent period; the early 18th Dynasty tombs in the Valley of the Queens and later in the Valley of the Kings bear an access shaft and a single burial chamber.

Certainly, TT320 and TT358 are later, more complex layout models. In that case, it becomes clear that KV39 belongs to a cultural and cultic context that is based more on the uniqueness of the chosen site (about the temple of Montuhotep II to the east and the Dra Abu el-Naga necropolis to the north) than on its architecture; it is a small, undecorated tomb equipped with a corridor and an access shaft, but when placed about the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom necropolis of Deir el-Bahari it takes on considerable importance, especially in the attempt to tie this structure to this glorious tradition. It is no coincidence that Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III himself would construct the *Djeser-Djeseru* and the *Akhet-Djeseru* to reaffirm such ancient legitimacy; if therefore viewed from this perspective, cliff tombs KV39, MMA 1021, VC1, and WN A are to be considered funerary structures intended for important members of the royal family because they are placed around the valleys where these temples were realized.

If, therefore, everything revolves around the Middle Kingdom tradition, it can be argued that the earliest cliff tomb patterns known to us at Deir el-Bahari are based on a relatively simple scheme: access shaft, corridor, and rectangular or quadrangular burial chamber; this is what is observed in KV39 (Phase I) and VC no.1. The "elevation" factor from the lowest or middle level of the Deir el-Bahari plain (Montuhotep II temple area) also seems to tie in well with the Middle Kingdom tradition. It may indicate, as mentioned, a hierarchical pre-eminence in terms of a royal family member.

In fact, at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, the two tombs probably destined for the queens Ahmose Meryetamun (TT358) and Ahmose Nefertari (TT320), were made in the Deir el-Bahari area and developed a more complex planimetric model consisting of multiple rooms (corridors and compartments) leading to the burial chamber; if you carefully observe these structures, as mentioned in Section II, you realize that they are "hybrid" typologies such as to combine some elements visible in the first tombs realized for Ahmose-Nefertari in 17th Dynasty necropolis of Dra Abu El-Naga (AN B) such as the "ritual shaft" in the funerary structure and the already known elements of the Middle Kingdom tradition like one or more votive niches, observed in the most ancient tombs of the Valley of the Queens.

That the Middle Kingdom tradition is pre-eminent in the Deir el-Bahari area is also shown by the two other burial structures (MMA 1021 and VC no.1) in the valleys adjacent to the Valley of the Royal Cache where is placed the TT320; the former probably intended for Prince Amenemhat Q and the latter for another member of the royal family. These are always undecorated tombs of small size with an access shaft and quadrangular burial chamber; thus, it seems that the plan of the KV39 first phase constituted an early plan model for the burial of sovereigns and princes in the area.

At this point, it can be said in all likelihood that if the first phase KV39 is the first burial intended for a queen at the end of the 17th Dynasty at Deir el-Bahari, TT320 in its early phase attributed to Ahmose-Nefertari represents a more advanced model of it because it has two long corridors and the well-known niche angle. The strong recall connection with the necropolis of the 17th Dynasty rulers of Dra Abu-el-Naga and El-Tarif must have implied a possible proliferation of burials (at least two) for the queen; the presence of the ritual shaft in tomb AN B seems to highlight this development, although it should be considered that TT320 was the final burial of the queen.

It is understandable how the TT358 intended for Ahmose-Meryetamun contains all the architectural elements relating to the TT320 and the AN B and constitutes an innovative model at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty; but, as already mentioned, this tomb is not a cliff tomb, although its position at a medium height of the circle of Deir el-Bahari has allowed it to be used for the necessary comparisons.

At this point, what has been said in these conclusions, to outline a reconstructive picture of the development phases of the cliff tombs analyzed in this work, allows us to carry out a general classification of these structures; this is not only important for defining the characteristics and peculiarities of the tombs but allows their function to be fixed in space and time.

A first distinction must be made between the *Babs* and the shafts tombs; the former indicates access to a vertical “door” on the rock wall, while the latter uses a well or excavation with access steps. These are two different architectural concepts; even if inside the funerary structure, the plans can converge in the common aim of ensuring the use of various rooms in succession; the concept that underlies the *Bab-tombs* is, above all, the verticality of the rock face to be excavated to obtain access and rooms; this is the case of WN A, WC A and WA D, all responding to the indicated layout and planned both by position and by rock quality even if the internal plan may differ. This typology presents a significant variant when the rocky wall has a deep cavity inside, on whose treading surface it is possible to dig the access with steps; this is the case of WDA, KV33, KV34, VP no.2 and WV no.1, all built according to this access scheme. Connected to all the *Bab-tombs* is the concept of the “waterfall” with rainwater outflow opening designed to avoid infiltrations inside the tomb, be it a well or “open” access; to this is added the “false door or frame” which recalls the traditional funerary ritual of rock tombs and mastabas.

The cliff tombs with shafts are the oldest ones and instead have the peculiarity of making use of a higher vertical rocky face “support”, which guarantees their visibility from above and anonymity from below; this is the case of KV39, TT320-TT358, KV41, VC no.1 and MMA 1021. To these, we can associate some tombs, such as the AN B, and the two in the Valley of the Rope, positioned at a medium height, not proper cliff tombs, but elevated structures than those excavated in the plain. All the cliff tombs with shafts lack the *Bab* tombs’ external elements (opening and cornice) and could be considered the first basic models of this funerary structure. Suppose one wants to identify a period and a structure among those known that initiated the transition from well-type cliff tombs to those of the *Bab* type, also in terms of layout for experimentation. In that case, one can think of the reign of Tuthmosis II and the WA D of Hatshepsut (Figg.48-49).

It is probably the first *Bab tomb* “model” of the Theban necropolis based on the ideal “link” between the tradition linked to the architecture of the TT358 and TT320 and the innovation consisting in the choice of place, position, type of hill (vertical wall continues) and the type of access with steps, the intersection of the internal corridors and rectangular burial chamber of the elongated type. An innovative part is the waterfall concept applied to the rocky wall using the false door/frame; the subsequent funerary structures will follow this layout, albeit with significant variations.

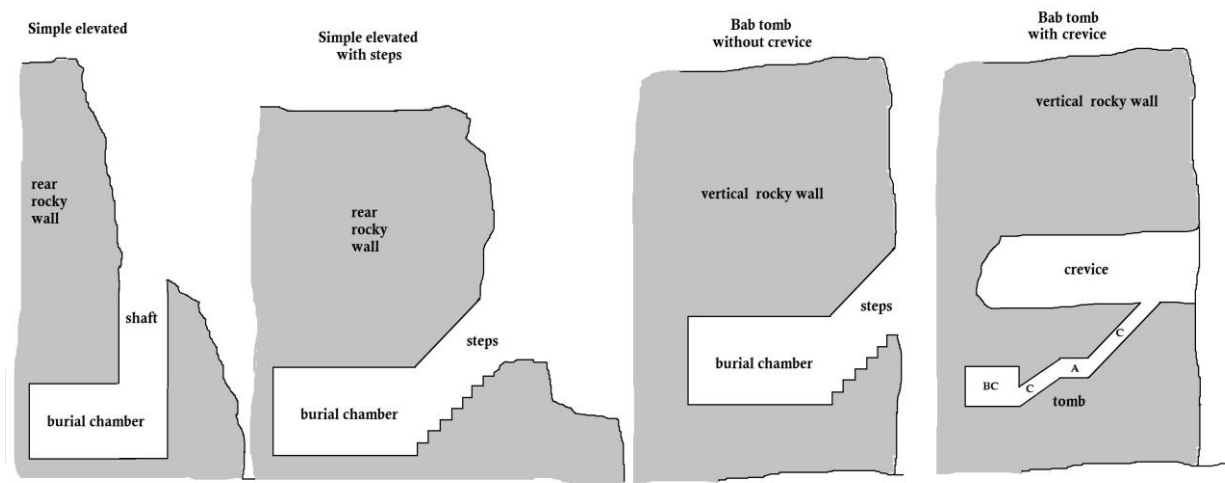


Fig.48 – Cliff tombs typology (drawing author)



Cliff tomb with shaft (TT320)

Bab tomb without crevice (WN A)

Bab tomb with crevice (WD A)

Fig.49 – Cliff tombs typology examples (photo author)

The *Bab*-tombs with crevices, KV33, KV34, WD A and probably VP no.2 and WV no.1, are the last examples of cliff tombs intended for a prince, queen, or princess; the excavation of KV38 and KV42 also marks the definitive abandonment of this kind of funerary structure as a “model”; the reign of Amenhotep II initiates a new development of funerary architecture now based on tombs accessible from the bottom of the Valley.

At the end of the New Kingdom, the emergency related to the looting perpetrated on the royal burials in the necropolis and the difficulty of creating *ex-novo* funerary structures (Aston 2009; Cooney 2011, 5-12; 2017) brought out the importance of the cliff tombs of the 18th Dynasty; this is a “compulsory” choice connected with the security of the royal mummies and their grave goods, and the elevated position becomes the essential element to which the creation of the caches is subject.

The research conducted so far on the cliff tombs which are the subject of this thesis has resulted in having analyzed, classified, and described the lines of development of this particular type of funerary structure from the early 18th Dynasty. Essential to outlining this study path was considering the cultural and cultic imprint of the Middle Kingdom on the Theban funerary concept capable of influencing its art and architecture in the first phase of the New Kingdom. If we look more closely at the evolution of royal burials and necropolises from the 11th to the 17th Dynasties, in

the area of El-Tarif and Dra Abu el-Naga, we can glimpse the creation of the cliff tombs of Amenhotep I (WN A?), of Ahmose-Nefertari (TT320), of Ahmose-Meryetamun (TT358) and Amenemhat Q (MMA 1021) at the “new” necropolis of Deir el-Bahari the conceptual “change of step” culminating in the subsequent creation of the village of Deir el-Medina.

The deification of these dynasts as ideal protectors of the necropolis, witnessed centuries later by the royal scribe Butehamun and his descendants, advocates of the protection of the royal mummies at the end of the New Kingdom, confirms not only the importance of these figures but corroborate the significance cliff tombs as suitable tombs to represent this shining past.

Giacomo Cavillier

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Abbreviations

eds. = Edited by

et al. = *et alii*

GI Carter MSS = Carter Manuscript Oxford

GMT = Cerný J., Desroches-Noblecourt C., Kurz M. *et al.*, *Graffiti de la montagne thébaine*, Voll.I-XII, Le Caire 1970-1983, CEDAE Collection Scientifique.

Gr. = Graffito

KV = Valley of the Kings tombs

MMA = Metropolitan Museum of Arts New York

QV = Valley of the Queens tombs

TMP = Theban Mapping Project

TT = Theban Tombs

VC = Valley of the Colors tombs

VP = Valley of the Pits tombs

WA/B/C/D = Southwestern wadis – Wadi A/B/C/D tombs

Wb = Erman A.- Grapow H., *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Voll.I-IV, Berlin 1926–1961

WN = Wadi en-Nisr

WV = Western Valley tombs (Cliff tombs)

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