

Use and re-use of tombs in the Theban necropolis: patterns and explanations

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The reuse of tombs in the Theban Necropolis is a complicated subject, as there are so many possible manifestations and phases of this phenomenon. Thus there is reuse for burial by the builder's family as part of the original plan, and reuse by unrelated persons at a later date, to name only two ancient possibilities. In more recent times tombs have also been reused as dwelling and storage places.

This paper concentrates on some aspects of ancient reuse for further burial. Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia suggested that for the 'Elites et pouvoir' conference I should prepare a contribution around the history of certain families in the Theban Necropolis, perhaps based on results of my own fieldwork. Since the recording and documentation of the 18th dynasty Theban Tomb 99 of Senneferi has revealed information about the burial customs at several different periods of the tomb's history, it seemed the logical place to begin.¹

The evidence from TT99

It is inappropriate in this paper to present as many of the details of the excavation work as was done at the conference itself, and I thus content myself with a summary of several aspects which relate directly to the present topic.² Four separate phases of use and reuse of the tomb for burial have been identified, although the quantity of evidence varies considerably.

¹ The paper presented in Lille also considered some aspects of the location of the tombs of two groups of office holders, but for the present version it seemed more profitable to concentrate on studying patterns of reuse in the necropolis at different periods. To reduce the number of references to manageable proportions, basic sources for tombs in the TT series are not normally given—the reader should refer to PM I² and F. Kampp, *Die thebanische Nekropole* (Theben 13), Mainz, 1996. I wish to thank Helen Strudwick and John H. Taylor for reading drafts of this paper and for many helpful suggestions.

² The publication of this complex project is still in course of preparation, and relies on contributions from experts in many different areas of Egyptology. In print already is a summary of some of the main results in 2000 (N. Strudwick, 'Theban Tomb 99—an overview of work undertaken from 1992 to 1999', *Memnonia* 11 (2000), 241–66), but some of these conclusions have been further refined by subsequent fieldwork. An up-to-date overview of most aspects of the work can be found on the TT99 web site: <http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99>. I wish to express my thanks to all contributors, and particularly to Dr Zahi Hawass and the Supreme Council of Antiquities for permitting the work to take place.

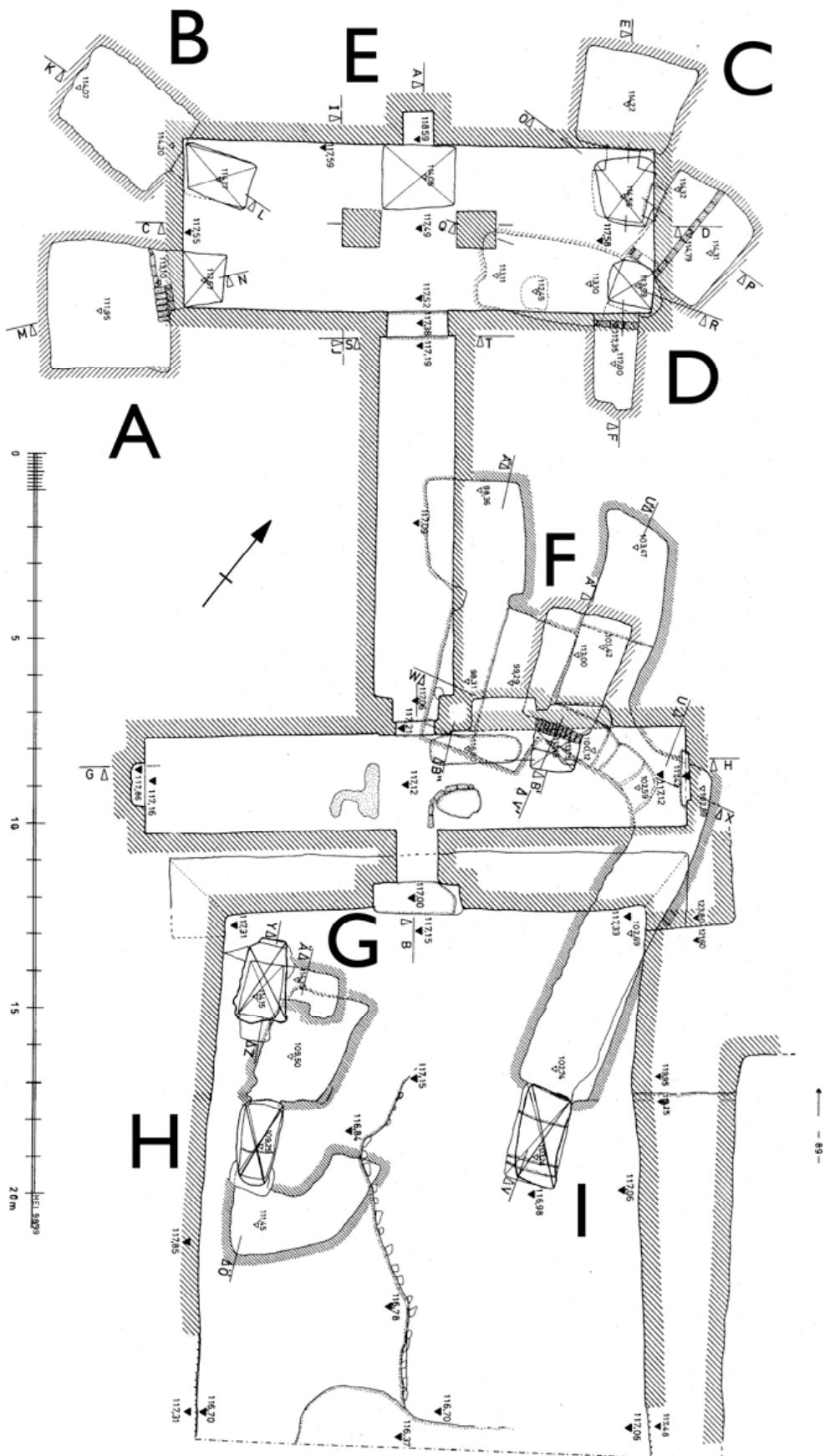


Fig. 1: TT99, showing chapel and shafts. [Plan by Günter Heindl]

The burial of Senneferi

The original burial place of the owner of TT99, who was active in the reign of Thutmose III,³ was accessed from the courtyard, in a set of chambers at the bottom of a 15m deep shaft (Shaft I in **fig. 1**) of the form typical in the Thutmoside era.⁴ Enough survived of the original interments to identify objects bearing the name of Senneferi among the debris, and of particular relevance to the present paper was the presence of the burials of six people. These were identified as the remains of two males, three females, and one juvenile.⁵ The wholly 18th dynasty nature of the material in the passages and chambers beyond the shaft precludes the possibility of some of these being later intrusive burials, and yet the objects found only named Senneferi.

Some suggestions can be made as to the identity of these persons. Two of the males and two females are thought to have been aged approximately 50 years; one of these is surely Senneferi himself. One of the females could reasonably be identified as Senneferi's wife Taiamu. The remaining two middle-aged bodies might be the parents of Senneferi, Haydjehtuy and Satdjehuty, who are mentioned several times in the tomb chapel in filiations, but more importantly are represented in at least two of the surviving scenes (**fig. 2**, **fig. 3**). Presumably Senneferi brought his parents from the Delta when he was promoted to his position in Thebes, and then buried them in his mortuary complex as they had no automatic rights to a tomb of their own. The two other persons were presumably young unmarried relatives, perhaps children or younger siblings. The question of other family members in burials is considered further below.

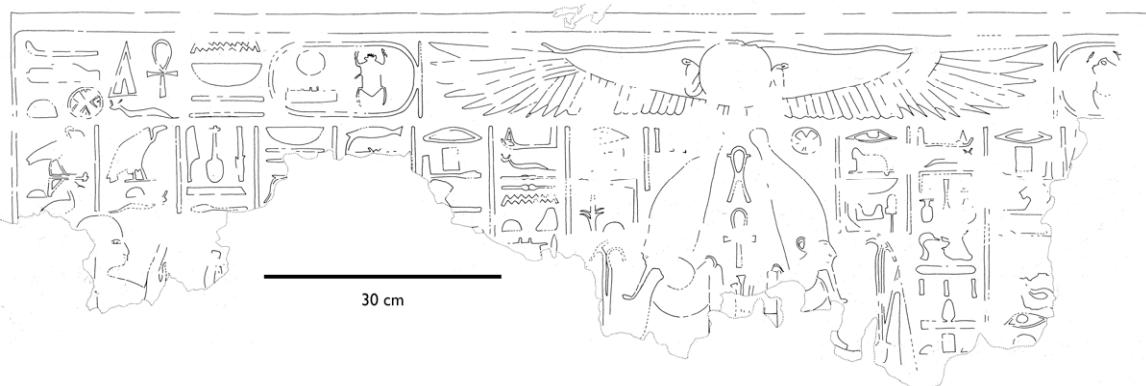


Fig. 2: Lintel at the entrance to the corridor passage of TT99 showing Senneferi and his mother Satdjehuty offering to Osiris. [Facsimile drawing by Nigel Strudwick]

³ The dating evidence is summarised in Strudwick, *Memnonia* 11 (2000), 243. A jar text from the tomb, still in the course of study, seems to give a date as high as regnal year 38.

⁴ Kampp, *Die thebanische Nekropole*, 85 (IV.3).

⁵ <http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99/report02/index.html>. I thank Tony Waldron for his work on this material.

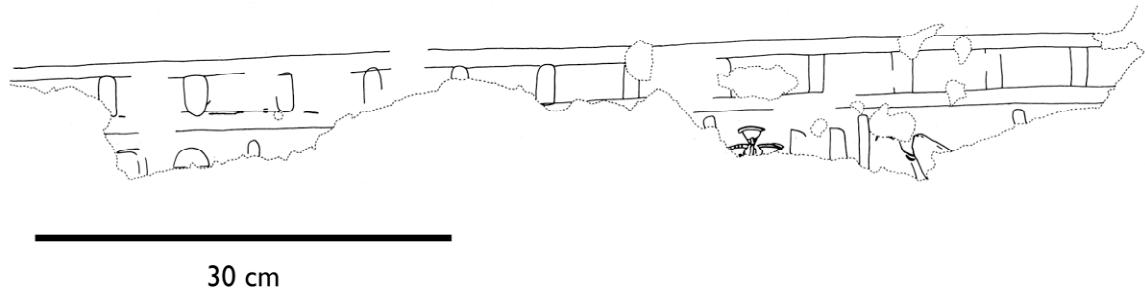


Fig. 3: Remains of text over a destroyed offering scene possibly naming '[his father] Hay[djehuty]' and '[his] mother [Satdjehuty]', presumably with the text at left applying to Senneferi himself. [Facsimile drawing by Nigel Strudwick]

Possible further 18th dynasty use

There is some limited evidence of further use which may belong within the 18th dynasty. From Shaft H (**fig. 1**) in the courtyard of the tomb, approximately 7 m deep, came a considerable assemblage of New Kingdom vessels, including a group of examples of a striking type with a painted wavy neck (**fig. 4**). Whereas preliminary assessment of the ceramics in Senneferi's burial is indicative of the reign of Thutmose III, study of these vessels from Shaft H suggests a likely date in the reigns of Amenhotep II to Thutmose IV, with a preference for the later date;⁶ other examples have been found in Theban tombs of that period.⁷ Also here was found a headrest which is probably of a New Kingdom type with a broad and long base (**fig. 5**). Although limited in extent, this material might suggest that this shaft was cut and used not long after the deaths of Senneferi and those buried with him. The amount of pottery might argue against these finds being intrusive.

⁶ See the ceramics report for 2001: <http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99/report01/pot.html>. The shaft H vessels belong to 'Phase 2B' of New Kingdom ceramics according to D.A. Aston, 'New Kingdom pottery phases as revealed through well-dated tomb contexts', in M. Bietak (ed.), *The Synchronisation of civilisations in the eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium BC II*, Wien, 2003, 146–7. I am indebted to Pamela Rose for these assessments, for the references in this and the next note, and for her direction of the work on the ceramics from TT99.

⁷ TT104: Abdel Ghaffar Shedad, *Stil der Grabmalereien in der Zeit Amenophis' II., untersucht an den thebanischen Gräbern Nr. 104 und Nr. 80* (AV 66), Mainz, 1988, 178, Abb. 19, Taf. 45a; TT54: D. Polz, *Das Grab des Hui und des Kel, Theben Nr. 54* (AV74), Mainz, 1997, 99, Abb. 29 (30). Both examples are presumed to be from the original interments.



Fig. 4: 18th dynasty wavy-necked ceramics [Photographs by Anthony Middleton]



Fig. 5: A possible 18th dynasty headrest [Photograph by Anthony Middleton]

The only other evidence which may be New Kingdom but slightly later in date than Senneferi is the statue of his son-in-law Amenhotep (**fig. 6**), which presumably dates to the reign of Amenhotep II, found in four parts in two shafts inside the tomb.⁸ The existence of this statue does not necessarily mean that Amenhotep was buried here, as he was also the owner of now lost tomb C.3,⁹ but it complements the ceramics and

⁸ <http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99/finds/amenhotep.html>. This statue is now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 99148; see Z. Hawass, *Hidden Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, Washington DC, 2004, 160–1.

⁹ PM I², 457. His false door was found reused at Karnak: C. Traunecker, ‘La stèle fausse-porte du vice-chancelier Aménophis’, *Karnak* 6 (1973–1977), 197–208.

headrest as pointing to the use of the tomb chapel at least for commemorative purposes by Senneferi's descendants.

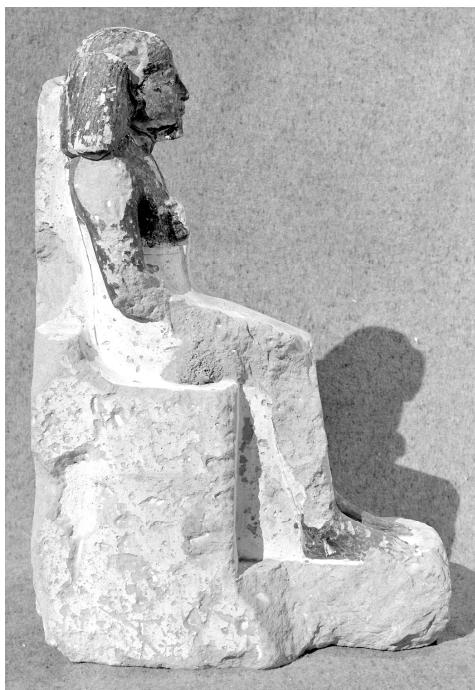


Fig. 6: Statue of Amenhotep in profile. Height 0.85 m [Photograph by Anthony Middleton]

The Third Intermediate Period

The history of the tomb in the 21st to 26th dynasties is complex. The most informative evidence comes from coffins and mummy cases,¹⁰ occasionally supplemented with other types of material. This evidence suggests that the six shafts (A-F in **fig. 1**) and associated chambers cut into the floor of the tomb chapel were made at this time, although at present the dating of the individual shafts still has to be determined, as the material in them tended to be very mixed together as a result of disturbance.

There are some very fragmentary coffin remains from the 21st dynasty suggesting that at least one shaft was in use at that time. There is more material from the 22nd-23rd dynasties, consisting mainly of parts of cartonnage mummy-cases and (less of) their associated coffins. In particular, at least one family can be identified of that date, that of Djedhorufankh whose cartonnage has survived in fragments along with those of two of his daughters, one of whom was named Tabakenmut (**fig. 7**); there are at least two unidentified female cartonnages and it is reasonable to assume that one of them belonged to his wife.

¹⁰ I thank John H. Taylor for his work on the coffin materials. See in particular his reports for 1999 (<http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99/report99/coffins.html>) and 2000 (<http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt/tt99/report00/coffins.html>).



Fig. 7: Fragments of cartonnage mummy case of Tabakenmut [Photograph by Anthony Middleton]

The clearest evidence comes from the 25th dynasty. The burial in year 10 of Shabaka (c. 705 BC) of the fourth priest of Amun Wedjahor has been identified, along with that of his son, the priest of Amun Horempe.¹¹ At least one female burial seems possibly to be

¹¹ See my preliminary article 'The fourth priest of Amun Wedjahor, GM 148 (1995), 91–4; the association between Wedjahor and Horempe is proven by statues JE 37153 and 36970 from the Karnak cachette (see

associated with these, of a woman named  , perhaps to be read Nyini or Niu,¹² the daughter of a priest of Amun of Gempaaten (Kawa), which provides evidence for links between the local priesthood and Kush. Further coffin fragments also suggest burials of the 26th dynasty.

The Graeco-Roman Period

Material of the post-Pharaonic period is not easy to identify. Nonetheless, one fine Ptolemaic amphora was reassembled from material in the tomb, and I have tentatively suggested that two recesses in the front room of the chapel might be loculi of Graeco-Roman date.¹³ In addition, three fragments of inscribed linen found inside the tomb appear to come from *Book of the Dead* texts of Ptolemaic date (**fig. 8**).¹⁴



Fig. 8: Fragment of a possible Ptolemaic *Book of the Dead* on a mummy bandage
[Photograph by Anthony Middleton]

B.V. Bothmer, 'Block statues of Dynasty XXV', in C. Berger, G. Clerc and N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant II* (BdE 106) Cairo, 1993, 67, fig. 3).

¹² I tentatively proposed the first reading, but Günter Vittmann has suggested (personal communication) that the first sign is perhaps a writing of sDm-aS, 'employee', and that the name is Niu. I thank Dr Vittmann for permitting me to mention this suggestion.

¹³ In N. Strudwick and J.H. Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis: past, present and future*, London 2003, 176.

¹⁴ Possible comparanda include such texts as A. de Caluwe, 'Les bandelettes de momie du Musée Vleeshuis d'Anvers,' *JEA* 79 (1993), 199–214; A. Gasse, 'Les bandelettes de momie inscrites du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Besançon' *BIFAO* 82 (1982), 205–11; R.A. Caminos, 'Fragments of the Book of the Dead on Linen and Papyrus', *JEA* 56 (1970), 123–30 (fragments 2–6).

The original occupants of elite New Kingdom Theban tombs

The Senneferi evidence reveals the burials of several persons in addition to the owner in the tomb. The identities suggested above for the occupants are speculative, as little is known about exactly who was buried where in these elite tombs of the earlier 18th dynasty. No tomb of a high-ranking official comparable to Senneferi in the main Theban necropolis of the time (the Sheikh Abdel Qurna/Dra Abul Naga area) has been found intact by archaeologists,¹⁵ but Peter Dorman and Karl Seyfried¹⁶ have already shown how the epigraphic and architectural material from a number of tombs, some of which are roughly contemporary with Senneferi's while others are later, can be used to illustrate complex sequences of commemoration of family members, echoing what was suggested above about TT99. Regrettably, the published records of contents of the burial chambers of the disturbed tombs are nowhere near as satisfactory as those of the decoration, particularly in the case of osteological material.¹⁷ Furthermore, in many cases, the rather violent disturbances which the burials have suffered have meant that human remains from different phases of use may have been mixed together and are consequently hard to separate in their excavated state.¹⁸ Thus the number of burials in the major private tombs is almost impossible to ascertain.

Some of the intact burials of the 18th dynasty from other parts of the necropolis or belonging to different social groups consist of the interment of just one person, for example, the burial of Maherpri in the Valley of the Kings,¹⁹ or the very modest burials found below the upper tomb of Senmut.²⁰ Presumably a more normal minimum arrangement would consist of the burials of husband and wife, attested in the Valley of the Kings for Yuya and Tjuya,²¹ or at Deir el-Medina for Kha and Merit,²² or in a less elaborate fashion in the tomb of Amenemopet (TT41).²³

¹⁵ A helpful survey of the grave goods of a number of intact tombs of the 18th dynasty from all parts of the necropolis is S.T. Smith, 'Intact Tombs of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties from Thebes and the New Kingdom Burial System', *MDAIK* 40 (1992), 193–231.

¹⁶ P.F. Dorman, 'Family burial and commemoration in the Theban necropolis', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 37–40; K-J. Seyfried, 'Generationeneinbindungen', in J. Assmann et al., *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen. Neue Perspektiven archäologischer Forschung* (SAGA 12), Heidelberg, 1995, 219–31.

¹⁷ Thus there is apparently no report of the finding of human remains in the carefully excavated tombs TT87 and 79 (H. Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min und des Men-cheper-Ra-seneb. Theben Nr. 87 und 79* (AV34), Mainz, 1995).

¹⁸ For example, attributing osteological material in the rich tomb TT373 is next to impossible (K-J. Seyfried, *Das Grab des Amonmose (TT373)* (Theben 4), Mainz, 1990, 290–1).

¹⁹ G. Daressy, *Fouilles de la Vallée des rois 1898–1899* (CG 24001–24990), Le Caire, 1902, 1–62.

²⁰ A. Lansing and W.C. Hayes, 'The Museum's Excavations at Thebes', *BMMA* 32 part II (1937), 6–12.

²¹ T.M. Davis, *The tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou*, London, 1907; J.E. Quibell, *The Tomb of Yuua and Thuiu* (CG 51001–51191), Le Caire, 1908.

However, evidence from intact tombs of officials who may not have been at the top of the social scale confirms that burials could also contain the bodies of a number of family members. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the tomb of Neferkhuit, discovered in the Assasif, and dating from the early 18th dynasty.²⁴ The three chambers of this tomb held ten burials, including discrete chambers for Neferkhuit and his wife Rennefer, and eight burials of probable relatives in the third room. The names of three of these eight persons are known, but the other five remain anonymous. Likewise, in the burial of Ramose and Hatnefer, the parents of Senmut, no fewer than six anonymous bodies were packed into two box coffins in the same chamber;²⁵ the burials of Setau and Sennefer at Deir el-Medina also contained some anonymous bodies.²⁶

Hayes observed that the anonymous burials in the tomb of Neferkhuit were probably added some years after the interment of Neferkhuit and Rennefer.²⁷ Senmut's parents were clearly buried before major work was carried out on his tomb (TT71) and well before their son's death: the sealing of the tomb seems to have taken place in year 7 of Thutmose III,²⁸ and Senmut was alive at least until year 16 of the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.²⁹ Perhaps Senmut might have originally envisaged his parents being buried with him, but the passage of time, the sequence of the passing of his parents,³⁰ and changes in his own plans for burial might have prevented that. As there is no clear evidence pertaining to the identity of five out of the six burials in the tomb of Senneferi, and because the context was disturbed, it is not possible to suggest a sequence of burial in TT99; there is no way of knowing whether Senneferi might have buried his parents (assuming they predeceased him) in a temporary location and then moved them to TT99, or whether their original interment was in the tomb, and it was kept accessible at least until all 'designated' persons or those likely to be interred there

²² E. Schiaparelli, *Relazione sui lavori della Missione archeologica italiana in Egitto (anni 1903-1920)* II: La tomba intatta dell'architetto Cha nella necropoli di Tebe, Torino, 1927.

²³ Two chambers each with two coffins, probably early 19th dynasty: D. Polz in J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Amenemope TT41* (Theben 3), Mainz, 1991, 244–67.

²⁴ Original report, W.C. Hayes, 'The tomb of Nefer-khewet and his family', *BMMA* 30 part II (1935), 17–36; the burials are enumerated on p.18. See most recently Dorman, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 34–7.

²⁵ The original report is Lansing and Hayes, *BMMA* 32 part II (1937), 4–39; the six other burials are described on p. 31. See most recently Dorman, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 32–4.

²⁶ Summarised in Smith, *MDAIK* 48 (1992), 229.

²⁷ Hayes, *BMMA* 30 part II (1935), 18.

²⁸ Dorman, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 32.

²⁹ Dorman in C. Roehrig et al. (eds), *Hatshepsut: from Queen to Pharaoh*, New York, 2005), 108.

³⁰ Ramose seems to have died well before Hatnefer, and his original burial could have been made when the family had less access to resources than it later did (Dorman, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 32–3).

had passed away.³¹ As noted above (note 16), Dorman and Seyfried use the chapel decoration and architectural arrangements to argue that the tomb operated as a place of family commemoration; this can now safely be extended to the actual burials themselves, and there can be little doubt that an elite burial could also contain additional burials other than the bodies of the tomb owner and his spouse.

This point can be further emphasised by careful use of evidence from the painted tomb chapels themselves. Children had since the Old Kingdom been the most commonly depicted family members in tombs, not least as a result of the filial requirement to maintain the cult of their fathers. But Whale has pointed out how common are the representations of the parents of the deceased in the 18th dynasty Theban tombs: from her sample of 93 tombs, 52 show both parents of the owner, and 11 just the mother (appearances of the father alone are not given).³² A number of these parents also are known to have tombs of their own, but it will be pointed out in the next section that many (perhaps even most) tomb-owning officials were not dependent on their fathers for their status. Thus it might not be too far-fetched to use this evidence with the archaeological material previously discussed to speculate that a considerable number of parents *could* have been buried with their sons.³³ It would be stretching the imagination too far to suggest that everyone shown in the decoration of a private tomb could have been buried there, but judicious comparison of the prosopography of a tomb with the space actually available for burial might produce some intriguing results.³⁴

It is of interest to compare this briefly with two eras in Thebes when it is clear that family burial and commemoration in the same tomb was carefully planned. Firstly, the large temple-tombs of the 25th and 26th dynasties, with their multiplicity of contemporary shafts and chambers, provide plenty of evidence for the planned burial of family beyond the tomb-owner and his spouse.³⁵ Bietak has listed the family members

³¹ Again, see Dorman's remarks in the previous note; he observes that the tomb of Neferkhuit was open and accessible for a period of roughly 60 years (in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 36). The general extent to which shafts were left open and accessible is unclear: cf Kampp, *Die thebanische Nekropole*, 90.

³² S. Whale, *The family in the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt* (ACE Studies 1), Sydney, 1989, 259.

³³ It is essential to sound a note of caution: in one of the three rare scenes of the deceased actually receiving his funerary equipment (that in TT79—the other two are in TT99 and TT85), Menkheperresoneb is accompanied by his father Minnakht who was buried in his own tomb TT87 (Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min*, Taf. 40–1).

³⁴ Note a similar comment with regard to the late Ramesside decoration of TT148 by B.G. Ockinga, in 'Use, reuse, and abuse of "Sacred Space": observations from Dra Abu el-Naga', in P.F. Dorman and B.M. Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes* (SAOC 61), Chicago, 2007, 145.

³⁵ D. Eigner, *Die monumentalen Grabbauten der Spätzeit in der thebanischen Nekropole*, Wien, 1984, 126–7.

for whom evidence of burial was found in the tomb of Ankhhor (TT414),³⁶ and, to quote two examples from less comprehensively published tombs, the burials of the sons of Montuemhat (TT34) and Padineith (TT197) were effected in the temple-tombs erected by their fathers. These two examples are noted in part as the sons did achieve all or some of the high offices of their fathers, but this did not mean they built their own discrete monuments. Rather, they used the impressive family tombs already in existence.³⁷

The second era is the later part of the Ptolemaic Period, when choachyte textual sources provide plenty of evidence for the association of families with particular choachytes who would then inter the mummies of family members in the same tomb.³⁸ The lack of epigraphic evidence in the mass burials located of this date prevents archaeological corroboration of this, but there would seem to be little doubt that the practice of burying members of the same family in the same tomb was following an old practice.

Patterns of later reuse—observations

The New Kingdom

Polz, followed by Kampp, has examined the reuse of chapels in a number of New Kingdom tombs, and has plausibly argued that the old concept of 'usurpation' is not always appropriate in these contexts.³⁹ Likewise, Seyfried and Dorman have shown that family concerns were central to further New Kingdom use of tombs (note 16 above). While not suggesting that there was automatically a connection between the new user and the original tomb owner, it is thought possible that a number of such reuses and remodelling of tombs might have been carried out with formal authorisation, as there was most probably some sort of bureaucracy concerned with the layout and use of the

³⁶ M. Bietak and E. Reiser-Haslauer, *Das Grab des 'Ankh-Hor. Obersthofmeister der Gottesgemahlin Nitokris II*, Wien, 1982, 249–51.

³⁷ Montuemhat's son Nesptah was a fourth priest of Amun, and was buried in the court of the family tomb (Atef Awadalla and Ahmed el-Sawy, 'Un sarcophage de Nsi-Ptah dans la tombe de Montouemhat', *BIFAO* 90 (1990), 29–39). Sheshonq, the son of Padineith, was chief steward like his father, and possessed a set of rooms in Padineith's tomb (Eigner, *Grabbauten der Spätzeit*, 57).

³⁸ Conveniently summarised in S.P. Vleeming, 'The office of a Choachyte in the Theban area', in S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-gated Thebes* (P.L. Bat. 27), Leiden-New York-Köln, 1995, 246–51.

³⁹ D. Polz, 'Bemerkungen zur Grabbenutzung in der thebanischen Nekropole', *MDAIK* 46 (1990), 301–36. Kampp, *Die thebanische Nekropole*, 123–9 expands on Polz's examples, also noting some tombs with additional shafts as well as decoration.

necropolis. A record of disputes over tombs which has come down from the Ramesside Period is possible evidence for this.⁴⁰

Use of a tomb by a range of people with family connections makes it very relevant to pause and consider here the issue of the length of time an elite family controlled sufficient wealth and influence to be able to build and maintain significant tombs in the necropolis. In times of stable government it is uncommon to find the influence of one family extending much beyond a single generation. Families who maintained significant power for a number of years in Thebes such as that of Ametju and Useramun are exceptional.⁴¹ Even to find two generations holding sufficient wealth to build separate elaborate tombs is not common—there are few parallels to the father and son overseers of the granaries Minnakht and Menkheperresoneb (TT87 and 79),⁴² or to the family of Ahmose Humay (TT224), two of whose sons, Amenemopet (TT29) and Sennefer (TT96), went on to reach very high office; both of the latter may even have had links with non-royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.⁴³ More typical are in fact families like Senneferi's, rapidly elevated to high status, only to disappear from the record with equal speed: Senneferi was brought to Thebes from the Delta, seemingly already holding his characteristic title *imy-r sDAwty/xtmt*, to occupy the post of overseer of the two granaries (**fig. 9**),⁴⁴ but at present no further sons of his are attested in office.⁴⁵ His daughter did however marry a man who was the *idnw imy-r sDAwty/xtmt* (Amenhotep, see above and **fig. 5**).

⁴⁰ See Polz, *MDAIK* 46 (1990), 335–6; one of the key documents, O BM 5624, is now published in R.J. Demarée, *Ramesside Ostraca*, London, 2002, pl. 7–8.

⁴¹ There is a wide-ranging consideration of this family in E. Dziobek, *Denkmäler des Vizirs User-Amun* (SAGA 18), Heidelberg, 1998, 103–28.

⁴² Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min*. There is some question as to whether Minnakht's father Sendjehuty held a comparable title (Guksch, p. 15).

⁴³ All these tombs presently lack publications; see also Whale, *The family in the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt*, 83–4 (30), 144–53 (60–1). See N. Reeves and R.H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, London, 1996, 102–3, 182–5 for the Valley of the Kings tombs.

⁴⁴ Urk IV, 528–31 (172). Translation A. Hermann, *Die Stelen der thebanischen Felsgräber der 18. Dynastie* (ÄF 11), Glückstadt-Hamburg-New York, 1940, 131.

⁴⁵ In fact only one possible son is attested, and that is in Senneferi's shrine at Gebel Silsila (*nbs...* : R.A. Caminos and T.G.H. James, *Gebel es-Silsilah I* (ASE 31), London, 1963, 38, pl. 31 (2)).

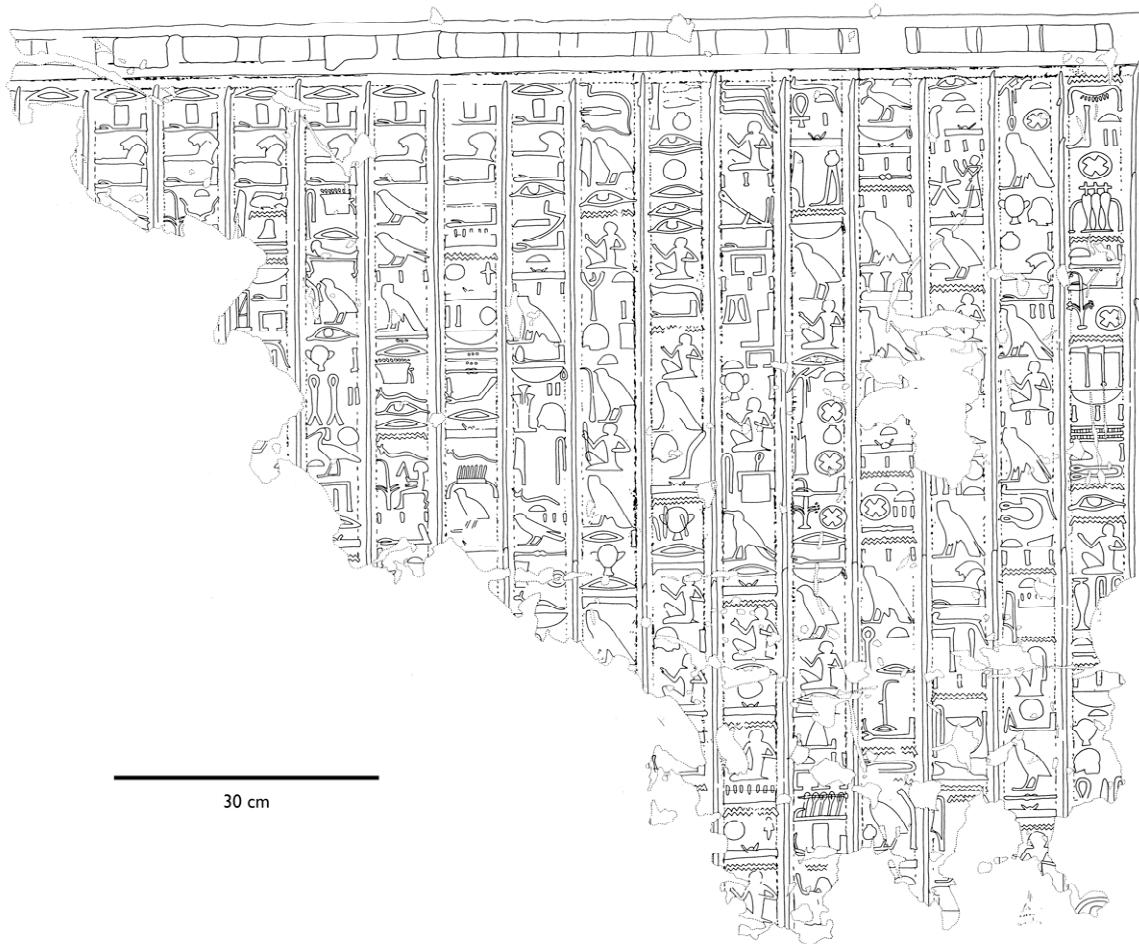


Fig. 9: The biographical text of Senneferi from TT99 [Facsimile drawing by Nigel Strudwick]

This principle is in general true for the major cities at most historical periods—for example, in the Old Kingdom, families such as those of Ptahhotep at Saqqara (three significant generations) and Sendjemib Inti at Giza (four or five significant generations) are equally rare.⁴⁶ The temple-tombs of the 25th/26th dynasty families at Thebes likewise only provide evidence for the holding of high office among a couple of generations (see notes 35–37 above). The explanation is without doubt to be sought in the overwhelming importance of royal favour for personal advancement to very high rank, which favour could be withdrawn at any minute, and might often not survive a change of ruler, thus leaving the family without the means (in the 18th dynasty at least) to construct a new major tomb. This explanation is reinforced by the fact that the notable exceptions are mostly to be found in periods where royal control was limited—for example the families of viziers in the 13th dynasty.

⁴⁶ Respectively N. Strudwick, *The administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, London, 1985, 55–6, 87–8; E. Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex, Part I. The mastabas of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370), Khnumenti (G 2374), and Senedjemib Mehi (G 2378)* (Giza Mastabas 7), Boston, 2001, 23–35.

Regrettably the archaeological evidence which would complement this argument for the duration of families in high office has mostly not survived, and what has come down to the present is questionable. The poor state of knowledge of the archaeology of Theban tombs, particularly of the New Kingdom, has made it very difficult to study the further use of tomb complexes in the years immediately following the decease of the original owner, at which time it might be surmised that the most likely persons to use the tomb further would be the remaining family. Only with the more careful archaeology practiced since the later 20th century is such evidence coming to light. One rare example is perhaps seen in TT87, primarily in the courtyard but perhaps also in the first room.⁴⁷ Guksch speculates that it is not beyond the realm of possibility for this work to have been carried out by a descendant of Minnakht, the original owner. A most welcome example from late in the New Kingdom is the changes and modifications of the tomb of Amenemopet (TT148), almost certainly to accommodate further relatives.⁴⁸

Staying in the realm of speculation, the further use of the Theban tombs of high officials by other members of their families might in some small way shed light on one of the burning issues of the Theban Necropolis: where are the burials of the majority of the population?⁴⁹ The location of the tombs of many (most?) important officials in Thebes has been long known, but as the elite formed only a tiny proportion of the populace,⁵⁰ other, less elaborate, cemeteries must have existed for those of lower status. But where? Even allowing for the number of tombs in the Theban necropolis which are now anonymous,⁵¹ the private tombs of Thebes in the New Kingdom would only account for a relatively small number of people if only the owner and his spouse were interred there. The German excavations in Dra Abul Naga have gone some way to solving this problem for the earlier 18th dynasty, postulating a large cemetery there for several thousand persons of the middle and lower classes.⁵² If this could be supplemented by a number of

⁴⁷ Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min*, 88–95.

⁴⁸ Ockinga, in Dorman and Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, 144–6. Ockinga further speculated (compare note 34 above) that there might be an association between the number of relatives depicted on the tomb walls and the evidence for multiple burials.

⁴⁹ My speculations on the size of the population of Thebes may be relevant here: ‘The population of Thebes in the New Kingdom: some preliminary thoughts’, in Assmann *et al.* (eds), *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen*, 97–105.

⁵⁰ See thoughts on this subject by J. Baines and C. J. Eyre, ‘Four Notes on Literacy’, *GM* 61 (1983), 72–4. See comments above about the ‘turn-over’ of the elite.

⁵¹ Note the 551 tombs recorded by Kampp in the –nnn– number series in *Die thebanische Nekropole*, 623–775, which number will certainly increase with further excavations.

⁵² D. Polz, ‘Dra’ Abu el-Naga: Die thebanische Nekropole des frühen Neuen Reiches’, in Assmann *et al.* (eds), *Thebanische Beamtennekropolen*, 25–42.

burials of descendants in the elite tombs, we might be closer to an overall picture of the disposition of the dead at this time.

Later periods

Much more is to be learned from the Third Intermediate Period. Indeed at the end of the 20th dynasty, it seems likely that reuse of tombs by presumably unrelated persons was well under way.⁵³ From that point to the early years of the seventh century BC, it appears that no new decorated rock-cut tomb chapels were built. In a few cases, a limited amount of decoration was added into older tombs and temples, but in most cases the earlier monuments were seen as convenient places to cut new burial apartments. The reason behind this might have been as straightforward as providing more security than other new locations, or it might actually be associated with the concept of 'sacred space', in that inserting one's burial into an older religious structure expressed the hope that the sanctity or religiosity of the older monument would transfer to the new burial. These topics will be considered further below. Little or no attempt appears to have been made to set up a visible commemoration of the new burials, although it has to be admitted that some possible alterations and additions might have been destroyed over time. Thus added decoration might survive,⁵⁴ but any internal commemorative structures would be more vulnerable to subsequent tomb reuse, especially modern habitation—I think particularly of such possibilities as added stela emplacements, or even cult niches or the like as inserted later into the Ramesseum.⁵⁵

Examination of the reports on the excavations of most Theban private tombs suggests evidence of reuse in the periods after the New Kingdom, but, as already observed, the quality of the available information is very variable. There is not the space here to present this massive amount of evidence, but instead I summarise my understanding of the trends of burial over this period in excess of 1000 years, only mentioning sources where they conveniently summarise a particular epoch or point. The following phases are approximate but chosen so as best to illustrate the various shifts.

⁵³ Suggested by isolated finds such as late 20th dynasty coffin fragments in TT297: N. Strudwick, *The tomb of Amenemopet called Tjanefer at Thebes (TT 297)* (SDAIK 19), Berlin, 2003, 32, pl. XIV.

⁵⁴ For example, in TT87: Guksch, *Die Gräber des Nacht-Min*, Taf. 7.

⁵⁵ J.E. Quibell, *The Ramesseum*, London, 1898, pl. II (3, 6).

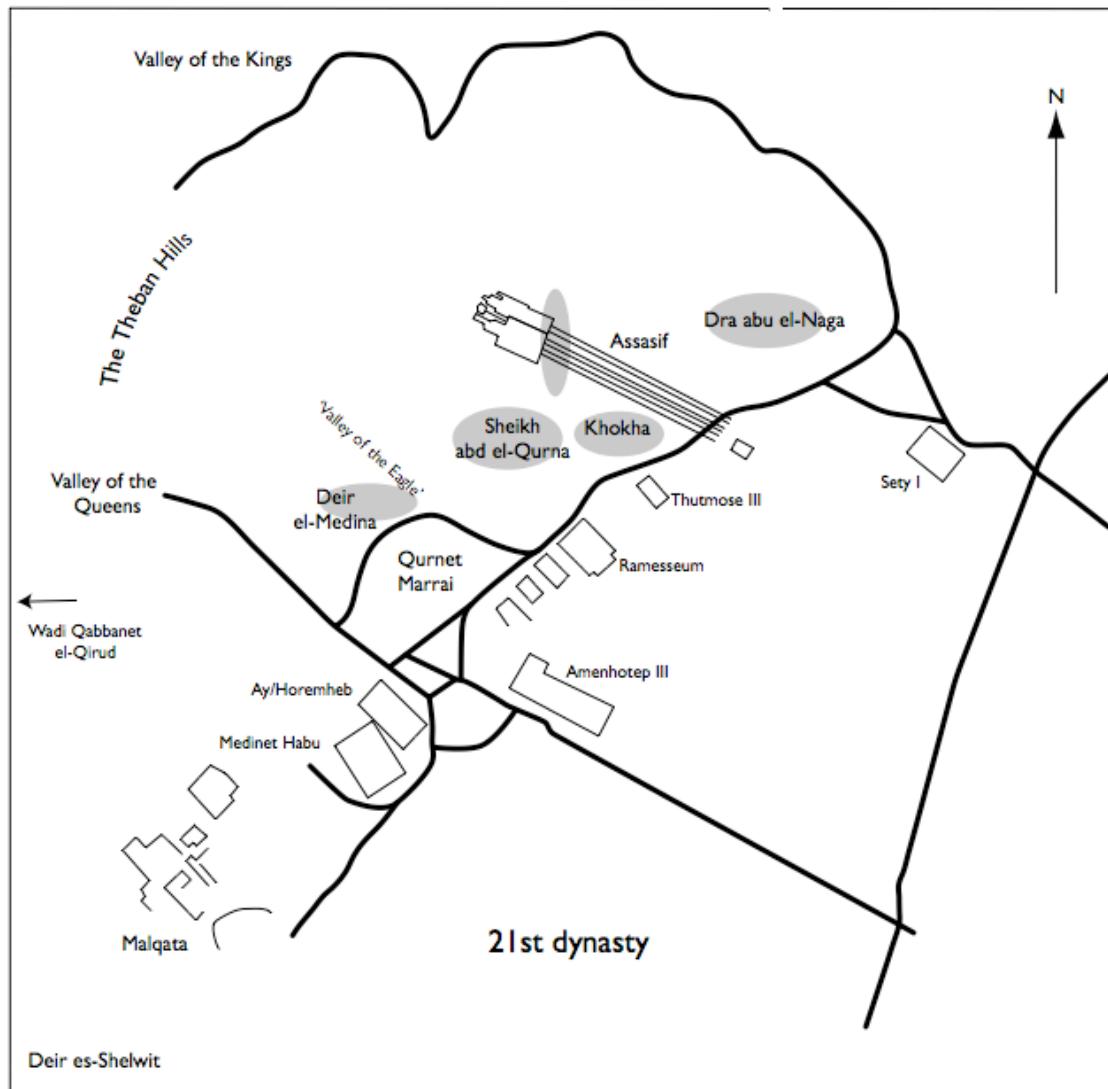


Fig. 10: Schematic diagram of the locations of 21st dynasty burials in the Theban Necropolis

21st dynasty:⁵⁶ (fig. 10) reuse of private tombs started in earnest and spread across the entire necropolis. A particular feature of the time is the use of tomb-caches, above all the first and second Deir el-Bahari caches which were never quite paralleled in later times.

⁵⁶ The only collection and study of the tomb groups of the 21st–25th dynasties is David Aston's unpublished dissertation: D.A. Aston, *Tomb Groups from the end of the New Kingdom to the beginning of the Saite Period* (PhD Dissertation, University of Birmingham 1987).

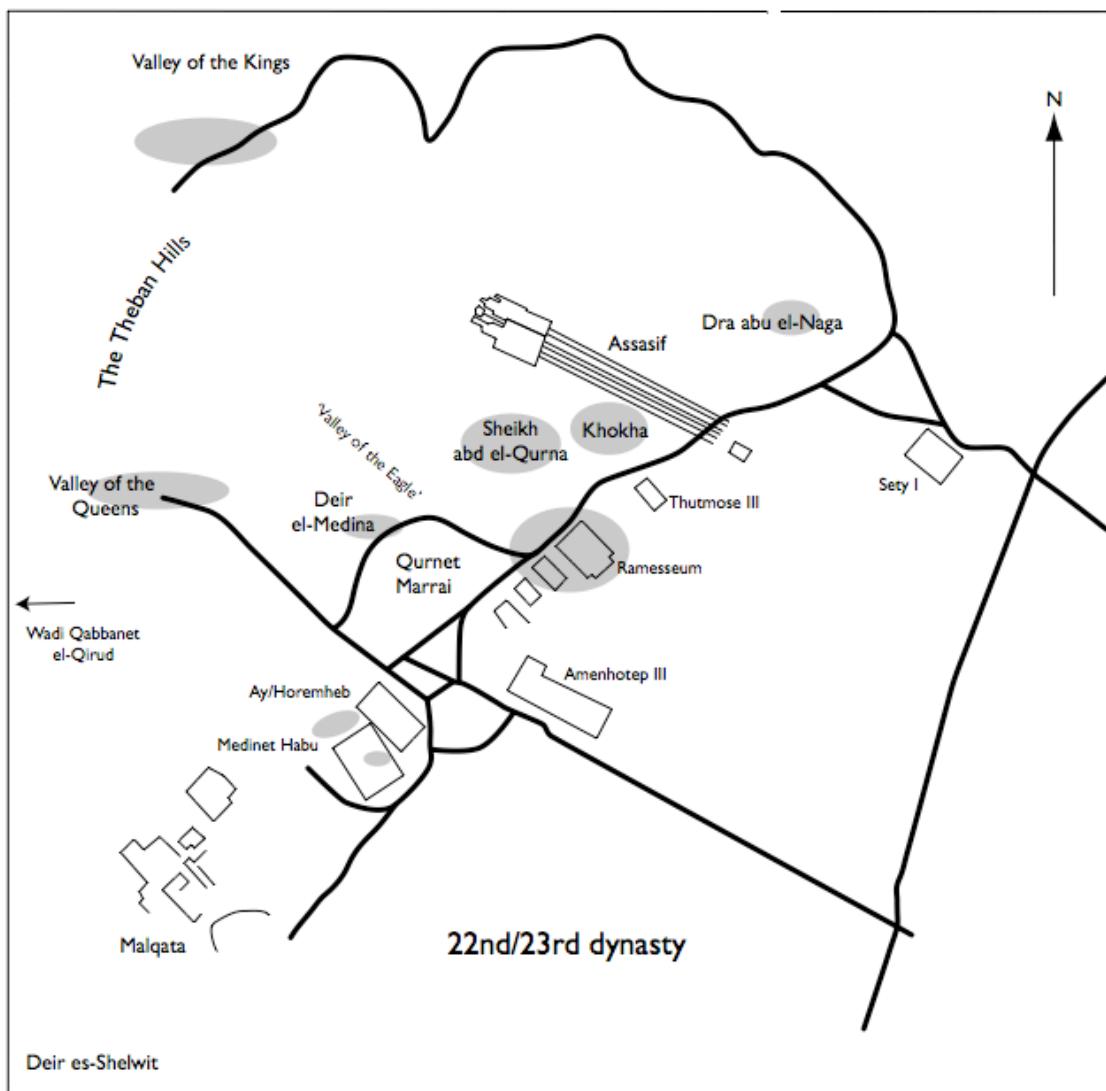


Fig. 11: Schematic diagram of the locations of 22nd/23rd dynasty burials in the Theban Necropolis

22nd–23rd dynasties: (fig. 11) the reuse of private tombs continued, and the reuse of the Valley of the Queens seems to have started, accompanied by a limited reuse of the empty royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.⁵⁷ A new feature was the first adaptation of a temple area to serve as a cemetery, seen at the Ramesseum;⁵⁸ another was the beginning of the construction of small brick chapels in various locations.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ J.H. Taylor, 'Aspects of the History of the Valley of the Kings in the Third Intermediate Period', in N. Reeves (ed.), *After Tutankhamun: research and excavation in the Royal Necropolis at Thebes*, London, 1992, 186–206.

⁵⁸ See for example, M. Nelson, 'The Ramesseum Necropolis', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 88–94.

⁵⁹ For example, the chapels west of Medinet Habu, in U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu IV*, Chicago 1951, 22–5.

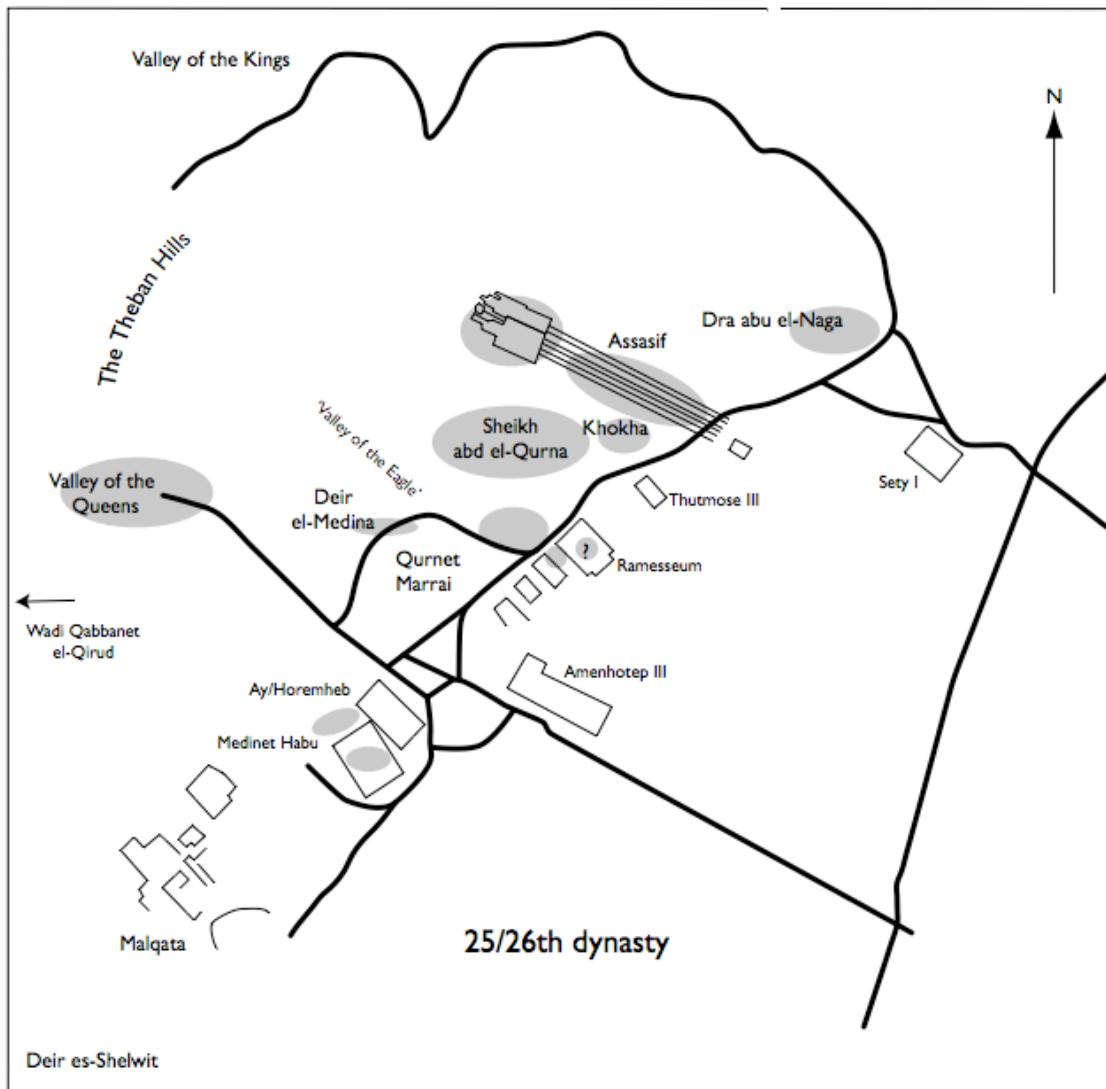


Fig. 12: Schematic diagram of the locations of 25th/26th dynasty burials in the Theban Necropolis

25th–26th dynasties:⁶⁰ (fig. 12) there was continuing reuse of private tombs and of the Valley of the Queens. The cemetery at the Ramesseum seems to have fallen out of favour, to be replaced by a new one in and around the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari; further mud-brick chapels were built in various locations. Lastly, there was the resumption of the construction of large tombs by the top of the elite, concentrated in the Assasif with a smaller number of sepulchres in the area south of Sheikh Abdel Qurna now termed the Southern Assasif,⁶¹ as well as the burials of the Divine Adoratrices at Medinet Habu.

⁶⁰ This and the following period is considered by D.A. Aston, 'The Theban West Bank from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to the Ptolemaic Period', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 138–66.

⁶¹ Eigner, *Grabbauten*, 28–34.

The period between the First Persian Period and the 30th dynasty is poorly attested archaeologically in Thebes,⁶² and the situation does not improve dramatically in the 30th dynasty. However, the appearance of the first choachyte archives at this time indicates the existence of an industry dealing with the burial requirements of the population.⁶³

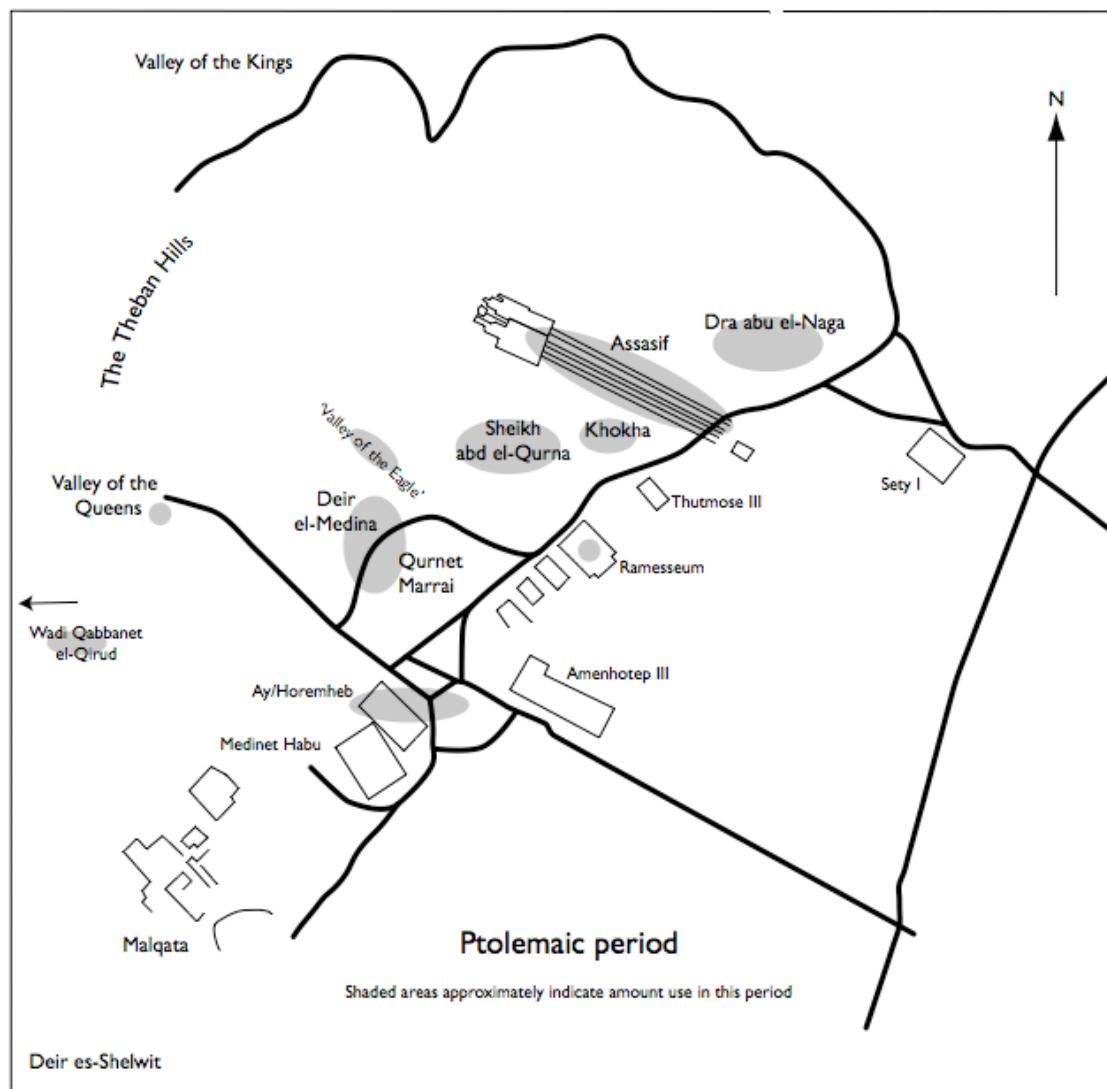


Fig. 13: Schematic diagram of the locations of Ptolemaic Period burials in the Theban Necropolis

⁶² D.A. Aston, 'Dynasty 26, Dynasty 30, or Dynasty 27? In search of the funerary archaeology of the Persian Period', in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in honour of H.S. Smith* (EES Occasional Publications 13), London, 1999, 17–22. See also Aston, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 155–63.

⁶³ See generally Vleeming, in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-gated Thebes*, 241–55, with mention of the early archives on p. 242.

Ptolemaic Period:⁶⁴ (fig. 13) A number of elaborate burials are known from this period, often reusing private tombs, but most of the cemetery usage took the form of the burial of plain mummies in older tombs; this period was the heyday of the choachytes, who primarily reused tombs, including private and queens' sepulchres. A series of new brick tombs was built at the east end of the Assasif and in the area of the temple of Amenhotep son of Hapu.

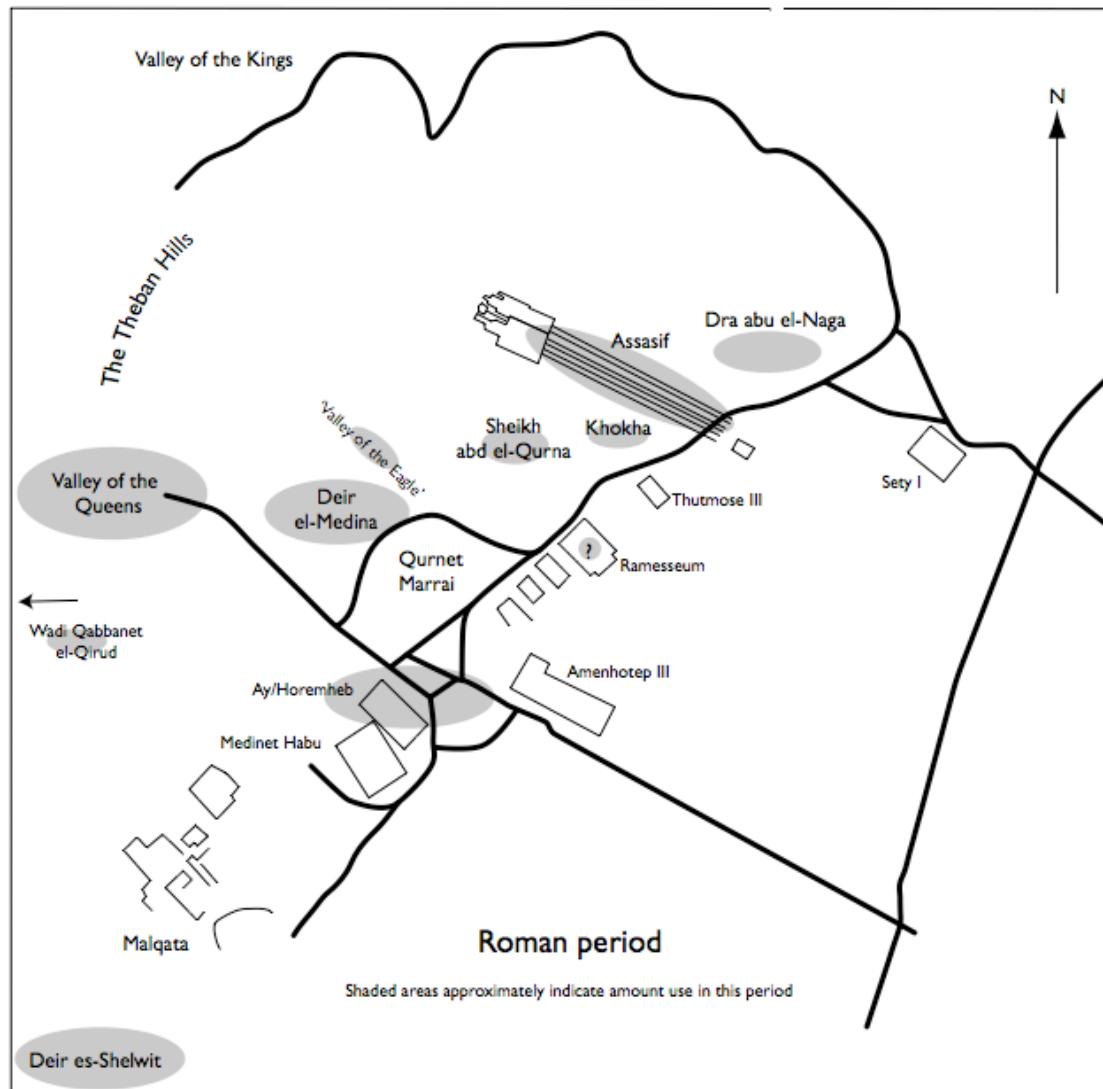


Fig. 14: Schematic diagram of the locations of Roman Period burials in the Theban Necropolis

Roman Period:⁶⁵ (fig. 14) There are not the papyrus archives to provide written evidence for this period, but the patterns are similar to the Ptolemaic Period: burial of mummies in reused private tombs and in the Valley of the Queens, with some more

⁶⁴ N. Strudwick, 'Some aspects of the archaeology of the Theban Necropolis in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods' in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 167–88.

⁶⁵ See previous note.

elaborate tombs inserted into domestic and funerary contexts, as well as the area of the temple of Hatshepsut;⁶⁶ further brick tombs were again built in the area of the temple of Amenhotep son of Hapu.

Explanations of use subsequent to the burial of the original tomb-owner

Although it is easy to imagine the existence of a bureaucracy which controlled tomb reuse (mentioned in note 40 above), there are no extensive written sources available to indicate anything approaching a 'system' until the choachyte archives appear in the 6th century BC. In the absence of such evidence, I now consider the possible explanations of the types of reuse seen in the Third Intermediate Period and later.

Family links?

It has been suggested above that family connections and family commemoration were a core motivation behind much of the New Kingdom reuse of tombs within a short time of their original occupation. But did this continue? While it was ideal that a cult should continue for perpetuity, the Egyptians were under no delusions about the likelihood of this happening, which must explain the number of different levels of 'insurance' added to ensure that offerings were maintained. In the examples from TT99 and TT87, no traces of any pottery were found, for example, of the Ramesside period which might point to offerings being placed there 200 years after the original first use of the tomb.⁶⁷ It can be assumed that cult use probably did not long outlast the use of the tomb for the burials of the original owner and of whatever members of his family, perhaps a subsequent generation or two, who were also buried there.

Do family connections explain any of the subsequent New Kingdom reuse? Polz's examples do not show any obvious attempts by others to express family links, other than a formal display of respect expressed by the use of what Polz terms a 'functional filiation'.⁶⁸ However, it is unclear to what extent the conventions and physical restrictions of tomb (re)decoration would anyway allow someone 100–200 years later to give voice to a perceived relationship with an ancestor, and so the possibility must remain open that there was some remote family link.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ C. Riggs, 'The Egyptian funerary tradition at Thebes in the Roman Period', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 189–201.

⁶⁷ Note also Polz's comments about 'use life' of a tomb in J. Assmann, G. Burkard and V. Davies (eds), *Problems and Priorities in Egyptian Archaeology*, London, 1987, 122–4.

⁶⁸ MDAIK 46 (1990), 307.

⁶⁹ Expression of relationship would be far more important in legal documents (if they existed) pertaining to permission to reuse the tombs; knowledge of one's ancestors for legal cases is clearly shown in, for

Turning to those who were buried in these tombs in the Third Intermediate Period, there is no obvious association with, or acknowledgement of, the original builders.⁷⁰ However, it is possible to trace this new phase of use of a tomb for a generation or two within a particular family, perhaps 50 years or thereabouts. It has been noted above that TT99 shows this practice for two generations of two families, as does TT68,⁷¹ and this practice of one shaft belonging to one family can also be found in burials not reusing older tombs, such as those discovered at the eastern end of the Assasif⁷² or to the west of the Ramesseum.⁷³ This situation contrasts strongly with the families of the priests of Montu buried in Deir el-Bahari, some of whose lines of descent can be traced for four or five generations, roughly 100 years.⁷⁴

Hence it is unlikely that family connections were important, unless there was some vague historical association, which I doubt. But, on the basis of the interpretation of the Deir el-Medina ostrakon BM EA 5624 (see note 40 above), it is not impossible that the rights to a tomb could have been retained for some considerable time.

Reflected glory?

Could there be any correlation between the desirability of a New Kingdom tomb as a target for reuse in later periods and the status of the original builder? This idea came to mind since Wedjahor, the first 25th dynasty reuser of TT99 was, as fourth priest of Amun, one of the more important officials of his time; did he deliberately choose to be buried in TT99, the tomb of one of the most important officials of the later reign of Thutmose III? Answering this would require a more comprehensive survey of the evidence than it has so far been possible to achieve, but the initial impression is that the archaeological evidence is too uneven to give an answer—as observed, there is a lack of good records of the remains of burials which have survived in these tombs. Thus, for the only other tomb known of an 18th dynasty *imy-r sDAwty/xtmt* in the necropolis, that of

example, the well known inscription of Mose from Saqqara (A.H. Gardiner, *The Inscription of Mes*, Leipzig, 1905; G.A. Gaballa, *The Memphite Tomb-Chapel of Mose*, Warminster, 1977). This case of course concerns an inheritance and not a tomb.

⁷⁰ Indeed one new user, Nisupaneferhor in TT68, erased the names of the previous Ramesside occupant of the tombs in places (K-J. Seyfried, *Das Grab des Paenkhemenu (TT68) und die Anlage TT227* (Theben 6), Mainz, 1991, 10).

⁷¹ Seyfried, *Das Grab des Paenkhemenu*, 121–3.

⁷² M. Bietak, *Theben-West (Luqsor). Vorbericht über die ersten vier Grabungskampagnen (1969–1971)*, Wien, 1972, 30–5, Abb. 8, Taf. XVII–XXV (Grab VII).

⁷³ R. Anthes, ‘Die deutschen Grabungen auf der Westseite von Theben in den Jahren 1911 und 1913’, *MDAIK* 12 (1943): two adjacent tomb shafts nos 28 and 29, Abb 15 area B, 34–40, 45–50, Abb 13–14, Taf. 7–14.

⁷⁴ For example, J.H. Taylor, ‘A Priestly Family of the 25th Dynasty’, *CdE* 59 (1984), 27–57.

Sebekhotep (TT63), nothing is known about the later occupants.⁷⁵ The reusers (if any) of tombs of contemporary viziers are presently unknown,⁷⁶ and in the well-excavated tombs TT87 and TT79 insufficient evidence was found to identify the titles of the Third Intermediate Period reusers. More negative evidence is suggested by looking in the reverse temporal direction: although there are but few examples, the burials of most viziers and high priests of Amun of the Third Intermediate Period, where they can be located, are not from reused private tombs.

Security?

The Egyptians wrote little about the subject of security; they must have been aware of the risks to their burials, despite the efforts made at various times to conceal their final places of rest, as tomb robbery is surely almost as old as tomb building. The question at issue is whether this had any effect on their choice of burial location.

The best-known statement relating to what happened to the original occupants of the private tombs of Thebes is almost of a throwaway nature in the Abbott Papyrus (P BM EA 10221).

The tombs and chambers in which rest the blessed ones of old, the citizenesses and citizens on the West of Thebes. It was found that the thieves had violated them all, dragging their owners from their inner coffins and their other coffins so that they were left on the desert, and stealing their funerary outfit which had been given to them together with the gold and the silver and the fittings which were in their inner coffins.⁷⁷

Most sources relating to tomb robbery at the end of the New Kingdom relate primarily to royal tombs, but there are a number of general references to tombs which could be royal or private. For example, this reference in the Leopold-Amherst papyrus:

We went to rob the tombs in accordance with our regular habit, and we found the pyramid of king Sekhemre-shedtawy, the son of Re, Sebekemzaf, this being not at all like the pyramids and tombs of the nobles which we habitually went to rob.⁷⁸

References to the looting of specific private tombs in the tomb robbery papyri are limited. Robbery is mentioned in P BM EA 10054 in the tomb of Tjanefer (TT158),⁷⁹ in an

⁷⁵ Compare E. Dziobek, *Das Grab des Sobekhotep. Theben Nr. 63* (AV 71), Mainz, 1990, 19, where three small chambers are suggested to be later in date.

⁷⁶ For example, TT100 (shaft not yet located), TT61/131, TT83 and TT29 (latter still in course of excavation).

⁷⁷ T.E. Peet, *The Great Tomb-Robberies of the twentieth Egyptian dynasty*, Oxford, 1930, 39, pl. II (4.1–4).

⁷⁸ J. Capart, A.H. Gardiner and B. van de Walle, 'New Light on the Ramesside Tomb-Robberies', *JEA* 22 (1936), 171, pl. XIII (2,5–7).

⁷⁹ Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 60–1, pl. VI (Recto 1 lines 3–7).

unnamed tomb,⁸⁰ and in the (unknown) tomb of Amenkhau.⁸¹ P Ambras mentions a robbery in an unspecified tomb and also in that of an (unnamed) 'great commander of the army'.⁸² Regrettably, there are no detailed statements in the papyri which might confirm or deny the sweeping statement of the Abbott Papyrus. Were the members of the Abbott commission deliberately exaggerating the situation of the private tombs to indicate that there was not a problem with the royal cemetery, which was their primary term of reference, or was it true? Large quantities of gold and other valuable items were found in the houses of some of the robbers. For example, the totals in P BM 10068 include 279 deben of gold and silver.⁸³ Assuming that the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings were more or less intact until some point late in the reign of Ramesses XI,⁸⁴ the private tombs would have been a major possible source of material in addition to the Valley of the Queens and the temples of the kings. The haul of gold from the tomb of Tjanefer was 1 *deben* and 6 *kite* of gold,⁸⁵ and thus 279 *deben* (allowing for the variability of the *deben*⁸⁶) could encompass the spoils from a large number of private burials. Perhaps there is some truth in the statement of the Abbott papyrus.

It is normally impossible to discern from archaeological sources when private tombs such as those later reused in the Third Intermediate Period were robbed for the first time, thanks primarily to modern robbery and poor excavation over the past 200 years. Since next to nothing is known as to how one particular tomb was chosen in preference to another for reuse by one family, it can only be speculated as to whether there was a preference for re-occupying a robbed-out tomb which had lost much of its significance.

A tomb did not have to be robbed before it could be reused. The original burials in TT99 **may** have been robbed, but, not being inside the tomb, their presence or otherwise need not have affected the reuse inside the tomb.

But none of this addresses the fundamental issue of how large a part security played. The Thebans of the 21st dynasty must have been aware of the robberies which had perhaps taken place not long before, probably knowing many of the actual robbers, and perhaps they might have begun by making some greater attempts at concealment inside an older tomb—witness the successful attempt to hide the burials of the priests of Amun

⁸⁰ Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 61, pl. VI (Recto 1 lines 8–11).

⁸¹ Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 61–2, pl. VI (Recto 2 lines 14–16).

⁸² Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 181, pl. XXXVIII (2, 5–6 and 8–9).

⁸³ Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 91, pl. XII (5, 18–26).

⁸⁴ C.N. Reeves, *Valley of the Kings. The decline of a royal necropolis*, London, 1990, 276–8; Taylor, in Reeves (ed.), *After Tutankhamun*, 188; K. Jansen-Winkel, 'Die Plünderung der Königsgräber des Neuen Reiches', ZÄS 122 (1995), 62–78; E. Graefe, 'Über die Goldmenge des Alten Ägypten und die Beraubung der thebanischen Königsgräber', ZÄS 126 (1999), 27–34.

⁸⁵ Peet, *Great Tomb Robberies*, 61, pl. VI (Recto 1 line 7).

⁸⁶ Graefe, ZÄS 126 (1999), 19–27.

at Deir el-Bahari, or indeed the royal mummies. All burials of this time appear to be in older tombs. For whatever reason, it seems that this was not so important afterwards, shown by the varying number of locations subsequently employed, including more publicly visible places such as temples.⁸⁷

Cost and convenience?

These factors are extremely difficult to evaluate at this distance from the original events. In terms of labour alone, it would have cost considerably less to excavate a typical Third Intermediate shaft of 5m deep with a 3 x 2 x 2m chamber (a total volume of perhaps 17m³) than a tomb-chapel and shaft like that of Senneferi with a volume in excess of 500m³. As an example, a section of the tomb of Senmut measuring 1 *nby* x 6 *nby* x 1 cubit was cut by 11 masons on the first day of tomb building.⁸⁸ This equates roughly to a volume of 1.3 m³, suggesting that, if this rate is applied, allowing for a decreasing rate as the masons moved further from the entrance, ten to fifteen days might have been adequate for the cutting of a shaft of the Third Intermediate Period.

Probably the cost of equipping a burial itself did not change a great deal. Coffins were never a cheap commodity in the New Kingdom,⁸⁹ but the overall cost of the nested ensembles of the 21st dynasty, with their elaborate painting and decoration both inside and out must have been at least as expensive if not more so, except where significant amounts of gilding may have been used in earlier times. However, equally important is the fact that funerary practices had been changing since the later New Kingdom, with decreasing emphasis on specifically non-funerary goods, such as furniture, linens and the like, and an increase reducing the burial ensemble to little more than the coffin, stela, shabtis, Osiris figures and papyrus.

There was evidently wealth available in the Third Intermediate Period, even if not on the scale of the New Kingdom. The element which was perhaps missing was royal

⁸⁷ Perhaps protection from robbery was less important at times. The average burial of the Third Intermediate Period and later was not equipped with items with an immediate resale value or which could easily be recycled—the oils and gold in elite New Kingdom burials were far more marketable and easily stolen than the largely religiously-orientated objects such as coffins, shabtis, stelae and figurines which formed the bulk of Third Intermediate Period burials (conveniently illustrated in Aston, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 142, fig. 3). These latter categories of object have only become highly desirable since the rise of collecting antiquities in the 19th century AD.

⁸⁸ W.C. Hayes, *Ostraka and name stones from the tomb of Sen-Mut (no. 71) at Thebes*, New York, 1942, 21, pl. XIII (no. 62).

⁸⁹ J.J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period. An Economic Study of the Village of Necropolis Workmen at Thebes*, Leiden, 1975, 209–48 gives sample prices for a range of tomb equipment. An average coffin cost between 20 and 30 copper *deben*, but there are examples which were 80 or even 200 *deben*. For comparison an ox could be worth 50 (Janssen p. 9) or even 120 *deben* (A.G. McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt. Laundry Lists and Love Songs*, Oxford, 1999, 74–5).

patronage and largesse. Although the role of this factor in tomb procurement is not understood for these periods, once central control was re-established in the late eighth century BC, it was not many years before the very top of the elite were able to afford to construct elaborate tombs. Anthony Leahy has made the intriguing suggestion that less elaborate tombs might be a sign of Libyan influence, coming from a semi-nomadic society with perhaps less well-established preferences for elaborate burials.⁹⁰ Perhaps the inception of a new (Kushite) dynasty more familiar with traditional Egyptian practices changed this?

Sacred space?

The concept of 'Sacred space' is one which has received attention in the recent past.⁹¹ A tomb is a holy place;⁹² as well as being a place for burial and a 'machine' for ensuring the eternal life of the deceased, a tomb is a repository of memory, a true 'monument'.⁹³ Memory can be a sacred thing, and reuse of an older tomb can itself imbue a new burial with a sacred status.⁹⁴ Commemoration is a very close cognate, and this has been examined above as an important element of further use of tombs by descendants.

The sacred landscape of Thebes included large temple areas, primarily Deir el-Bahari, the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, but the area around the shrines at Deir el-Medina should not be overlooked.⁹⁵ The sacredness of Deir el-Bahari is associated with the cults of Hathor practiced there,⁹⁶ most clearly manifested in the Valley Festival,⁹⁷ while Medinet Habu was the site of the mound of Djeme with its associations.⁹⁸ The Ramesseum is a little more problematic; in addition to any residual importance it held as

⁹⁰ 'The Libyan period in Egypt: an essay in interpretation', *Libyan Studies* 16 (1985), 62, although this was primarily written with reference to the Delta, and I extend it to Thebes with considerable caution. I thank John H. Taylor for this reference, although he is not responsible for my further speculation.

⁹¹ See in particular the volume of Dorman and Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*; note particularly the introductory remarks by Dorman and Bryan (pp. xiii–xviii).

⁹² Jan Assmann admirably describes the creation of sacred space in the Ramesside tombs: 'The Ramesside tomb and the construction of sacred space', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 46–52.

⁹³ Eigner makes this important point for the 25th/26th dynasty temple tombs, but it can be applied much more widely (*Grabbauten der Spätzeit*, 196).

⁹⁴ J. Mack, *The Museum of the Mind*, London, 2003, 91–4. This refers to a British example, but the point is well made.

⁹⁵ D. Montserrat and L. Meskell argue that the sanctity of Deir el-Medina might have contributed to the reuse of that area in the Graeco-Roman Period ('Mortuary Archaeology and Religious Landscape at Graeco-Roman Deir el-Medina', *JEA* 83 (1997), 196–7).

⁹⁶ See G. Pinch, *Votive offerings to Hathor*, Oxford, 1993, 3–25.

⁹⁷ See generally E. Graefe, LÄ VI, 187–9; S. Schott, *Das schöne Fest vom Wüstentale, Festbräuche einer Totenstadt*, Wiesbaden, 1953.

⁹⁸ L. Bell, 'The New Kingdom "Divine" Temple: the example of Luxor', in B.E. Shafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, Ithaca, 1997, 177–8.

a temple of the great Ramesses II, it seems possible that the former causeway of the 'Sankhkare temple',⁹⁹ which met the edge of the cultivation in the Ramesseum area, had some important function (although not obvious in actual evidence), perhaps paralleling that of the better understood Mentuhotep causeway.¹⁰⁰ This may have contributed to the sacredness of that part of the necropolis, including the Ramesseum.

This sacred landscape can only have been enhanced by processions which passed through it. The major processions of the New Kingdom—the Valley Festival and the regular visits of Amun of Luxor to Djeme—probably continued in some form through the Third Intermediate Period and right down to Roman times.¹⁰¹ **Fig. 15** is based on the plausible routes for the processions of the Valley and of the ten day visits to Djeme.

⁹⁹ More likely that of Amenemhat I: Do. Arnold, 'Amenemhet I and the Early Twelfth Dynasty at Thebes', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991), 5–47.

¹⁰⁰ Compare comments in Eigner, *Grabbauten*, 27–8.

¹⁰¹ Graefe, LÄ VI, 187–8 notes material pertaining to the Valley Festival down to Roman times; the Coptic name of the month in which the festival took place is derived from the ancient term. M. Bietak and E. Reiser-Haslauer, *Das Grab des 'Ankh-Hor. Obersthofmeister der Gottesgemahlin Nitokris I.* Wien, 1982, 29 suggest a particular revival of the Valley Festival in the 25th dynasty, and certainly scenes related to the festival reappear in the temple-tombs of this period (for example, J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Basa (Nr. 389 in der thebanischen Nekropole (AV 6)*, Mainz, 1973, 68–71, Taf. X).

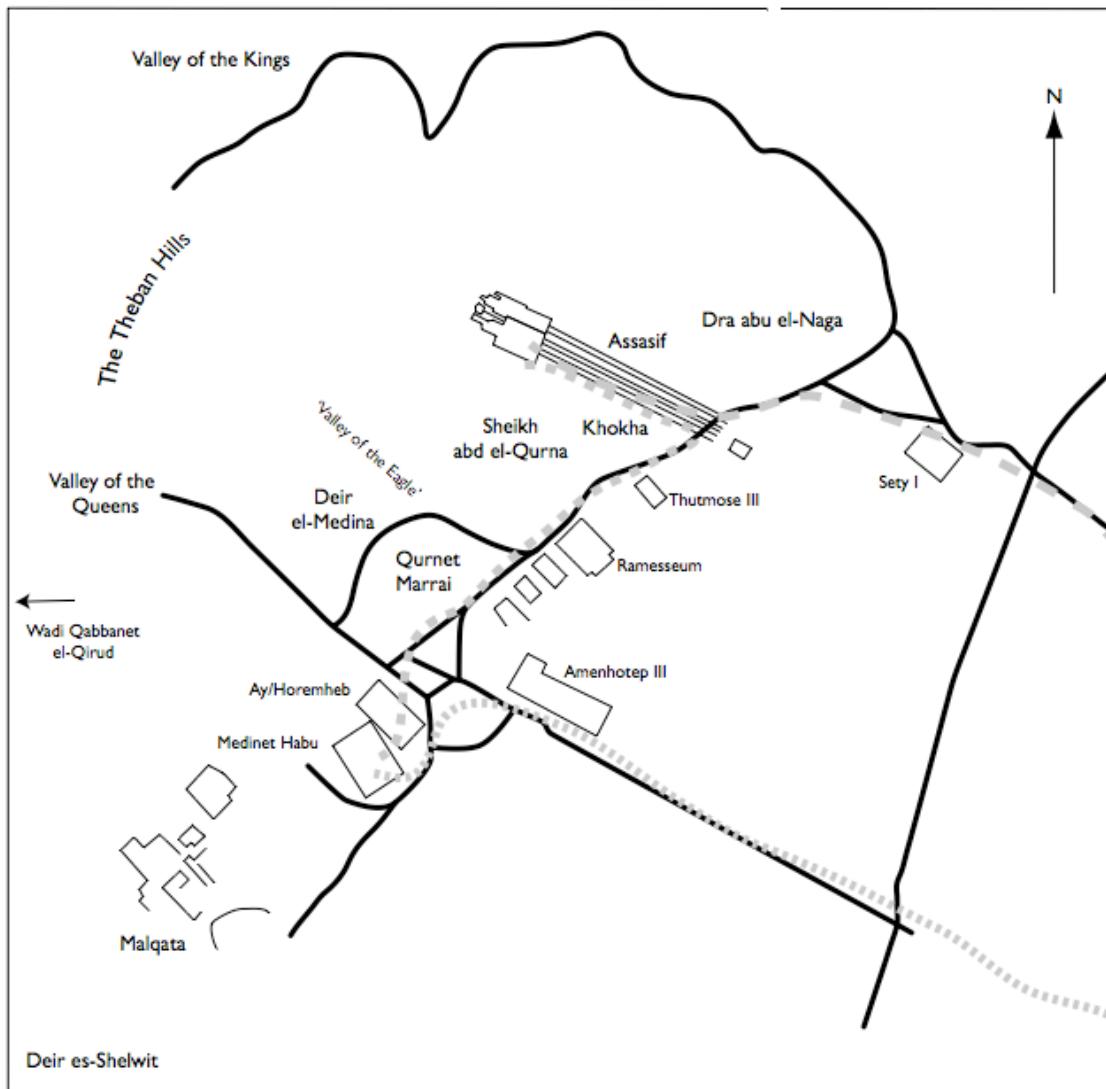


Fig. 15: Three processional routes in Thebes: Karnak to Deir el-Bahari; Deir el-Bahari to Medinet Habu; Medinet Habu to Luxor

This sacred landscape with its processional ways is likely to have increased the desire for a tomb within sight of these temples and routes, and this may have been a major factor in the location of many New Kingdom chapels, looking out onto it in such a way that the souls of those buried in them could benefit from the aura of being in areas special to the pre-eminent deities, and to view and join in the processions and festivals.¹⁰² Before the temple-tombs of the 25/26th dynasties, the majority of which were built probably in relation to the processional way leading to Deir el-Bahari, the only tombs built, other than chapels within the Ramesseum, were a number of structures of brick with a number of small chambers, in the floor of which were burials. These are not

¹⁰² Many scenes produced for the original owners of the tombs probably express the wish for this participation (Schott, *Schöne Fest*, 91–2).

very common, but they perhaps contributed to the concept of sacred landscape by also being near the Ramesseum,¹⁰³ Medinet Habu,¹⁰⁴ and adjacent to the processional way to Deir el-Bahari.¹⁰⁵

The reuse of the private tombs fits the concept of 'sacred space' in two ways. Firstly, the original tombs themselves formed part of the sacred landscape. Organising one's burial by reusing such a tomb fitted one into that landscape.¹⁰⁶ Secondly, the tomb space itself was perhaps sacred. It was of course thus to the original owners, as within its sacred limits the processes needed to guarantee new life to them could take place—the tomb was, after all, a machine for the new life of the dead. Presumably this would be an attraction to someone of later date looking for a location for his burial, in a time when building new tombs was out of fashion. He might see the 'eternal life machine' of the ancestors as working for him, and at the same time affording him security at a relatively low cost. The pre-existing private tomb also offered the facility of a ready-made chapel. At the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, new small chapels formed part of the Third Intermediate Period tombs; the burials in the Deir el-Bahari area might also have used the temple as their chapel. A focus for the cult was necessary; perhaps even taking over such a tomb was seen as a positive gesture to those who went before.

Another advantage of the reoccupation of a private tomb is that it might, in addition to its sacred aspect, help to stress and legitimise the personality of the new deceased. It should be recalled that it was towards the end of the Third Intermediate Period that the intense craze for archaism began, and what better way to attain that than to use the monuments of ancestors?

Concluding remarks

The range of material considered in this paper begins to illustrate the complex nature, use-life and history of structures originally built for the burial of a closely-defined group of elite people. The Theban private tomb shows that well-known genius of the ancient

¹⁰³ Tomb of the vizier Nebnetjeru (summary in Aston, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 139–40); tombs from the Berlin excavations (Anthes, *MDAIK* 12 (1943), Abb. 15).

¹⁰⁴ Series of chapels to the west of the temple, some dating back to the late New Kingdom, and others built and reused during the Third Intermediate Period (summary in Aston, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 140–1).

¹⁰⁵ Some were constructed on the flat floor of the valley (Bietak, *Theben-West (Luqsor)*, 26–30, Abb. 6–7), but others were placed in courtyards of earlier tombs on the side of the valley (for example, the brick structures marked on Kampp, *Die Thebanische Nekropole*, 493, Fig. 386).

¹⁰⁶ C.M. Sheikholeslami, 'The burials of priests of Montu at Deir el-Bahari in the Theban necropolis', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 131–2 argues that the prominence of the Valley Festival, coupled with links between Montu and Hathor, led to the priests of the former god being buried at Deir el-Bahari.

Egyptians for adapting and reinterpreting concepts of earlier times to make them useful in a new age. It also illustrates how ancient structures themselves could be modified to handle the needs of men and women in later periods, although the precise reason in a particular case must remain speculative. There could be simply an element of strong personal preference for a particular tomb or location which appealed to the new owner, or that tombs were allocated by the bureaucracy.

In post-Pharaonic times, beyond the scope of this paper, the tombs in particular have seen a different aspect of reuse, when they became homes to elements of the local population. This is attested firstly in the Christian period, when members of the local Coptic community occupied them, usually as extensions to monastic settlements in the area, developing their own sacred landscape.¹⁰⁷ In later times, it is likely that the sacred landscape sketched briefly here has surely played its part in the location of the modern Islamic holy places of Western Thebes—witness the location of the mosque of Sheikh Tayyeb at the entrance to the valley of Deir el-Bahari, or the tombs of local holy men at points where the old route from Karnak meets the hills and turns south, or indeed the saint’s shrine of Sheikh Abdel Qurna itself.¹⁰⁸ The practice of tomb reuse, however, seems generally to have gone into decline with the ascendancy of Islam, but then approaching the modern era, the tombs were occupied one last time by the local populace, as both dwelling places and storerooms. This happened partly for the extra security they may have offered, but also because it put the inhabitants closer to the monuments which contained the antiquities which Europeans were so desperate to collect from at least the early 19th century AD. Tombs such as that of Senneferi remained homes and workplaces to the people of Qurna until most of the occupants were bought out in the early years of the 20th century.¹⁰⁹

Modern issues of tomb reuse still remain prominent in the eyes of the Egyptian authorities, local campaigners, the media, and archaeologists, and this has most clearly been brought to the fore by the complex issue of the removal of housing in close proximity to the ancient monuments in 2006–7. Few issues can be said to have played

¹⁰⁷ The ground-breaking contribution in this area was Winlock’s wonderful overview in H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum, *The monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes I*, New York, 1926, 3–24. References to subsequent studies will be found in H. Behlmer, ‘Christian use of Pharaonic sacred space in Western Thebes: the case of TT 85 and 87’, in Dorman and Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, 163–75, particularly p. 163.

¹⁰⁸ See K. van der Spek, ‘Feasts, fertility, and fear: Qurnawi spirituality in the ancient Theban landscape’, in Dorman and Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes*, 177–92, for an account of modern spirituality in the necropolis.

¹⁰⁹ Only in the late 20th century did academic interest in the modern village of Qurna develop. See for example C. Simpson, ‘Modern Qurna—pieces of an historical jigsaw’, in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 144–9.

such an important and continuing part in the local landscape over more than 3,500 years.