



**The last New Kingdom tomb at Thebes:
The end of a great tradition?**

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Theban Tomb 65 is considered here as the last New Kingdom tomb at Thebes in the same manner as the tomb of Ramesses IX is the last completed royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings (Abitz 1992, 184). Indeed, later tombs are known in both the royal wadi and elsewhere in the Theban necropoleis, but these were never completed (in the case of the royal ones), or are private tombs later in date but only in a strict chronological sense. I will clarify the latter point below. This paper will elucidate how TT 65 represents the end of the great tradition of the New Kingdom elite tomb complexes.

The perception of the early reign of Ramesses IX,¹ when TT 65 was decorated, and late Dynasty 20 in general, is still dominated by the theory that Egypt stagnated under the descendants of Ramesses III, due to titanic bureaucracy and, above all, priesthoods. Content in a perfumed listlessness, the late Ramesside world atrophied as it trod the path to socio-political and economic collapse. All excerpts from the Third Book of Manetho emphasise that this period, the last dynasty of the New Kingdom, consisted of twelve Theban kings who reigned for 135 (or 178) years.² Most modern evaluations, however, diverge little from the view of Diodorus, who wrote that after the death of Ramesses III

kings succeeded to the throne for seven generations who were confirmed sluggards and devoted only to indulgence and luxury. Consequently in the priestly record neither costly building of theirs nor any deed worthy of historical record is handed down in connection with them (Diodorus I, 63.1).

This opinion is echoed in modern literature, when late Ramesside Egypt is lamented as a time when

it was Egypt's misfortune to have the throne occupied by a succession of seven pious nonentities (Hayes 1959, 374).

Admittedly, our sources for the period are either fragmentary or present very specific perspectives, and are rarely used effectively. The present paper seeks to understand the character of one set of these sources, as embodied by an elite monument of the period.

The passing of an era, however definitive it may appear to contemporaries or later observers, seldom occurs without the beginnings of its successor era being already apparent. In this respect, it may be interesting to note that Manetho himself chose to end his Book II

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¹ A completion date in Year 9 of Ramesses IX is based on a graffito of the chief draughtsman Amenhotep in the tomb of Ramesses VI, see Spiegelberg 1921, 92–93; *KRI* VI, 658, A.24; Keller 1984, 124 with nn. 65–68; also Bács 1995.

² The figure of 135 years is that of Africanus, while Eusebius gives 178 years for the same period, see Waddell 1948, 152–55; see also Černý 1965, 3–4.

with Dynasty 19 and, significantly, commence Book III with Dynasty 20 (Waddell 1948, 152–55). In terms of foreign relations, Egypt of Dynasty 20 is traditionally seen, within a context of decline and collapse, to have been affected by three major historical developments. Firstly, the loss of imperial holdings in the Levant occurred during the middle years of Dynasty 20,³ despite the efforts of Ramesses III. This pharaoh is frequently cast as the last great Pharaoh of the New Kingdom, in a ‘heroic’ role within the historiography of the era. The second development, occurring later under the last ruler of the dynasty Ramesses XI, was the secession of the Nubian territories under the Egyptian Viceroy Panehsy, more usually interpreted, however, as a withdrawal on Egypt’s part.⁴ The third is less of an event than a long-term effect and can be defined, even if used elsewhere for the ensuing period, as the ‘Libyan dimension.’⁵ Although these developments, and to a lesser degree their results, are hardly debatable, the precise course or causal chain of events is impossible to reconstruct, but only a hypothetical picture of their materialisation.

In a society where large-scale public building activity was a royal monopoly, the construction activity of any monarch is a primary indication of his control over available resources, and his ability to mobilise them. That this method of evaluation was also applied by ancient societies is a common assumption, as is the observation that, as architecture was an important vehicle for display, it falls into the category of competitive consumption. For any kind of accuracy in this field, however, the available data should provide an accurate cross-section of architectural activity. Considering the 18-year long reign of Ramesses IX, for example, the evidence for his building activity is usually considered far from impressive. It should be remembered, however, that this value judgement, which typically uses Amenhotep III or Ramesses II as a yardstick, stems from a comparison that may ultimately be unfair. Significantly, lacking adequate knowledge of the precise historical circumstances prevailing in Ramesses IX’s reign, it cannot simply be stated that the surviving material attests to underachievement; the opposite may in fact be true. The following section reviews the sacred landscape of the Theban West Bank under the last Ramesside kings, providing context for the construction and decoration of TT 65.

³ It is generally assumed, as for Nubia later, that some form of Egyptian withdrawal from Canaan took place during or shortly after the reign of Ramesses VI, at the very latest. This dateline, however, is more conventional than real, since it is primarily based on a very small number of archaeological and epigraphic evidence, see e.g., Weinstein 1981; Weinstein 1992; Zuhdi 2001/2002; Morris 2005, 691–773.

⁴ See Török 1997, 101–7.

⁵ Although the definition was created to describe the specific socio-political and cultural features of the Third Intermediate Period, it nevertheless applies, if not in all respects, to the period under discussion as well (see Leahy 1985, 51). As the available evidence from the late Ramesside period indicates, the situation during the reign of Ramesses IX, for example, was more critical and complex than previously thought. This evidence should be considered now as showing the Libyans in a double role, namely both as migratory nomads and as significant elements of the Egyptian military establishment settled within Egypt, see Jansen-Winkel 1994.

The sacred landscape of the West Bank under the last Ramesside kings

The royal memorial temples

What little is known of the memorial temples or ‘Mansions of Million Years’ of the kings following Ramesses III is consistent with the general pattern of evidence for their respective reigns. For some rulers there exists an extremely limited set of archaeological remains relating to temples, together with some brief textual references; for others no evidence survives.

Ramesses IV embarked on grandiose projects at the beginning of his reign, perhaps motivated by the assassination of his father.⁶ The ambitious plan was not restricted to a memorial temple, but rather the wider reshaping of the cult topography of the Western Bank. The slim archaeological evidence suggests that a mortuary complex, consisting of two structures, was laid out in the Assasif, a site undoubtedly chosen to front Deir el-Bahari as well as to serve as a northern counterpoint to Medinet Habu.⁷ Several motives must have prompted Ramesses IV to select this arrangement, the most important being the integration of his funerary cult with the ‘Festival of the Valley,’ by redirecting the processional route through his own temple. A second consideration was more prosaic: the proximity of the site to other structures, which could thus be used as open quarries. These temples, the larger intended as a grander version of Medinet Habu, were not completed during the king’s lifetime. Eventually, a more humble chapel near Medinet Habu came to serve his mortuary cult (Fig. 1).⁸

The Assasif temple was probably continued by Ramesses V,⁹ and is identical to his memorial temple referred to in P. Wilbour (Helck 1961, 114). Subsequently, parallel to his appropriation of the royal tomb, Ramesses VI took over the memorial temple of Ramesses V. It is not clear, however, whether construction was ever completed, as the temple was systematically quarried away in later periods.¹⁰ Further emphasising the ‘Festival of the Valley’ at this period, it provided the setting for the installation ceremonies of the God’s Wife and Divine Adoratrice Isis, sometime early in her father’s (Ramesses VI) reign. Although the exact date of her investiture remains unknown, it is likely to have taken place in 2 *šmw* of either year 2 or 3,¹¹ attended in person by the king, the queen-mother Iset-Tahemdjeret, and the vizier Nehy.¹²

⁶ In general, Peden 1994a, 78–81; for the involvement of the High Priest of Amun, Ramessesnakht, in the construction of the temple, see Polz 1998, 279–81.

⁷ This is supported by the numerous reused blocks found on the site, see Keller 1994, 148–50; Peden 1994a, 48–51; Bietak 1972, 19; Ullmann 2002, 524–26; Budka 2008.

⁸ For the funerary chapel near Medinet Habu, see Robichon and Varille 1938.

⁹ As indicated by decorated blocks with his name found at the site (Peden 1994a, 50).

¹⁰ Ramesses VI’s mortuary temple, identical to the Assasif temple, is referred to in the biographical inscription of the High Priest Amenhotep, Wentz 1966, 78–79; Helck 1961, 115. A further reference might be in P. Louvre AF 6345, probably dating to the reign of either Ramesses IX or more likely to that of Ramesses XI: Gasse 1988, 17, 34 n. 57, 44 n. 125.

¹¹ Year 1 is a possibility, but since Neferrenpet was still the vizier, implying a change of viziers in the months between the accession of Ramesses VI (1 *prt* 28 to 2 *prt* 11, probably 2 *prt* 8) and 2 *šmw* of his reign. For the accession date of Ramesses VI, see von Beckerath 1984, 7; Demarée 1993b, 52; and Janssen 1997, 137.

¹² For a proposed date of Year 2, see Amer 1985, 68; see also Kitchen 1972, 189–91; for the Deir el-Bakhit in-

No evidence survives of the mortuary establishments of Ramesses VII and VIII, although it is reasonable to assume such foundations existed. In the case of Ramesses IX, despite his length of reign, only one unreliable source for the presence of a mortuary temple in western Thebes can be cited: among the officials sitting in the ‘Great Court’ (*knbt ʿ3t* on 3 Akhet 21) of P. Abbott, the third listed is a Nesamun bearing the title ‘prophet of Amun-Re, King of the Gods’ and ‘*sem*-priest of the Mansion of Millions of Years of the King of Upper and Lower, Neferkare Setepenre, l.p.h.’ While the royal prenomen is that of Ramesses IX,¹³ the priest is probably to be equated with the well-known Second Prophet Nesamun (Fig. 2), repeatedly referred to in P. Leopold II/P. Amherst as ‘*sem*-priest of the Mansion of Usermaatre Meriamun,’ i.e., the temple of Medinet Habu.¹⁴ Accepting the P. Abbott reference as evidence for a memorial temple of Ramses IX, rather than a scribal mistake, does not explain the curious absence of other evidence from the relatively abundant Theban data known from his reign. Furthermore, there is indication of construction activity at Medinet Habu under Ramesses IX: during the excavation of the Western Fortified Gate, which remained unfinished at the death of Ramesses III, several blocks were recovered, one bearing the painted cartouches of Ramesses IX (Fig. 3).¹⁵ The block, together with several unpublished ones of late Ramesside date, testifies to an attempt by Ramesses IX to complete his grandfather’s edifice, unsurprising in view of Medinet Habu’s prominent role in the Theban religious landscape. In this context, it is interesting to note the otherwise puzzling number of ostraca found in KV 6, that depict details of triumphal scenes associated with Ramesses IX. Among these are, examples showing Syrian captives (CGC 25042), bound Nubians and Asiatics (CGC 25141), Amun presenting the king with the sickle-sword (CGC 25121; Fig. 4) or the famous reward scene of the British Museum (EA 5620).¹⁶ It is tempting, therefore, to relate these trial pieces and sketches to the decoration of the Western Fortified Gate, a memorial temple, or both, as thematically they would fit well within such an architectural contexts. No matter how modest the resources available for this project, it is inconceivable that no provision was made for the funerary cult of Ramesses IX.

Valley of the Kings

From the emerging evidence produced by recent excavation work in the Valley it transpires that a specific change occurred in the use of the royal necropolis under Ramesses IX. Besides continuing the practice of Ramesses III, by providing a tomb (KV 19) for his heir apparent Prince Montuhirkhopshef (II), Ramesses IX went one step further and also supplied burial places in the Valley for his mother Takhat and his queen Baketwerel. Moreover, if

scription the origin of which is still obscure, see Seele’s redrawing of the blocks after Lepsius, in Seele 1960, 193 fig. 11; also *KRI* VI, 321–22, with translations in Sander-Hansen 1940, 29 and Černý 1958, 32.

¹³ P. BM EA 10221, rt. 7, 3–4; *KRI* VI, 480, 2–3; Peet 1930, pl. 4.

¹⁴ Thus amending the simple prophet title in P. Abbott to ‘Second Prophet,’ Peet 1930, 45 n. 24; also accepted in Helck 1961, 115; Peden 1994b, 241. For the P. Leopold II - Amherst references, see *KRI* VI, 483, 5–6; 486, 11; 486, 13; 488, 10–11; 489, 9–10.

¹⁵ For the building history of the Western Fortified Gate, Hölscher 1951, 8–11; for the Ramesses IX block, pl. 26D.

¹⁶ See Daressy 1901, pls. 9, 27–28, 32; for the latter, see James 1985, 43 fig. 46; also Peck and Ross 1978, no. 44.

our understanding of the king's filiation is correct, he might also be credited with moving his father, Prince Montuirkhopshef (I), from an unknown original resting place to KV 13.¹⁷ Ramesses IX transformed the Valley into a family necropolis,¹⁸ though the underlying motivation escapes explanation. One possibility is that the security situation on the West Bank prompted this decision, but at present there is no evidence to elucidate the dating of these burials. Without knowing when the burials took place, whether relative to each other or within the reign, a direct correlation with events such as the tomb-robberies cannot be established. An alternative explanation, also difficult to substantiate, is that Ramesses IX consciously chose to refashion the Valley in a way resembling the practices of early Dynasty 18. In this case, he was again using Thutmose III as his model.¹⁹

Either way, the manner in which Ramesses IX provided for the burial places of his family is reflective of several developments pertinent to our discussion. Firstly, neither of the tombs (except his own) was newly cut; instead, earlier tombs in different states of preservation were chosen, although all of them were of the corridor type and not earlier pit tombs. The resemblance of older tombs to those of queenly and princely tombs of Dynasty 20 may have dictated their selection.²⁰ Thus, he chose for his (supposed) father Prince Montuirkhopshef (I) the tomb of Bay already reused once under Ramesses VI; the two queens were placed in the tomb of Amenmesses (KV 10), and his son Montuirkhopshef (II) was buried in the barely started tomb of Ramesses VIII/Sethirkhopshef.²¹ Secondly, although the tombs themselves were re-appropriated and their architecture left mainly unaltered, they were nevertheless furnished with new decoration, a procedure also found in contemporary non-royal burial custom.²²

Non-royal elite tombs

One of the topoi related to late Ramesside mortuary architecture is that very few new tombs were created; re-use or usurpation of older structures is envisaged as the norm. This, however, may be more of a modern misconception than ancient reality, a misunderstanding

¹⁷ The sarcophagus of Montuirkhopshef, a princely type analogous to that of Prince Khaemwaset from QV 44, was deposited with other items of his burial assemblage in the corridor (H) before Amunirkhopshef's burial chamber (Altenmüller 1994). Therefore, the the reburial could not have happened before the reign of Ramesses VI, though the motivation for that king moving his brother to the Valley is hard to envisage. More recently, however, Altenmüller has argued for regarding this Montuirkhopshef as a prematurely deceased son of Ramesses VI, rather than the son of Ramesses III (Leblanc 2001–2002, 212 n. 54; Altenmüller 2009).

¹⁸ This possibility was also raised by Dodson (1987, 226).

¹⁹ On Thutmose III's rearrangement of the Valley of the Kings, see Romer 1981, 253; on the early Dynasty 18 tombs in the Valley, also Dorman 1995. Due to their layout KV 12, 27 and 30 are usually treated as family tombs broadly datable to Dynasty 18, see Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 109.

²⁰ Their ground plans, designated as type III, are conveniently assembled in Leblanc 1989, 244 fig. 6.

²¹ For KV 10, see Dodson 1985; Dodson 1987; also now Schaden and Ertman 1998, 137–51. For the intended owner of KV 19, see Brock 1995, 65 n. 13; also referred to in Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 170; for the tomb otherwise, Ayrton 1908; *PM* II, I, 546; Thomas 1966, 151–52; Reeves 1984, 233–34; Reeves 1990, 134–35. The titles of the prince occurring in the tomb are in *KRI* VI, 463–65.

²² The most notable example of course is TT 65, but several less precisely datable tombs such as TT 68 also display this late Dynasty 20 phenomenon. For the latter tomb, see Seyfried 1991.

stemming mostly from our inadequate perception of the tombs of this era. Despite the intensive archaeological exploration of the Theban necropolis in general, the non-royal mortuary landscape of the late Ramesside period is still poorly understood, partly because scholarly preferences have tended to filter out the monuments or features of the period. It is overlooked how late Ramesside architects sought to ‘overwrite’ the landscape of the West Bank. Of course, the past, and to a certain extent ongoing, priorities of scholarship in this area has been somewhat dictated by the state of preservation of the majority of the tombs and, more importantly, the lack of secure dates for many monuments.

In numerical terms, approximately sixty tombs can be attributed to Dynasty 20, on account of royal names present in their decoration, or on stylistic grounds.²³ Further tombs will undoubtedly be added to this corpus: those yet undiscovered but also others currently merely designated as ‘Ramesside.’

The distribution pattern of the loosely datable tombs shows that their scatter extends across the entire area of the elite necropolis (Fig. 5), with a preference for the site of Dra Abu el-Naga. In interpreting these patterns, one obvious but often forgotten aspect should be noted: notwithstanding the royal cemeteries, the West Bank necropolis in Dynasty 20 is the necropolis of the city of Thebes. It was no longer a court cemetery, the end result of a process of change that started immediately after the Amarna period. In social terms, this means that the elite, and other groups shaping its mortuary landscape, belonged to a single community centred around Karnak temple and the wide-ranging estate of Amun (Fig. 6). Significantly, amongst the sixty identifiable tomb-owners only the mayor of Thebes under Ramesses III, Paser (I), belonged to the civil administration. All other tomb owners were members of the priesthoods of various Theban cults, or officials attached to different branches of the bureaucratic or economic infrastructure of these cults.²⁴ Although we must be wary of treating all the tomb-owners as a single class or overemphasising their homogeneity, it signals that, at least at the level of elite behaviour and decision-making, an increased social and cultural integration might be expected. Different strategies of self-presentation no doubt existed and may have been articulated, but only within constraints defined by the social standing and financial means of the individual or family.

On a more detailed level, choice of tomb site depended on a variety of factors, as effectively exemplified by Dra Abu el-Naga. Besides its close proximity to the contemporary royal memorial temple (under construction) and the route of the Festival of the Valley, it was also an ancient royal cemetery. More importantly, however, it was the traditional burial ground of the high priests of Amun from early Dynasty 19 onwards, but also with tombs of such predecessors as the second New Kingdom High Priest of Amun, Minmonthu (TT 232; Polz 2009, 337–38; also Kampp 1996, 507–12) or the post-Amarna high priest Parennefer/Wennefer (TT -162-; Kampp 1996, 713–16; also Kampp and Seyfried 1995). The former tomb complex is important here in the way that it provides a telling example of how the late Ramessides related to such earlier structures (Fig. 7). Whether its new owner, Tjerwas,

²³ See the list compiled in Kampp 1996, 146–48; for the purpose of stylistic analysis a smaller dataset of tombs are available, Hoffman 2004, 49–50. For the dating and brief description of TT -59- and TT -61-, see now Bács et al. 2009, 71–72.

²⁴ On Paser (I), see Helck 1958, 529 no. 14; for the remains of his tomb chapel found reused at Medinet Habu, Schott 1957.

a treasury scribe of Amun, knew that he was appropriating the tomb of an erstwhile high priest is doubtful. Even if he did recognise this fact, it has left no visible trace. Instead, a complete architectural refashioning is undertaken, transforming a *saff*-tomb into a Dynasty 19 tomb type, in particular into a tomb-complex closely imitating the high priest Nebwenenef's tomb (TT 157), of early Dynasty 19.²⁵ Although a further understanding of the individual motivation behind this particular choice goes beyond our sources, the conscious stress laid on continuity with the Ramesside and local past is unmistakable.

Continuity with the past and emphasis of locality were also defined and bounded by strong familial interests and ancestry, as shown by one of the last tombs to be constructed at Dra Abu el-Naga, that of the Third Prophet of Amun, Paser (TT 303).²⁶ Scion of one of the elite, if not indeed the dominant, priestly families, he was the son of Penpare, Third Prophet of Amun under Ramesses IX, and brother of Amenemope, who served as Third Prophet before him in the reigns of Ramesses III, IV and V, as well as being the owner of TT 148.²⁷ Both Penpare and Amenemope were sons of Tjanefer (I), the well-known Third Prophet; Paser chose to have his tomb cut next to that of his grandfather (TT 158). This latter tomb clearly served as a model for both TT 303 and the earlier TT 148 (Fig. 8). The lineage of Paser's tomb-type, however, does not end here, since it can be traced back further to the most illustrious ancestor's tomb, that of the High Priest Bakenkhonsu (TT 35).²⁸

Intensive archaeological work at the site of Dra Abu el-Naga has recently revealed evidence for an alternative method for dominant members of the community to maintain control and monopolise sacred places and institutions. This solution involved the anchoring of private mortuary cults to a kind of place previously inaccessible to non-royal individuals. Its most unequivocal display is found in the double burial place K93.11/12, where the high priest Ramessesnakht, followed by his son and successor Amenhotep, reshaped and 'modernised' what were most probably the tombs of Amenhotep I and his mother Queen Ahmose-Nefertari (Fig. 9).²⁹ This intrusion into the sacred spaces of two of the principal local deities of the necropolis was, for Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep, a novel and ultimate way of merging their mortuary cults within a divine temple context. It may also not be out of place to note here that in one of the tomb robbery depositions the area is referred to as 'the quarter of Nefer[tari]' (*t3-sp3t Nfr[tiry]*),³⁰ indicating that the particular identity of the place was common knowledge. It shows that Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep were not only altering the semantics of private tomb-complexes but also reconfiguring sacred space. Incidentally this may also account, in part, for the scale of the purposeful destruction of their architectural modifications, supposedly at the hands of the viceroy Panehsy's troops.³¹ As a phenomenon,

²⁵ For TT 157, see PM² I, 1, 266–68; Kampp 1996, 445–47 and fig. 341; Kákósy et al. 2004, 9 n. 13.

²⁶ PM² I, 1, 381–83; Kampp 1996, 570, 571 fig. 465.

²⁷ For the genealogy of the family, see Bierbrier 1975, 6, chart II. On TT 148, see Ockinga 1993; Ockinga 1996; Ockinga 2007, 142–46.

²⁸ Kákósy et al. 2004, 9–10 with n. 12; for the plan, see Kampp 1996, 226 fig. 127.

²⁹ Polz 1998, 291; Rummel 2009.

³⁰ P. BM EA 10054 rt. 1, 8; Peet 1930, 61 and n. 9, pl. 6. That the northern slope of el-Khokhah was also understood as lying within the area may be indicated by a textual reference in TT 373 that places the tomb here also into the 'district of Ahmose-Nefertari,' see Seyfried 1990, 50 text 22.

³¹ As proposed in Rummel 2009, 352.

however, it should be understood as a precursor to the widespread use of temples and temple precincts as cemeteries from Dynasty 21 onwards.³² Imiseba's own tomb-complex of TT 65 attempted to achieve this same goal in a different manner, as outlined below.

Tomb construction in the proximity of a royal memorial temple is known in earlier periods, and explains the clustering of tombs on the southernmost hill of Qurnet Murei necropolis. It is clear that for contemporaries of any king, the royal memorial temple served as a 'nucleus' for commemorative activity, and their tombs represent a form of semi-court cemetery. This could be further nuanced by professional association as the two Qurnet Murei burials of Heqamaatenakht (TT 222)³³ and Userhat (TT 235),³⁴ both high priests of Monthu from early Dynasty 20, illustrate. These two burials also indicate that loyalty to a ruler could overwrite professional association, when and if ties of ancestry did not exist, since the burial ground of the Dynasty 19 high priests of Monthu seems to have been in the Assasif. For later tomb-owners, like Amenemone, a god's father of the memorial temple of Amenophis III (TT 277)³⁵ or Khaemopet, another god's father and lector-priest in the temple of Sokar (TT 272),³⁶ the memorial temple represented their erstwhile place of employment, in this case the still operational parts of the temple of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Heitan. Although numerous additional examples could be cited, the question of reuse alluded to above requires further consideration. When evaluating the practice of reusing earlier tombs by late Ramesside individuals, one practical circumstance must be emphasised before others: the lack of adequate space for tomb construction within the necropolis. As a problem, this already surfaced as early as the reign of Amenhotep III, and was further exacerbated in Dynasty 19, giving rise to solutions still employed in Dynasty 20. One of the most widespread methods was to cut new tombs into the side walls of existing sunken courts of earlier tomb-complexes, in the flatter parts of the necropolis.³⁷ In cases where an earlier tomb was situated on steeper terrain, its façade could be exploited in this manner, as shown for example by TT 377 on Dra Abu el-Naga, where the new tomb also availed of part of the transverse hall (Fig. 10).³⁸ Besides the ingenuity observable in how the most difficult of circumstances and conditions were negotiated by late Ramesside architects, one conclusion seems inescapable: no matter the topographical or architectural situation, these architects wished to create new tomb-complexes corresponding in layout and decorative programme to the Ramesside concept of a private tomb. First appearing in the aftermath of the Amarna period, this tomb-type imitated the architecture of contemporary divine (and royal memorial)

³² For the phenomenon in general, see Stadelmann 1971; for a review of its development, Lull 2002; the textual evidence relating to its conceptual origins in Dynasty 18 is discussed in Bommas 2005.

³³ PM² I, 1, 323–24; Kampp 1996, 496–98, fig. 389.

³⁴ For TT 235, Fakhry 1934; PM² I, 1, 329; Kampp 1996, 514–15, fig. 408.

³⁵ For TT 277, PM² I, 1, 353–55; Kampp 1996, 548–50, fig. 444; Hofmann 2004, 50–54.

³⁶ For TT 272, Gautier 1920; Foucart 1928–1935; Vandier d'Abbadie 1954, 1–39, pls. 1–22; PM² I, 1, 350; Kampp 1996, 545, fig. 441.

³⁷ For example, TT 134 and 135 are both cut into the southern court wall of the earlier TT 53 (Amenemhat). For the former Chermette 2000, Chermette 2002; for the latter, see Doulat 2002.

³⁸ This was apparently achieved by walling off the northern aisle of the transverse hall of TT -NN-197- with a mud brick wall and cutting a new entrance through the façade accordingly, see PM² I, 1, 434; Kampp 1996, 598–99, fig. 494.

temples, with the Theban variant basically adopting the form of a hemispeos temple.³⁹ As illustrated aptly by the tomb of Khonsumose (TT 30, Fig. 11), the transfiguration of older architectural spaces, in this case an unfinished tomb from the reign of Amenhotep III, was achieved by a combination of cutting new features and adding elements built from mud brick.⁴⁰ Abandoned, unfinished or dilapidated older tombs were therefore seen mostly as neutral spaces to be used and to be given new meaning in the architectural and decorative idiom of the day. Due to the frailty of mud brick architecture, and obscured by the later history of these tombs, this aspect of late Ramesside tombs is typically overlooked. The scale of work and amount of labour involved in TT 30 and other enterprises underline that it is vital not to confuse reuse with impoverishment. It is important to note that earlier burial apartments, usually in shafts located in forecourts, were not disturbed unless absolutely necessary. Instead, so-called 'sloping passages' with burial chambers at their ends were cut, or if circumstances did not permit such an approach, new shafts were sunk from separate side-chambers within tomb-chapels (Fig. 12).⁴¹

The same applies to tomb decoration (Polz 1990), with a few exceptions, mainly dating to Dynasty 19, where the original (mostly Dynasty 18) decoration was left intact and only supplemented by new elements and scenes (Polz 1990). With an overwhelming preference for painted rather than relief decoration, Dynasty 20 tombs generally remained, both in form and content, within the parameters of the fairly standardised decorative scheme created simultaneously with the new architectural form that is the 'temple-tomb.' The textual and pictorial programme of Ramesside tombs, the subject of welcome attention in recent years, both in regards of overall meaning and in many of its details, here provides context for the tomb of Imiseba (TT 65).

The tomb-complex of Imiseba

If, as mentioned above, the mortuary complexes (K93.11/12) of the high priests Ramessesnakht and Amenhotep transcended the Ramesside temple-tomb in their use of space, and therefore form a link to subsequent burials in actual temple precincts, then the mortuary establishment of Imiseba represents an alternative approach, apparently unique. As is now widely recognised, the Ramesside temple-tomb created a temple for its deceased owner(s), where he could directly worship and offer to the gods. That it could also be conceived as a virtual temple of Osiris is well illustrated by several instances, where statues, half-statues or painted figures of the Osirian triad or Osiris alone (Fig. 13) were

³⁹ See in general Assmann 2003; Bács in Kákosy et al. 2004; and Kampp-Seyfried 2003.

⁴⁰ PM² I, 1, 46–47; Kampp 1996, 215–19, figs. 116–21; Collins 1976, pl. 7.

⁴¹ E.g., TT 58 or TT 174, Kampp 1996, 271 fig. 158 (TT 58), 462 fig. 357 (TT 174). Kampp, while citing further examples takes a more cautious position and reserves judgement on assigning these to Dynasty 20, Kampp 1996, 272 n. 1. Other tombs displaying this feature include TT 150 (Kampp 1996, 439 fig. 334), TT -45- (Kampp 1996, 646 fig. 541). Probably TT -154- (Kampp 1996, 705 fig. 622) and TT -159- (Kampp 1996, 711, fig. 635) should be differentiated from these tombs, since their chambers open from the end of the axial corridor and may belong to the tomb-chapel's original plan.

placed into a niche representing a naos, cut into the western wall of chapels.⁴² Even in the most elaborate Ramesside temple-tombs, a clear distinction from divine temples still existed, perhaps reflecting a desire on the part of the two high priests and Imiseba not to impinge upon royal prerogatives. As an illustration of this point, and pending further results from the work in K93.11/12, brief reference should be made here to the well-known, though widely misunderstood, work of Amenhotep within Karnak temple. Between the Eastern Postern Gate and Thutmose III's peripteral shrine, on the exterior of the 8th pylon's court wall, Amenhotep executed a tripartite composition including his famous twin reward scenes dating to year 10 of of Ramesses IX (Fig. 14).⁴³ The focal point of this composition is recognisably a double false door cut deep into the wall surface, today missing its upper trellised supraporte. The two door-leaves separated by a column or standard bear the formal figures of the pontiff, with a conventional niched pattern decorating the base. The widely held assumption about these scenes is that they were not intended for wide public consumption, but were located within the high priest's residence.⁴⁴ How this area would have been incorporated into such a building or building complex, however, remains entirely conjectural. On the other hand, the locational and decorative context of the tripartite composition clearly defines it as a cult site and a border between spaces with different accessibility.⁴⁵ Indeed, the textual and pictorial evidence actually suggests that Amenhotep designed and built a structure, now lost, devoted to the cult of the king, Ramesses IX, and housing his cult statue.⁴⁶ It is not by accident that his equally famous autobiographical inscription, and further scenes, were later engraved on the refashioned peripteral shrine of Thutmose III.

The combination of false door, reward scene, and biographical inscription are cult features which typically appear in a private mortuary context. As relief fragments unearthed at K93.12 show, the reward scene was also duplicated in the decoration programme of Amenhotep's edifice at Dra Abu el-Naga,⁴⁷ further underlining the common conceptual background behind the two monuments. In this way, Amenhotep successfully provided for and integrated his own cult into an existing one of the highest esteem at Karnak.

Lacking access to such genuine sacred spaces, Imiseba followed the model provided by the royal memorial temple and tomb. It is this background that sets the decoration and architecture of TT 65 apart from other tomb-complexes of the period (Fig. 15). In appropriating a 350-year old edifice, unfinished in terms of architecture and decoration, and presumably abandoned by late Dynasty 20, Imiseba was merely following contemporary practice.⁴⁸ In the same vein, he proceeded to include a vaulted axial corridor and 'sloping passage,' though the latter was never completed in its planned form (Fig. 16). The resulting interior layout conformed to

⁴² Bács in Kákósy et al. 2004. As a variant in one instance, the owner T'jaunany was inserted into the Osirian triad in place of Horus in TT 134's niche, see Chermette 2000, 185, pl. 39B; Chermette 2002, 28, 3b.

⁴³ See Lefèvre 1929, 63–64; Helck 1956, 163–78; *KRI* VI, 455–58; for a more recent translation of the texts, Froot 2007, 68–77.

⁴⁴ See Lefèvre 1929, 187; Wenté 1966, 86–87; cited also in Niwinski 1995, 332 with n. 16.

⁴⁵ On the well known such a function of false doors, see Arnold 1994, 227; Ullmann 1998.

⁴⁶ See also Loeben 1999, 190–201; for the association of this type of false doors with royal statue cults, see Ullmann 1998.

⁴⁷ Rummel 2009, 351, 359 fig. 7, 360 fig. 8; on reward scenes now in general, see Binder 2008.

⁴⁸ For the history of the tomb, see Bács 1998.

the normative plan of a Ramesside temple-tomb, but the decorative programme overwrote the conventional function of its parts through many intentional details. The monumental transverse hall with its polygonal columns was designed to evoke a royal-style memorial temple, while integrating and articulating the mortuary and funerary cult of Imiseba. The recess, a vestige of the intended Dynasty 18 axial corridor that was abandoned in an early stage of cutting, took on the chapel function, providing the indispensable venue for the statue and offering cult. The newly cut axial corridor, then, no longer retaining its original function of connecting the transverse hall with the chapel proper, was reinterpreted as a spatial unit belonging to the tomb's substructure. Intriguingly, however, the decorative content of the axial corridor, together with the short passage, accommodates two different concepts, namely that of a contemporary royal tomb, on the one hand, and that of a Deir el-Medina-style burial chamber, on the other. The latter is all the more unexpected, as the actual burial chamber would have been located at the end of the 'sloping passage.'

The desire to create a royal memorial temple in the transverse hall was achieved by the transposition of royal temple scenes to a non-royal context.⁴⁹ Perceiving this as an attempt by Imiseba to create a royal monument for himself would be a misunderstanding of his intentions. Rather, what emerges is that his aim was to create a royal memorial temple context for the purpose of integrating his own mortuary cult within it. Conceptually, therefore, he was doing the same as Amenhotep at Dra Abu el-Naga and Karnak, but here Imiseba had to create a sacred space rather than use one already extant.

The highly delicate matter of employing the visual idiom of royal monuments, and indeed for the decoration to be genuinely effective, required that Imiseba was portrayed in a manner consistent with his actual socio-cultural position (Fig. 17). Major scenes, therefore, that depict the festivals of Opet, the Valley and the New Year all show him as a relatively minor figure, in a peripheral position relative to the king or the high priests. Moreover, in the scene on the Southern End Wall, where pharaoh offers to the bark of Amun resting in a shrine here during the Festival of the Valley, Imiseba does not even appear, thus adhering to the decorum dictated by the particular ritual context. Any further doubts about the intention of Imiseba, however, are dispelled by a ceiling inscription containing an offering-formula to which an 'Appeal to the Living' text was appended (Fig. 18). In this Imiseba turns to an informed audience:

He says: O, scribes, lector-priests, those of knowledgeable speech, (and) wise (ones) in every respect, who shall enter this temple of Amun-Re, your (sic) King of Gods

In terms of design, visually conveying the sense of a temple wall and lending it the sensation of monumentality was achieved by iconography, but also by breaking with the prevailing form of decoration, the 'film-reel style' (*Bildstreifenstil*).⁵⁰ Accordingly, instead of partitioning the main wall areas into two or three horizontal segments, these were provided each with one single large-scale scene, the central figures of which were rendered slightly larger than life. The resulting effect of monumentality and grandeur attained by these scenes, which cover most of

⁴⁹ Bács 2001; Bács 2002.

⁵⁰ Assmann 1987, 34–36. The filmstrip style itself is supplanted earlier in Dynasty 20, as demonstrated by the decoration of TT 68 and TT 372 (Ramesses III/IV), see Seyfried 1991. See also the remarks in Hofmann 2004, 55.

the wall surfaces, meant that all other themes had to be featured in the less conspicuous parts of the hall. This included the ceiling, friezes and architraves, column sides, and the base area of walls; all involved texts, with the exception of the central panels on the ceiling.

The central ceiling panel, divided into three units, and the walls of the entrance doorway to the tomb, were dedicated to the imagery of the solar journey, a standard practice in New Kingdom private tombs that ensured the tomb owner eternal participation in the sun cult. The normative arrangement of having parallel scenes showing the tomb owner facing both outwards and inwards, accompanied by sun hymns, sadly only survives as traces in TT 65. Enough has been preserved on the southern reveal of the doorway, however, to show that Imiseba not only had special access to privileged pictorial models and artists who could execute them, but also to sacred writings that did not have wide currency. Thus, despite retaining the conventional arrangement, the extremely fragmentary text does not belong to any of the known hymn types encountered in other private tombs. Obviously of liturgical origin, in its surviving parts the text is made up of lines beginning with the repetitive invocation ‘O, Re come to Imiseba, the justified,’ which are then followed by different qualifying assertions.⁵¹

On entering the transverse hall, the central part of the ceiling designed to convey the path of the sun is divided into three panels, the first and largest of which yet again belongs to the stock repertoire of private tombs (Fig. 19). Depicting the solar cycle or birth of the sun, it is a large-scale variant of the scene often misleadingly referred to as BD 16.⁵² Alternatively called a vignette, after versions appearing on papyri, it can be seen as an introduction or preface to the textual corpus of the hall. As nine of the twenty longer texts inscribed on the hall’s ceiling, friezes and architraves are sun hymns, it is a particularly appropriate introductory image.

A systematic and detailed description of the individual texts lies beyond the scope of this paper, which is concerned with how the autonomous assemblage of texts relates to the creation of the monument as a whole. The length of these texts is particularly striking, varying between 8 and 9m for the bandeaux, encompassing 12 to 18 verses. This aspect deserves emphasis as space restrictions in a tomb can prompt shortening, omission or excerpting of texts, but with lengthier texts, this is less obvious. Space considerations evidently influence the selection of texts, but how it affects text creation is less so. As an intellectual stimulant and challenge, the need to meaningfully fill large surfaces is often overlooked when analysing monumental texts comprising units of disparate origins and genres. In a manner akin to the analytical process of decorating temple walls (defined as ‘wall theology’: Traunecker 1997, 173), this mode of text construction is evidenced by several texts found in TT 65. Thus at least two of the sun hymns had been brought together and compiled from a number of different liturgical and theological hymns (texts 85 and 88; Assmann 1983, 121–22, 124–25), while the *hṯp-di-nsw* offering formulae on the ceiling of the western half of the northern aisle were expanded to include such sections as, for instance, the earlier cited ‘Appeal to the Living.’ The results, pleasing aesthetically, were texts that appealed to an intellect appreciative of innovative variation on themes. Variation and its intellectual enjoyment come into play in another respect as well: the presence of seven sun hymns is in itself a form of variation on

⁵¹ It is all the more unfortunate, then, that its northern counterpart, that would have formed its conceptual pair, has been almost totally lost, other than a few individual signs and word fragments.

⁵² See e.g., Allen 1974, 26; for scenes belonging to this genre, Hornung 1992; for vignette 15 created for BD 15 of the Saitic Recension, see now Budek 2008.

a theme, but so are the two utterances by the goddess Nut placed side by side on the ceiling of the southern aisle that start with the same wording ‘Words spoken by Nut: “I stretched myself upon you,”’ before continuing with divergent texts. The sun hymns also offer another insight, as the seven examples in the transverse hall fall into three distinct categories: (1) three traditional hymns, (2) two representing the new ‘sun theology’ of the Ramesside era, and (3) a further two theological hymns unattested elsewhere. Described as a veritable ‘anthology’ of sun hymns (Assmann 1983, XXXIII), this corpus reveals as much, if not more, about its compiler than of the richness of this particular genre of religious literature. His antiquarianism, no doubt born out of Imiseba being a third generation chief archivist of Karnak temple, however, rose above the horizon of manuscripts kept in his archive. For several of the texts he chose to include have primary sources other than archival papyri.

Researching textual parallels for the hall’s texts yielded an unexpected and intriguing pattern (Fig. 20). At least four of the texts are only attested in one other tomb, all situated in the vicinity of TT 65. These include an utterance of Osiris addressed to the ‘Council in his following’ from the tomb of Sobekhotep (TT 63),⁵³ an utterance of Ha, Lord of the West, from that of Hapuseneb (TT 67),⁵⁴ one of the Nut texts already referred to from Hapu’s tomb (TT 66),⁵⁵ and a sun hymn from the famous Ramesside vizier, Paser’s (TT 106).⁵⁶ While those collected from Dynasty 18 tombs are all mortuary texts, that of Paser is a composition representing the so-called new ‘sun theology,’ which incidentally also explains why it was extracted from a more distant tomb. The phenomenon is instructive in more than one way, and leaves little doubt that on one level, Imiseba implicitly conceived his tomb-chapel as a virtual archive of religious knowledge that, among others, served the discursive construction of identity. On the other hand, by encompassing the sacred landscape, it also highlights the notion that the concept of ‘archive’ was understood in a much wider sense than a collection of manuscripts, an observation that cautions against accepting the transmission of texts as a necessarily straightforward process. Thirdly, as an active force it can be observed how, by feeding off the associations of other mortuary monuments, Imiseba embedded his tomb into a spatial and temporal context that unified the glory of the Thutmose past with a Ramesside present.⁵⁷

When turning to the decoration programme of the axial corridor the emerging picture is no less complex. The recess preceding it, as mentioned beforehand, was allotted the function of a chapel and received further emphasis by two framing elements, the Abydos fetish on the north and the personified *djed*-pillar on the south. Elsewhere, as in both royal tombs (Ramesses VII, KV 1) or private tombs (e.g., that of Kynebu from the reign of Ramesses VIII, TT 113), two *djed*-pillars were the norm.⁵⁸ On the ceiling immediately before the recess is the last unit of

⁵³ The text in TT 63 is understandably shorter, see Dziobek and Abdel Raziq 1990, 51–52 Text 14a.

⁵⁴ The text is only partly preserved on the ceiling of the southern aisle of TT 67’s transverse hall, see *Wb* I, 128, 14 and *Wb* III, 384, 8; and *Wb* Belegstellen I, 8, *Wb* Belegstellen III, 111.

⁵⁵ The text is in the central bandeau of the southern aisle, see Davies 1963, 13.

⁵⁶ See, as Text 86, in Assmann 1983, 122–23, also 33–34.

⁵⁷ For another aspect and expression of this embedding, see also Bács 2004.

⁵⁸ For KV 1, see Hornung 1990, 75, pl. 128; the drawing of the doorway made by the Hay expedition (Hay MSS 29822) is reproduced in Manniche 1987, 111 fig. 87. A compendium of *djed*-pillars in Theban tombs is given in Assem 2009.

the central panel of the transverse hall, depicting the youthful and mature figures of Imiseba in adoration of a large *akhet*-sign (Fig. 22). The scene was unmistakably intended to produce a non-royal equivalent of similar scenes placed on lintels above the entrances of Ramesside royal tombs, which cosmographically marked the transitional zone between netherworld and that of the living.⁵⁹ As with the royal prototypes, the sun-disc contains figures of the goddess Maat and the Horus-falcon, and was painted yellow to represent the daytime sun.⁶⁰ In this case, the daytime sun represented a symbolic exterior location, as opposed to its actual one. Fronting thus the place of rebirth, re-emergence and the entrance to the Netherworld represented by the axial corridor, the scene, it may be added, found its place on the ceiling, simply because there was no lintel here.

The royal tomb theme is carried further on the side walls of the passage leading into the axial corridor. Now extremely fragmentary, the scene on the southern side showed two deities supporting the *djed*-pillar, with the better preserved one on the north depicting the purification of Osiris by Inmutf. The latter scene, absent from private tombs in this form, appears first in the tomb of Ramesses VII (following the entrance scene in the first corridor), but is to be expanded in the tomb of Ramesses IX into a sequence of scenes leading to and culminating in the deification of the king.⁶¹ The main difference between Imiseba's scene and those of the royal tombs, apart from the addition of the protective goddess, is that the royal tomb scenes show pharaoh being purified (Fig. 21).⁶² The Osirian iconography of the royal figure, however, enabled Imiseba to change it into a generic scene of purification without losing its royal associations.

The layout of the following axial corridor, today missing its western wall and doorway, leading to the 'sloping passage' that was originally built from mud brick, displays a curious duality in concept. The basic division of the vaulted ceiling and walls, with panels of equal size divided by text bands, recalls the near identical arrangement found in the burial chambers of the Ramesside tombs at Deir el-Medina. Whereas these were clearly intended to imitate the decorative layout and scheme of sarcophagi that earned them the name of 'sarcophagus vault' or more reflectively 'macro-sarcophagus',⁶³ in the tomb of Imiseba the décor clearly merges this notion with the concept of the royal tomb. Thus the ceiling panels received the usual geometric and textile patterns instead of Book of the Dead or other vignettes and were separated from the wall panels by a frieze of alternating *djed*- and *tjet*-signs. Because of this duality a certain degree of ambiguity contained in the cosmographic orientation of the corridor was nevertheless retained (Fig. 23). Firstly, the text of the central ceiling bandeau is an otherwise unattested sun hymn addressed to Amun-Re-Harakhti-Atum, which praises the journey of the sun from east to west in eulogical form,⁶⁴ and is to be read from the doorway inwards with reference to the true orientation of the hall. In effect, it is the textual

⁵⁹ The placement of the scene on the entrance lintel starts with the tomb of Ramesses II (KV 7): Reeves and Wilkinson 1996, 35; Wilkinson 1994, 83.

⁶⁰ Wilkinson 1994, 83.

⁶¹ For KV 1, Hornung 1990, 58–60, pls. 7b, 104; for KV 6, Guilment 1907, pls. 21, 38.

⁶² Abitz 1990, 21–25, 22 fig. 6; and more briefly in Abitz 1992, 16–17 fig. 28.

⁶³ See Gaber 2004, 222.

⁶⁴ Assmann 1983, 128–29, Text 90.

complement of the scenes contained in the upper panels of the walls. In a liminal position at the entrance, the first bandeau, on the other hand, has two short salutations addressed to the holy mountains *M3nw* (W) and *B3hw* (E), but running counter to both the actual and the orientation implied by the said panels. Finally, the two bandeaux texts above the frieze bring into play a third orientation by presenting two long utterances by the tutelary goddesses Neith (E) on the northern and Selket (W) on the southern wall.⁶⁵ But then of course, this orientation in reference to the cardinal points only makes sense in the context of the hall's sarcophagus/burial chamber function that would have included Isis (S) and Nephthys (N) in their respective positions as well. The upper row of panels on the side walls contain a composition that should be understood as an *Underworld Book* specially created for this tomb. The pictorial composition, which in its layout if not subject matter recalls that in the tomb of Prince Montuhirkhopshef, charts the day and night journey of the sun god by repeating the image of the sun bark in consecutive panels, five on the southern wall moving inwards and in five on the northern one moving outwards. Although separated by vertical columns that never received their intended texts, as this part of the tomb-chapel was never finished, a unity and sense of progress was conveyed by painting the bottom border of these panels a continuous blue to represent the waterway on which the night and day bark of the sun god traverses the Netherworld and sky respectively. Despite the overall repetitive character of the scenes, they differ enough from each other in details to express the discrete phases of the solar journey, as to single out only one example, illustrated by the spearing of Apophis in the first and last scenes of the southern, nocturnal phase.

That the now missing western end wall of the hall was conceived of as a second *akhet* is made explicit by the decoration in two ways. In the last scenes facing each other at the western end of the wall and forming an obverse pair, the southern panel shows Atum travelling in the bark in contrast to the four preceding ram-headed depictions of the nocturnal sun god, while opposite to it and now outward facing, the bark carries the scarab-headed Khepri adored by a *Hetet*-baboon (Fig. 24). Although not part of this sequence, the last scene of the lower row of panels presents Isis and Nephthys adoring the rising sun, here again coloured yellow (Fig. 25; e.g., Wilkinson 1995, 76). This appearance of a second *akhet* can be satisfactorily explained only if it is interpreted as a manifestation of the phenomenon known as duplication, a phenomenon yet again characteristic for royal tombs that divided these into an upper and a lower section and where the passages of the latter lower section are referred to as 'the other, first, second, etc. god's passage.'⁶⁶

Reduced to the part of *Underworld Books* technically termed the 'register of action' (Müller-Roth 2008, 8–9) and lacking accompanying texts, in the end it is difficult to pinpoint the specific royal composition or more accurately compositions that served as models. Nevertheless, it seems inherently likely that—like the texts and their construction—it brought together material from disparate sources but with the 'Book of Day' and the 'Book of Night'

⁶⁵ Part of the inscription has been published by Sethe when writing on the orthography of Neith's name here, see Sethe 1906. Interestingly enough, two similar texts by the two goddesses respectively appear on the internal coffin of Butehamun (CGT 10102.a) in Turin, see Niwinski 2004, 155 testo 16b–c, pl. 4.

⁶⁶ See Abitz 1984, 4–17; the last example of this scheme in the Valley of the Kings is found in the tomb of Ramesses VI, Abitz 1989, 77, 79 fig. 17; Černý 1973, 31–32; also Wilkinson 1995, 79.

providing the fundamental inspiration.⁶⁷

The obvious correlation of the hall's basic decorative layout with Deir el-Medina burial chambers, one reinforced further by style and iconography, is made even closer by the scenes contained in the lower panels of its northern wall. A staple of Ramesside private tombs otherwise, it is only here, apart from a few questionable textual fragments in the transverse hall, that material from the Book of the Dead is encountered (in general, Saleh 1984). This seeming neglect or disinterest, while surprising at first, may ultimately derive from the overall programme of Imiseba's mortuary monument and its dependence on royal prototypes. By and large, and considering the space available here, the proportion of the featured Book of the Dead material mirrors that of their usage in the royal tombs of the late Ramesside era.⁶⁸ Visually and thematically, however, the imagery of the Deir el-Medina tombs took precedence, partly attributable no doubt to the interaction of Imiseba and his artist, the chief draughtsman Amenhotep.⁶⁹

Forming a sequence with the aforementioned *akhet*-scene of the last panel, four vignettes from the Book of the Dead were laid out in the order of BD 68, 17, a repeat of BD 17,⁷⁰ and BD 135 (Fig. 26). Rather than perceiving this as a random selection of BD vignettes, a closer scrutiny reveals a thematic coherence that once more has its motive in the exploration and exposition of a theme through variation, in this case in the form akin to taxonomic enumeration. Without denying the influence of Deir el-Medina artists, especially in the case of such a personality as Amenhotep working on the wall paintings, it is nevertheless Imiseba's perspective and intellectual imprint that these reflect.

In the vignette of BD 68 (Fig. 27), with the inconspicuous title of 'Spell for going forth by day by N.,' the double doors of the horizon are pivoted in an *akhet*-shaped desert and another tract of desert in place of the sky. Two symmetrically placed figures of Imiseba, rather than a single figure, are depicted adoring the double doors and not in the more common act of opening them.⁷¹ These details reveal a subtle shift of emphasis which purposefully foregrounds the *akhet*-scene aspect and explains its placement next to the doorway in contrast to most of the Deir el-Medina tombs, where it is featured on ceilings in the inner half of chambers (Saleh 1984, 37). As with all the others, the intended complementary texts never came to be added, but here at least the beginning of the first sentence 'Opened for you' had been put in place.

The presence of the following panel, containing the *akhet*-sign between the double lions Ruty from the various motifs accompanying BD 17, with its explicit symbolism hardly needs explaining (e.g., Milde 1991, 33), especially with a cross linkage provided by the bandeau text mentioning the holy mountains *M3nw* and *B3hw* (Fig. 28). It can be suspected moreover that presaging its later usage on various media, it was exploited in this context more for its concise

⁶⁷ For a similar though not parallel pictorial excerpting from the Book of Day in the later tomb of Ramose (TT 132) from the reign of Taharqo, see Müller-Roth 2008, 29–32, pl. 24.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the Book of the Dead texts in the royal tombs, see Hornung 1990, 79–83; summarised in a tabulated form in Hornung 1982, 219; and Hornung 1990, 33.

⁶⁹ On the career and artistic production of the chief draughtsman Amenhotep, see Keller 1981; Keller 1984; and Bács in press.

⁷⁰ It is less likely to be that of BD 83 or 84.

⁷¹ Saleh 1984, 36–37; for other variants from papyri, Milde 1991, 148–51.

iconic character and as a self-contained image, than as a reference to the spell itself. It is this multi-referential aspect that may also offer an answer to why the pictorial mode of expression was given precedence so forcefully over the textual.

Even without detailed description, the inclusion of next two panels in the sequence becomes self-explanatory once it is realised that they were all expressive of a single core idea, namely rebirth or more specifically the place of rebirth (Fig. 29). And it is this ordering principle that allowed the last panel scene, that is not a BD vignette, to be included among them. The adoration of the *bennu*-bird standing on the primeval mound and wearing an elaborate crown, or the vignette of BD 135 familiar from Deir el-Medina (despite its textual reference to the rebirth of the moon)⁷² are nothing more and nothing less than alternative images of this single, though central, idea. Like glosses in texts or synonyms in language, they intend to provide meaningful understanding by presenting a host of alternative images and readings. Ultimately, this again results in an anthology, this time a pictorial one of *akhet* scenes.

Instead of a conclusion

I have claimed at the outset that the funerary complex of Imiseba stands at the end of a great tradition. At first glance this may have appeared to be a bold proposition considering the existence of later tombs and may even seem more so now having had a glimpse of its idiosyncratic character. It has also become clear, moreover, that it directly neither reflects nor represents the conceptions of a non-royal mortuary monument as understood or followed in practice by his contemporaries and in general by the late Ramesside elite or sub-elite. The question then, is how does indeed TT 65 represent the conclusion of this tradition and what validates its claim? In answering briefly I only wish to reiterate one earlier argument made, namely that besides the other embodied in the Dra Abu el-Naga monuments of the high priests, Imiseba's tomb-complex offered a way of blending continuity and change whereby the limitations of the temple-tomb tradition could be exceeded, indeed transcended. And in light of the prevalent socio-political realities of its time, it also underlines that an intellectual community under pressure is not inevitably a depressed or a depleted one.

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⁷² Heerma van Voss 2000; for its presence in Deir el-Medina tombs, see Saleh 1984, 72–74.

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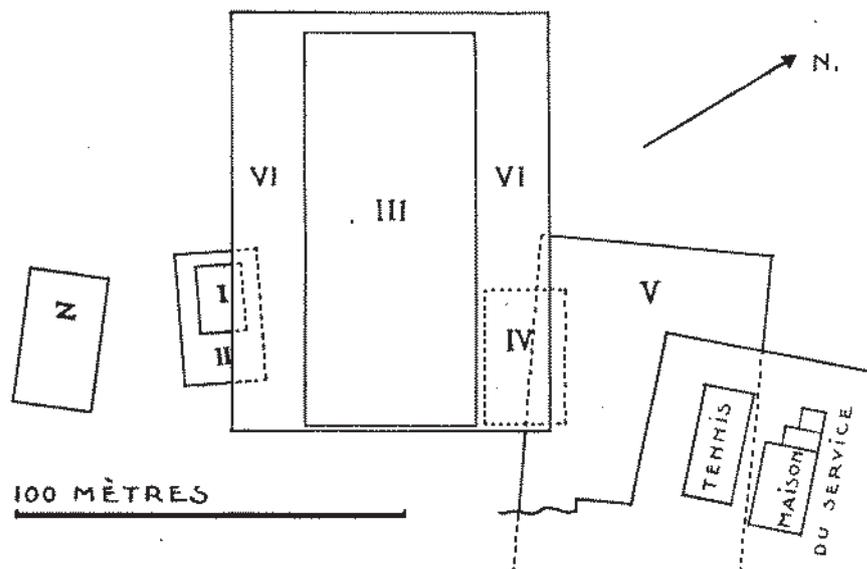


Fig. 1: The temple of Ramesses IV at Medinet Habu (No. V, after Robichon and Varille 1938, 99).



Fig. 2: The figure of the Second Prophet Nesamun (right), in TT 65.

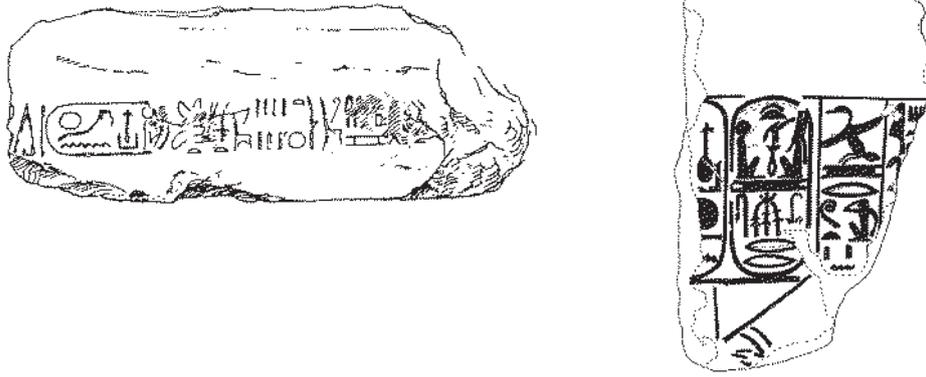


Fig. 3: Blocks with the name of Ramesses IX from Medinet Habu (after Hölscher 1951, 8–11, pl. 26D).

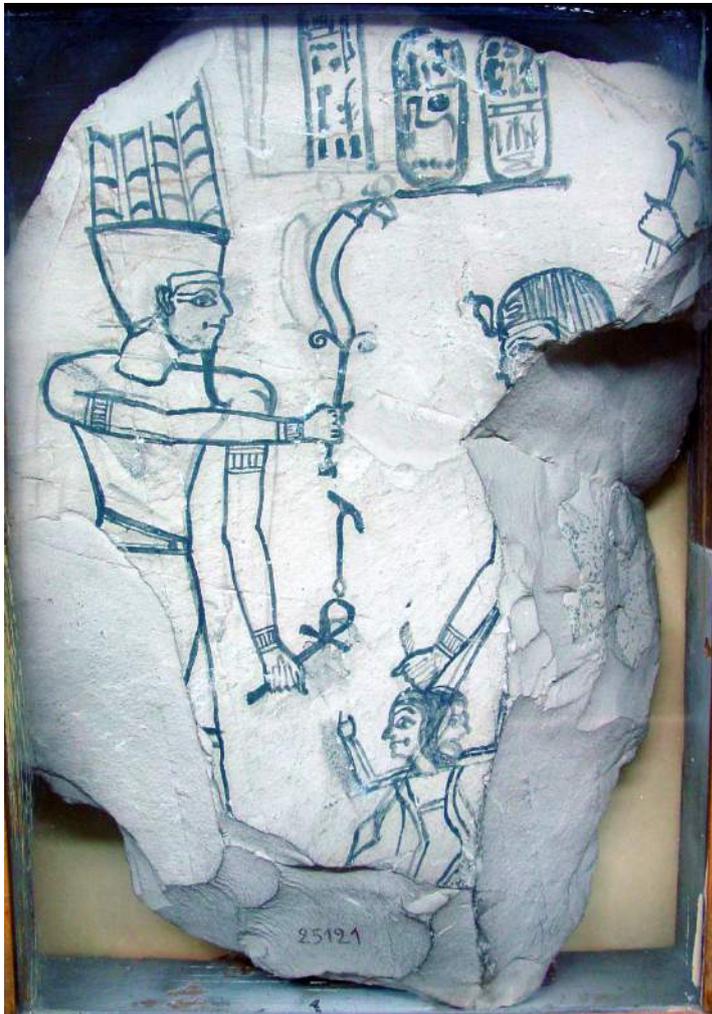


Fig. 4: Amun presenting Ramesses IX with the sickle-sword, upon a limestone ostracon (CGC 25121).

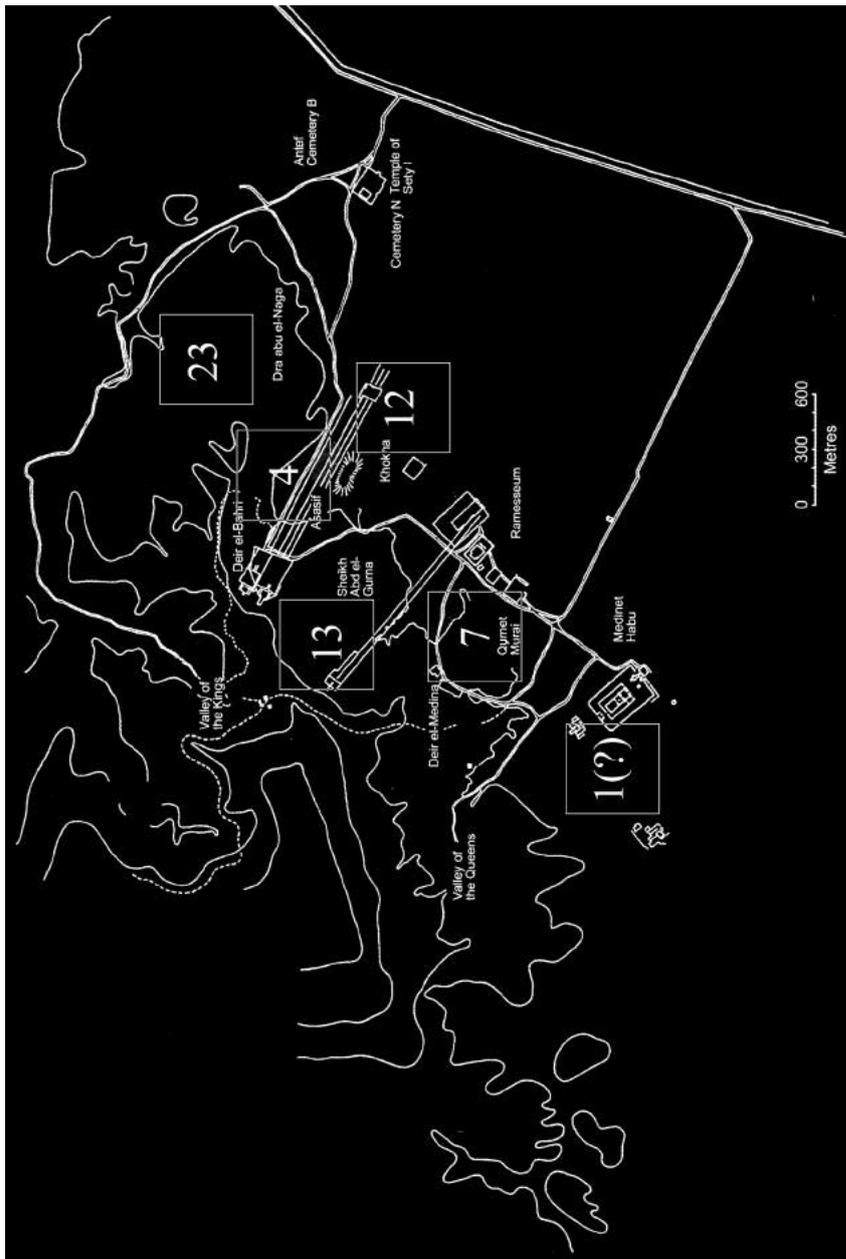


Fig. 5: The distributional patterning of Twentieth Dynasty tombs.

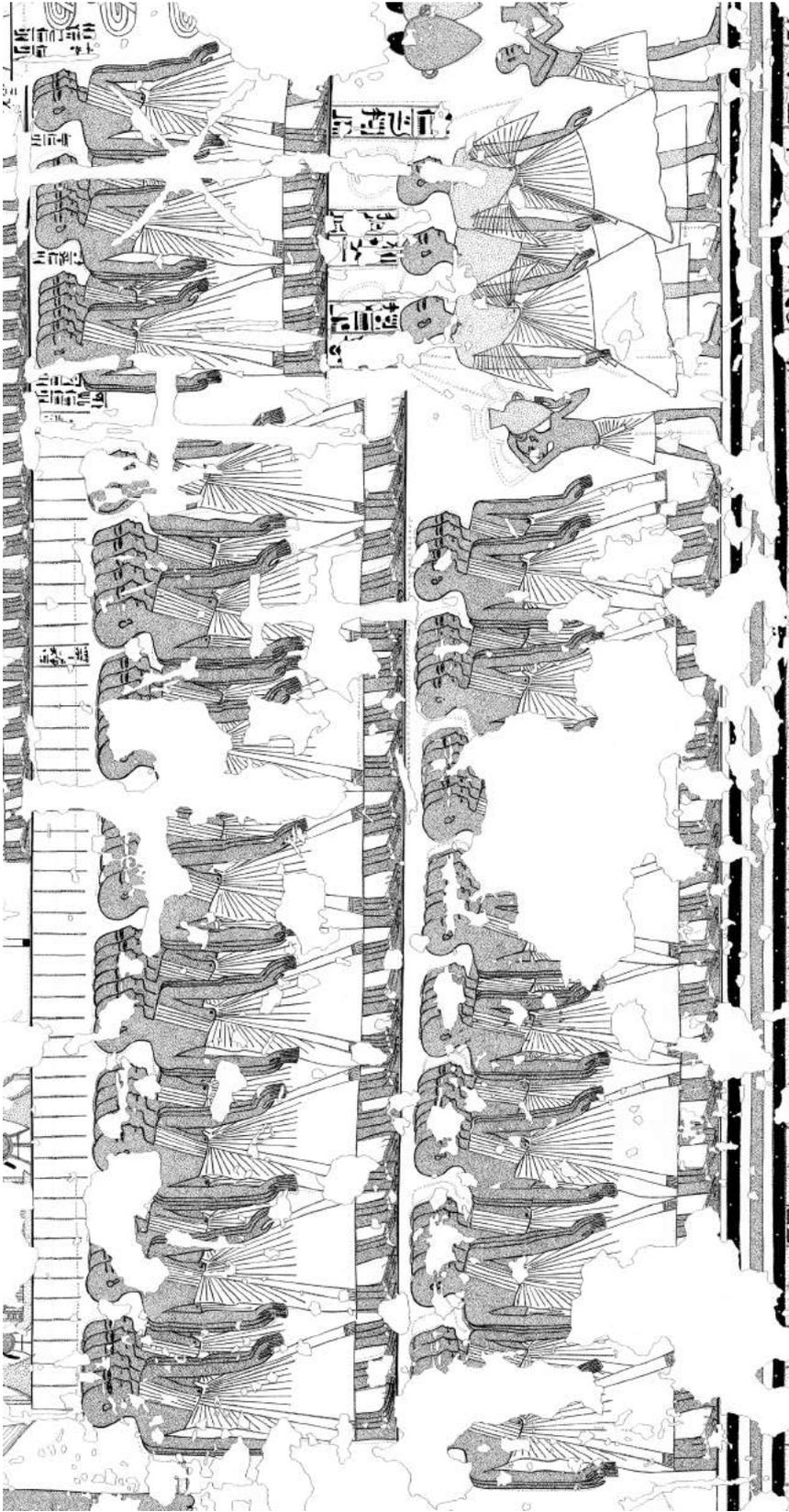


Fig. 6: The clergy of Amun as depicted in TT 65 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

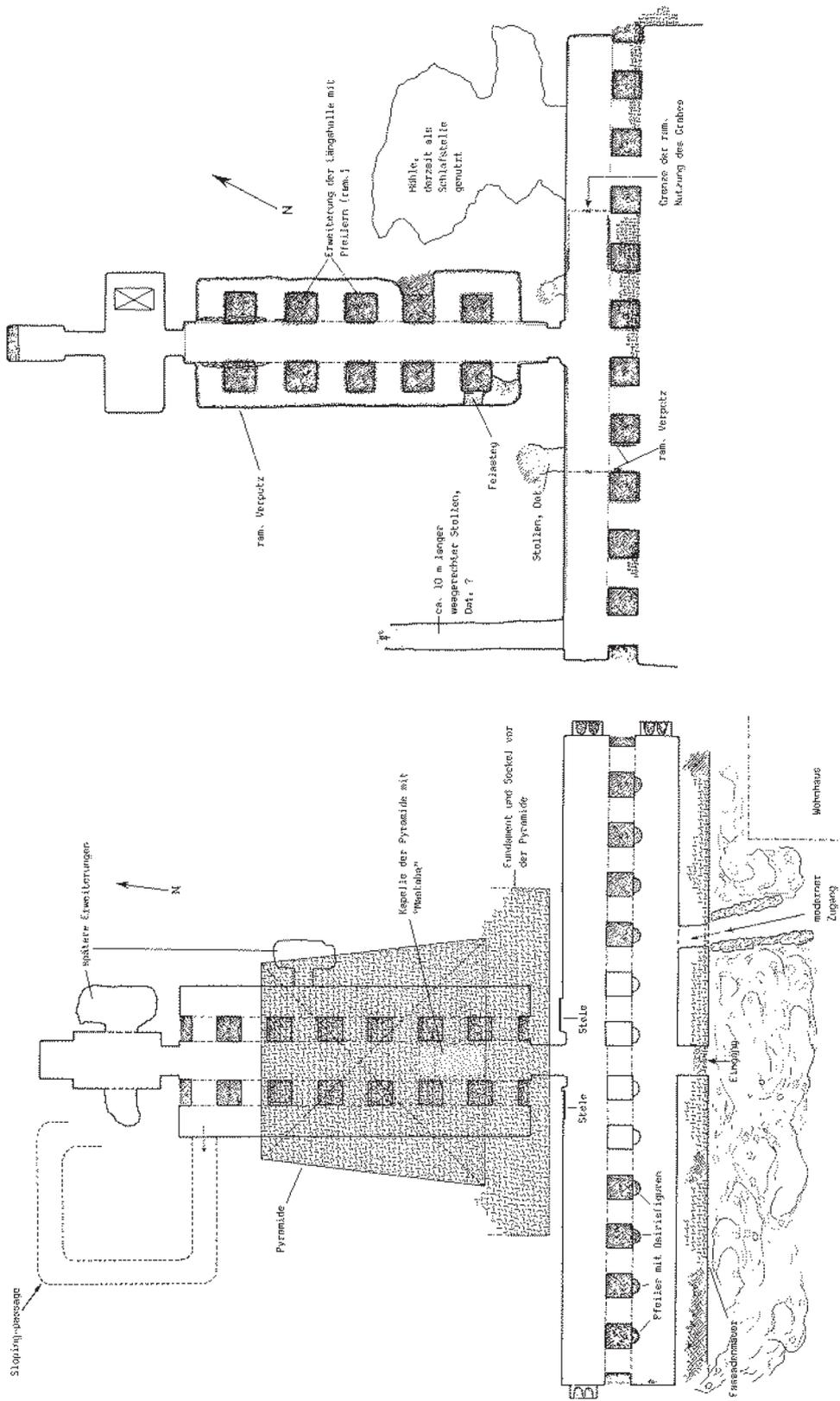


Fig. 7: Tomb-chapels of the High Priests of Amun, Minmonthu (IT 232; left) and Nebwenef (IT 157) (after Kampp 1996, 511, 446).

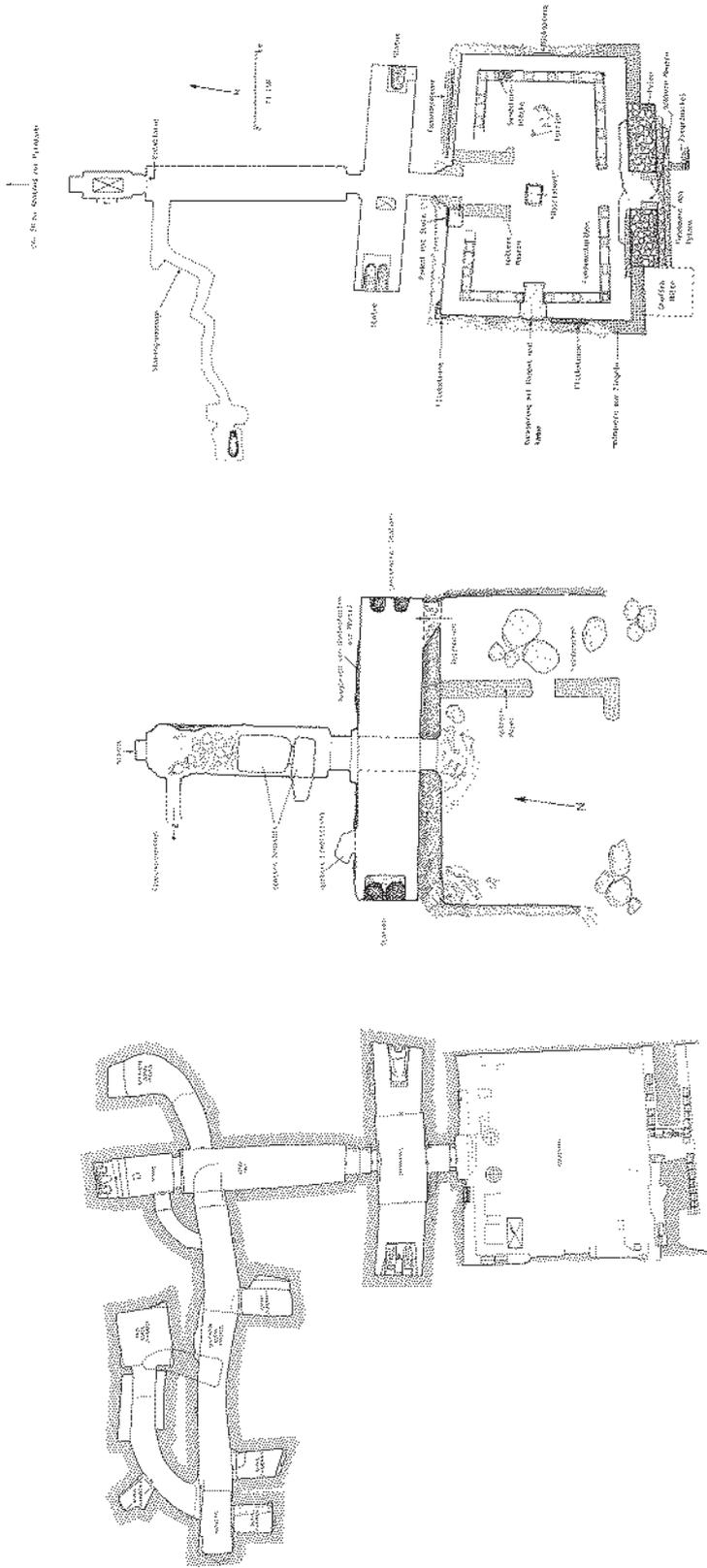


Fig. 8: Tomb-chapels of the Third Prophets of Amun, Paser (TT 303; left), Amenemope (TT 148; centre), and Tjanefer (TT 158) (after Kampp 1996, 571, 449 and Ockinga 2007, 155).

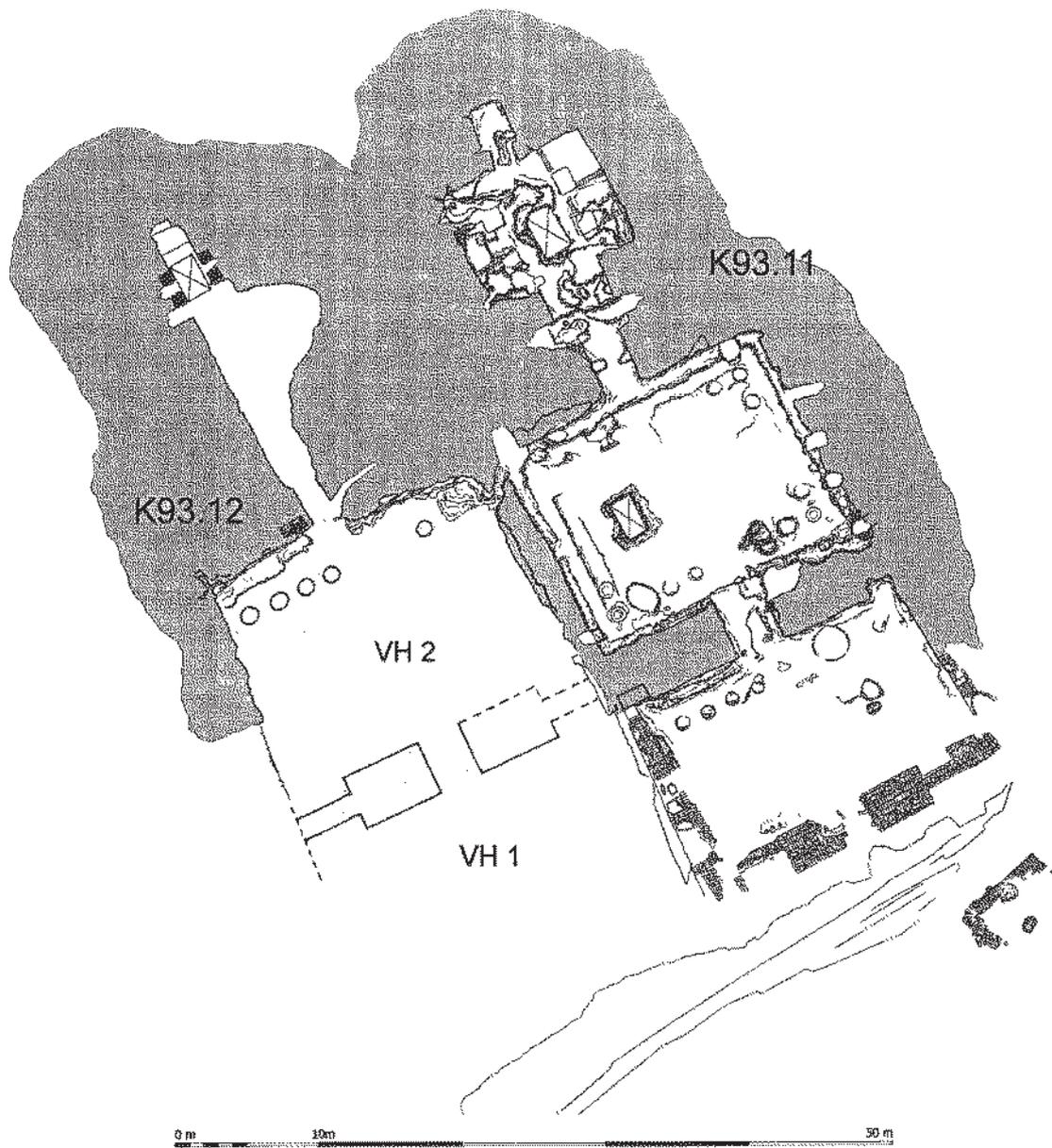


Fig. 9: K93.11/12 at Dra Abu el-Naga (after Rummel 2009, 356).

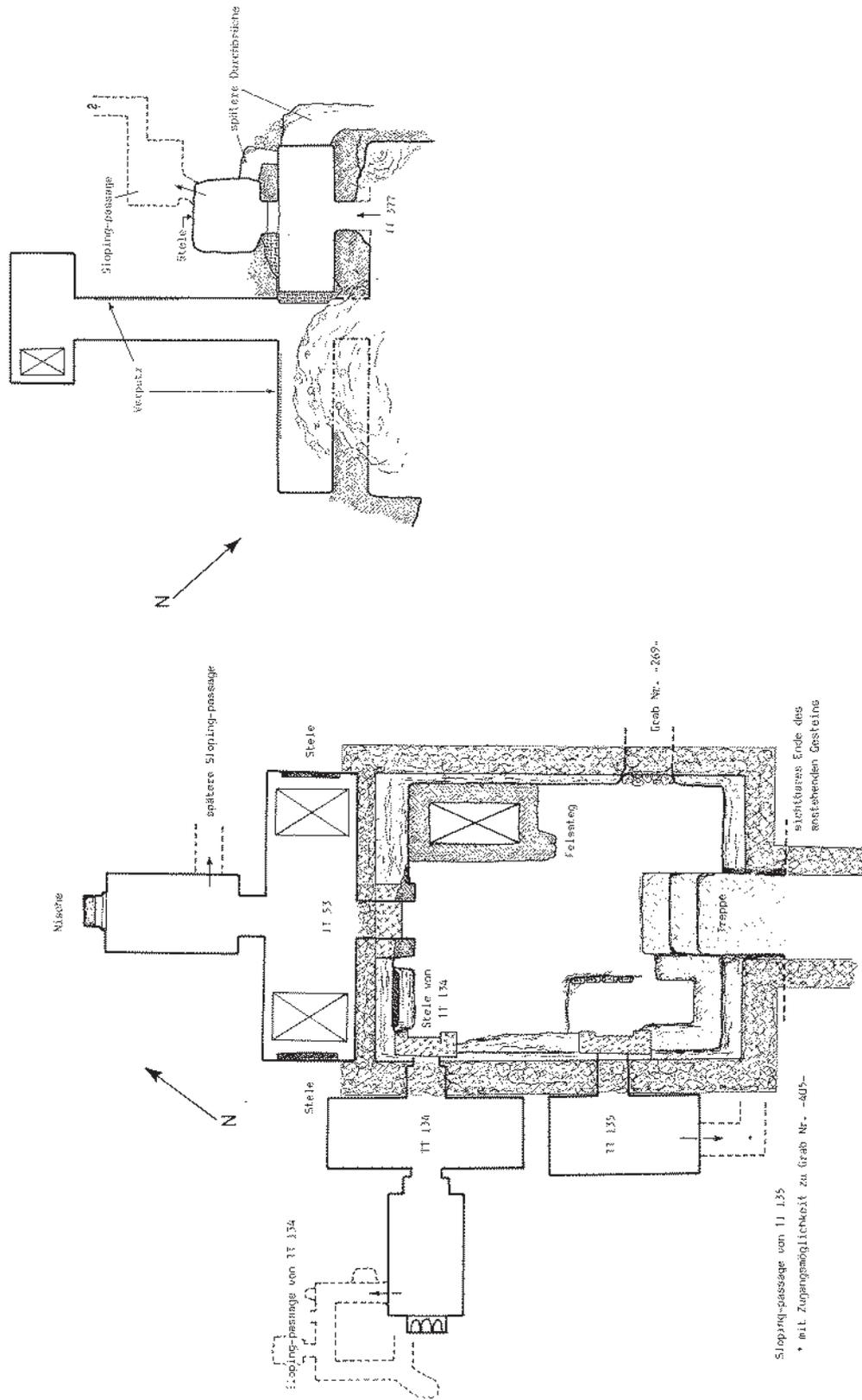


Fig. 10: Tomb-chapels of Tjaueny, Bakenamun (TT 134 and 135; left), and an unknown owner (TT 377) (after Kampp 1996, 259, 599).

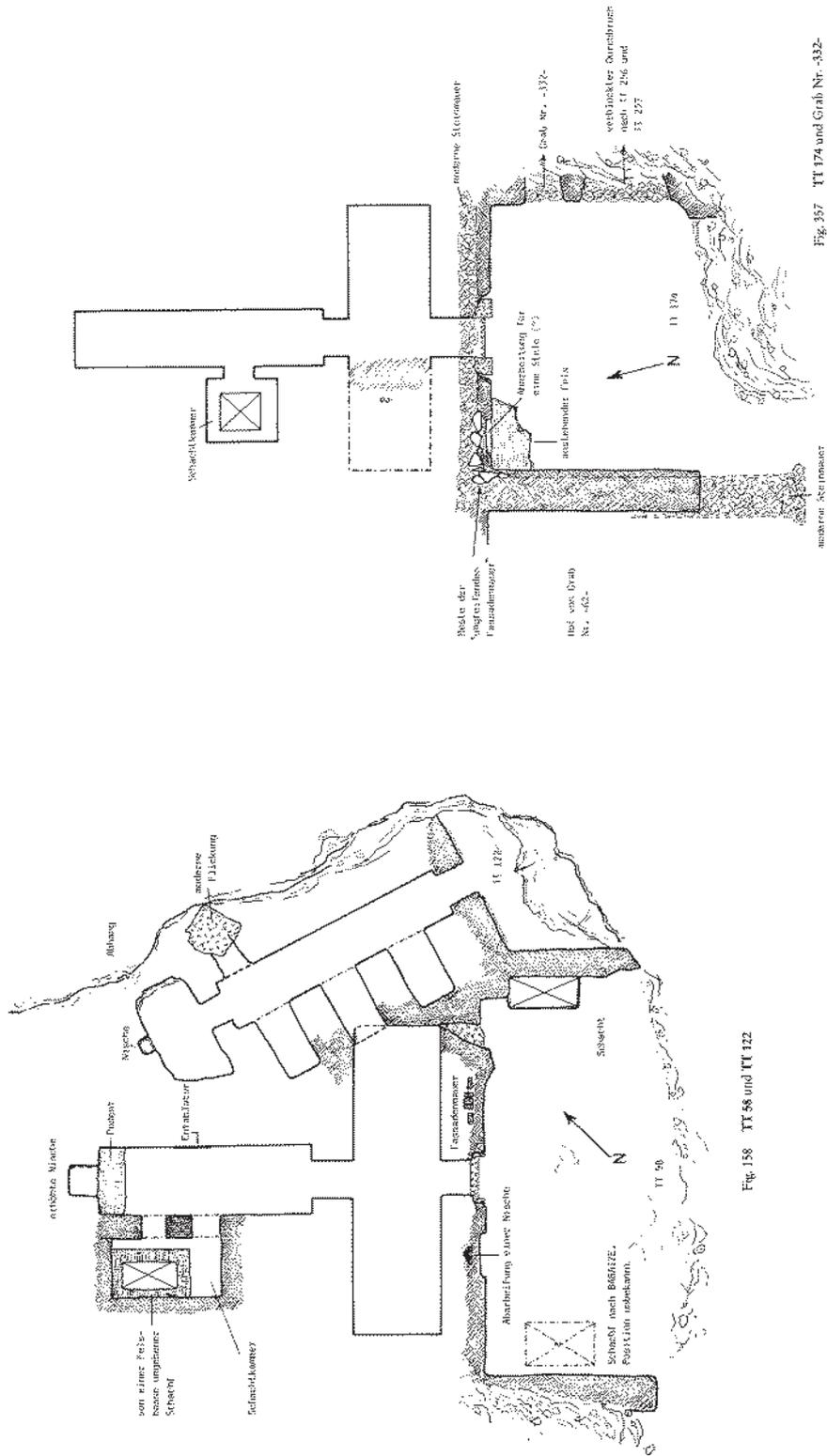


Fig. 138 TT 58 und TT 122

Fig. 357 TT 174 und Grab Nr. 462

Fig. 12: Tomb-chapels of Amenemone (TT 58; left) and Ashakhet (TT 174) (after Kampp 1996, 271, 462).



Fig. 13: The niche representing a naos in the tomb-chapel of Amenemone (TT 58).



Fig. 14: The 'Reward Scene' of the High Priest Amenhotep, Karnak.



Fig. 15: The façade of TT 65 (photograph by Ferenc Pfeffer).

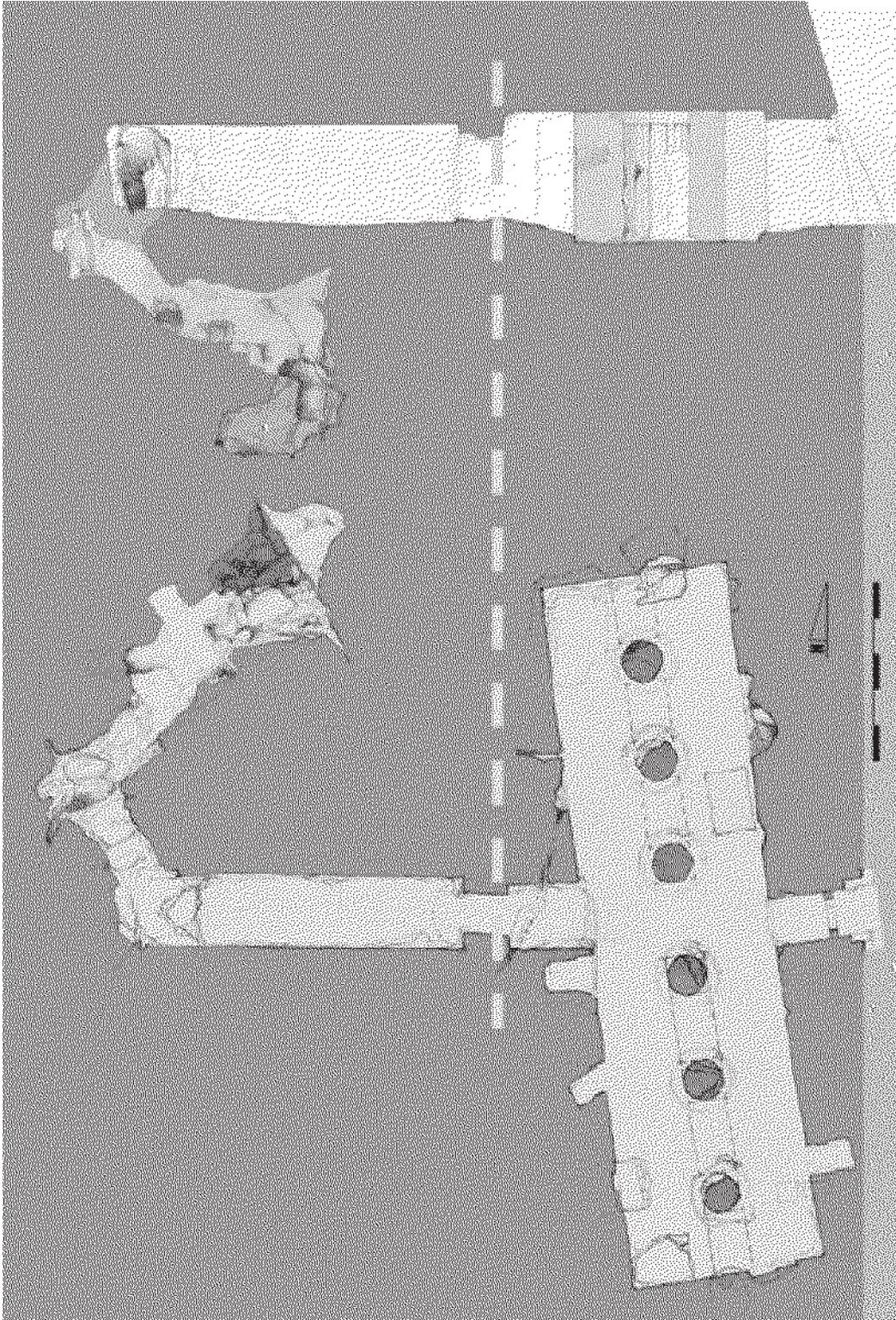


Fig. 16: Ground plan and section of TT 65 (drawing by Marcell Nagy).

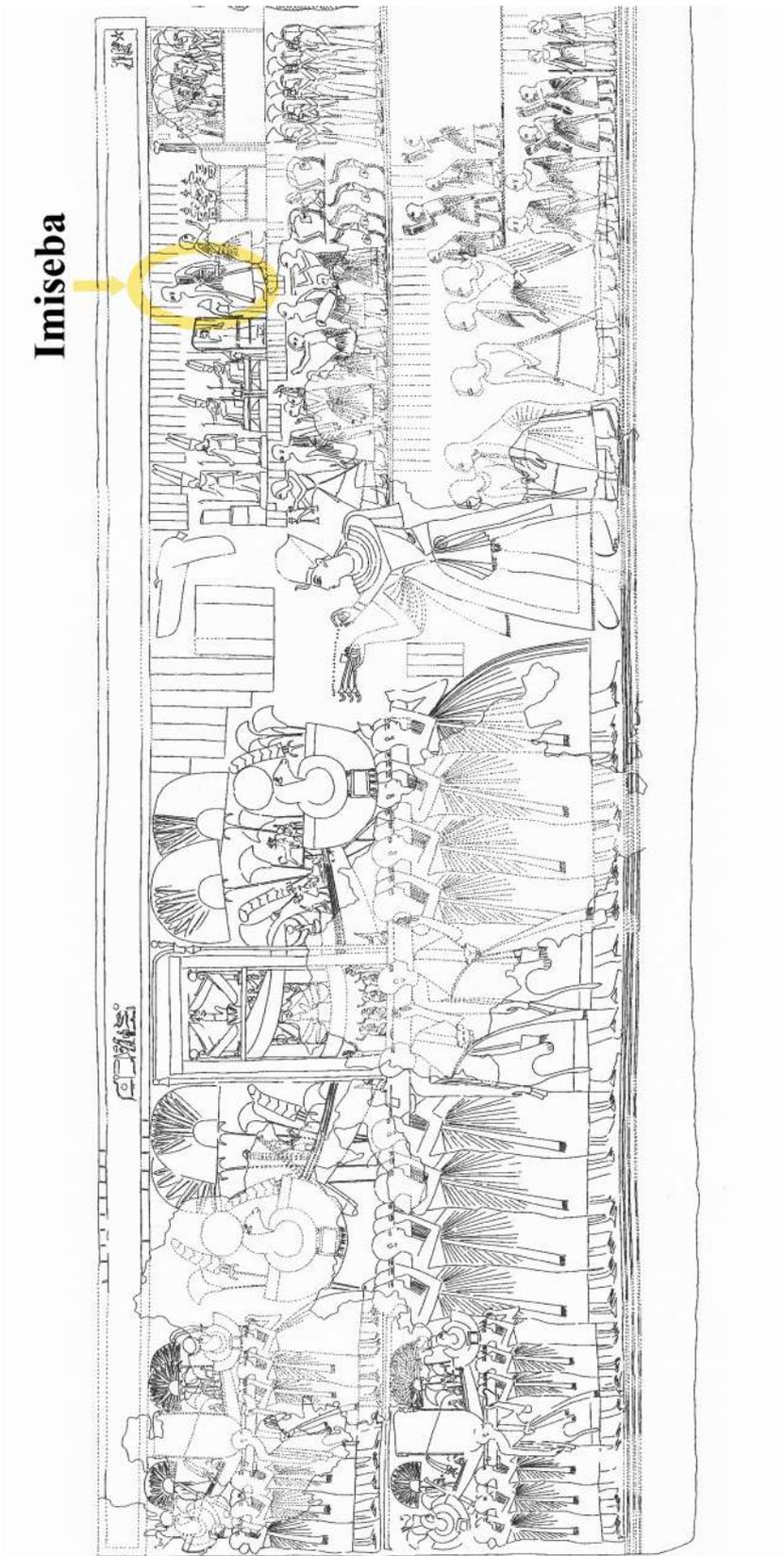


Fig. 17: TT 65, transverse Hall Northern Front Wall (sketch, by Krisztián Vértes). Imyseba is highlighted top right.



Fig. 18: TT 65, ceiling inscription carrying an offering-formula and containing an 'Appeal to the Living' text.



Fig. 19: TT 65, ceiling scene depicting the solar cycle (or BD 16).

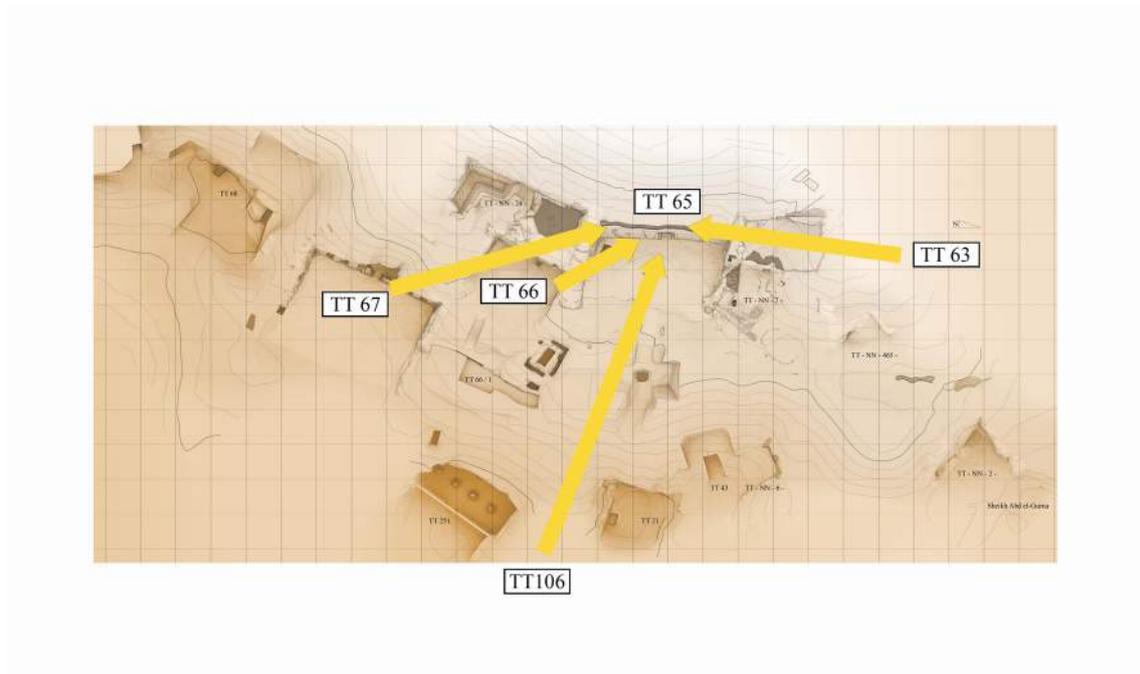


Fig. 20: The origin of certain texts in TT 65.

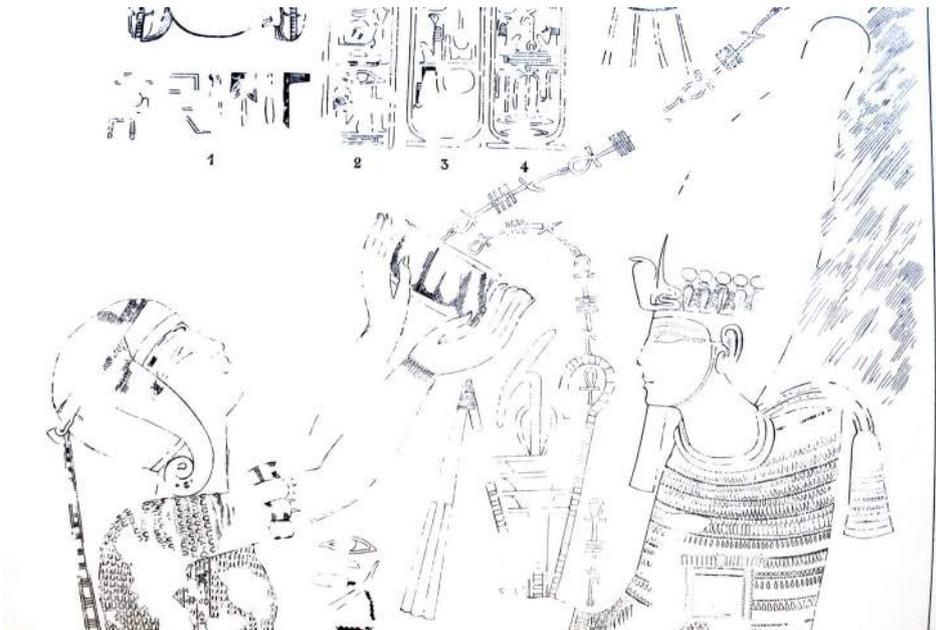
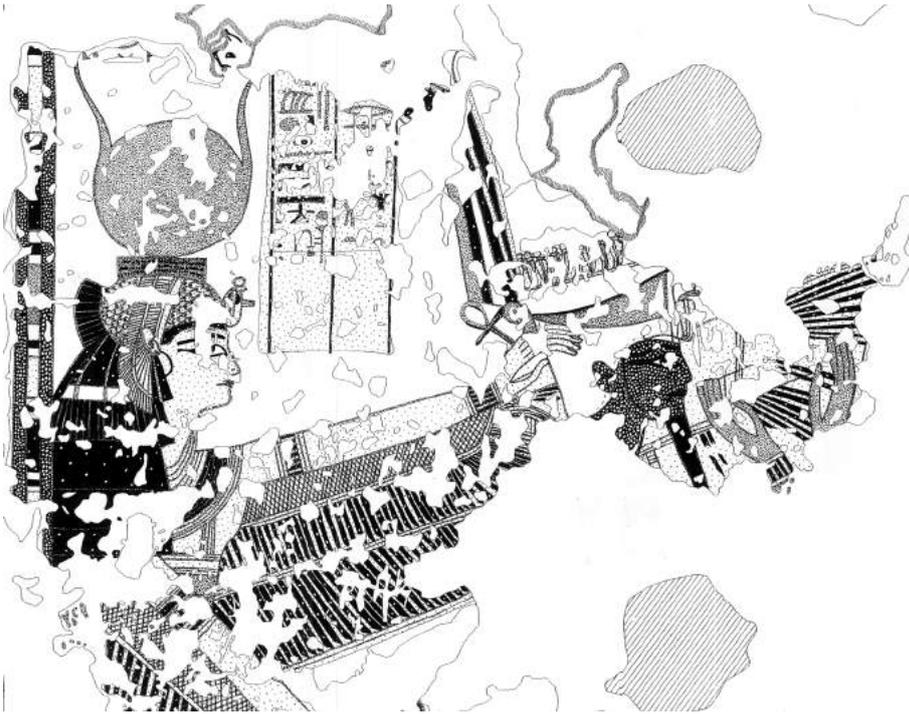


Fig. 21: Detail of purification scenes in TT 65 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés; top) and KV 6 (after Guilmant 1907, pl. 21; bottom).



Fig. 22: TT 65, ceiling scene showing the dual figures of Imiseba in adoration of a large *akhet*-sign.

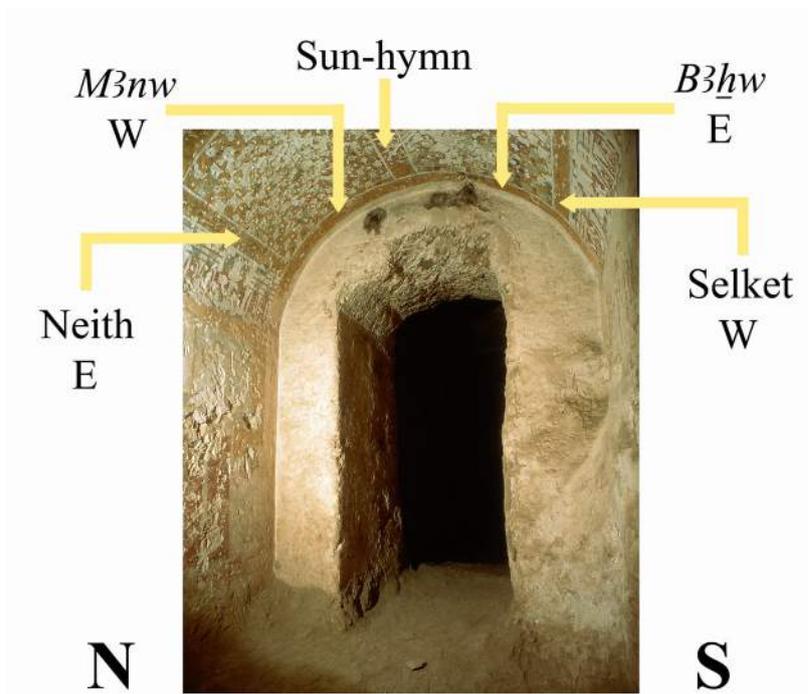


Fig. 23: TT 65, the cosmographic orientation of the axial corridor.



Fig. 24: TT 65, pair of facing scenes at the western end of the axial corridor.

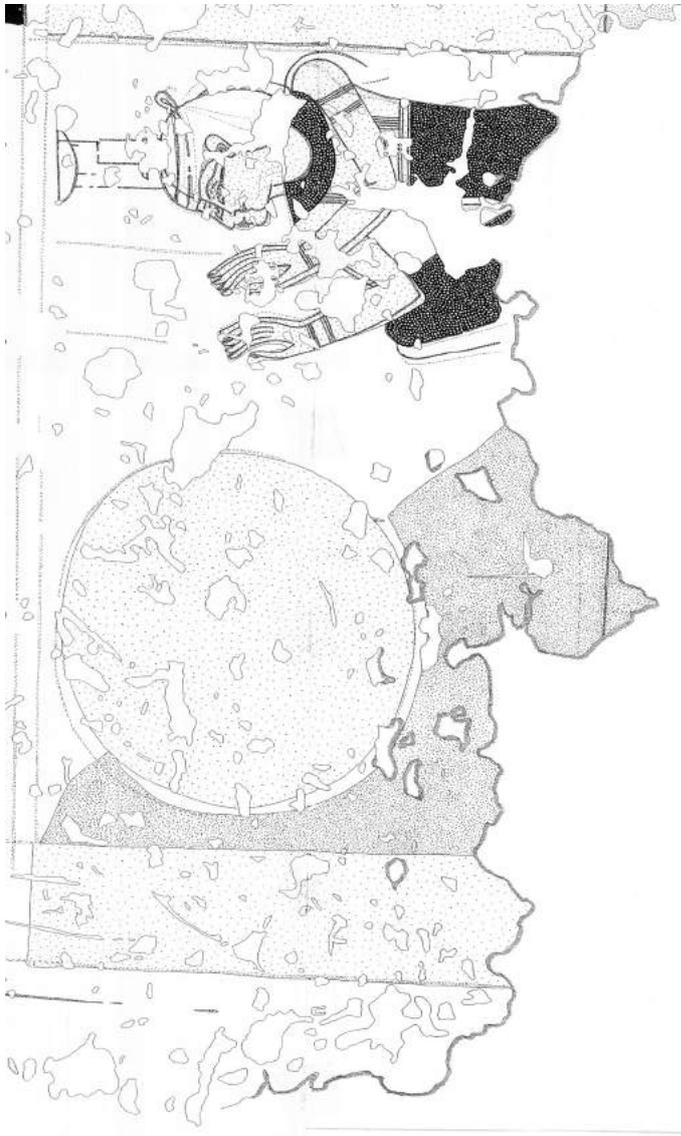


Fig. 25: TT 65, Isis and Nephthys adoring the rising sun (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).



Fig. 26: TT 65, distribution of the Book of the Dead vignettes on the axial corridor's northern wall (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).



Fig. 27: TT 65, vignette of BD 68 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

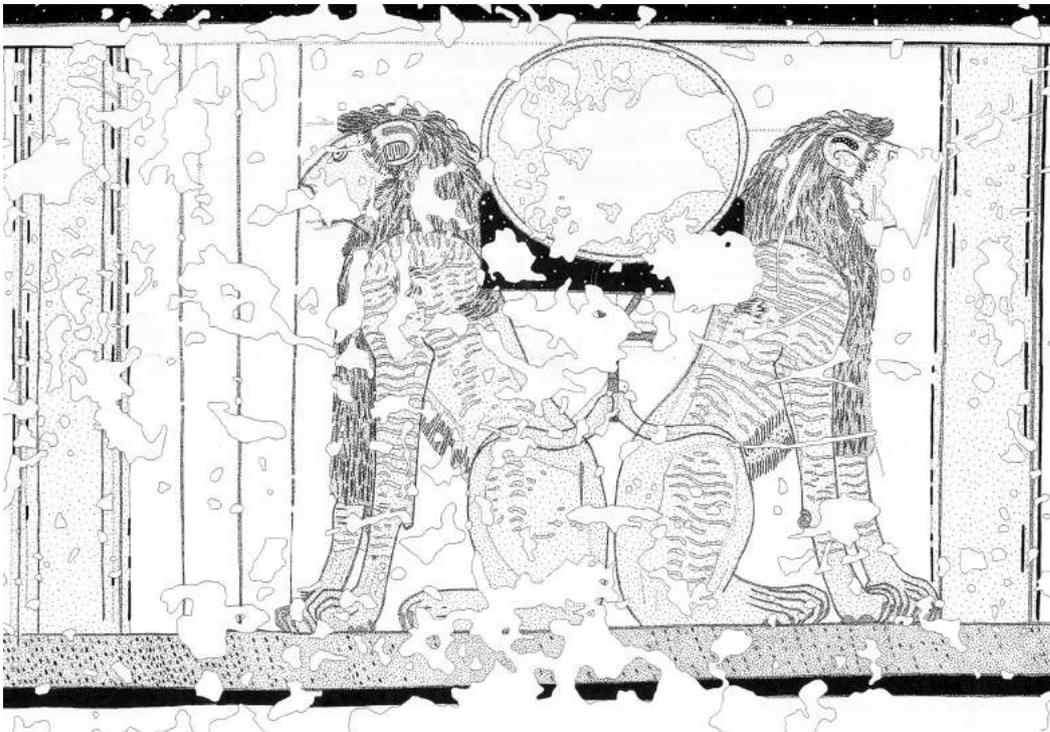


Fig. 28: TT 65, vignette of BD 17 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).

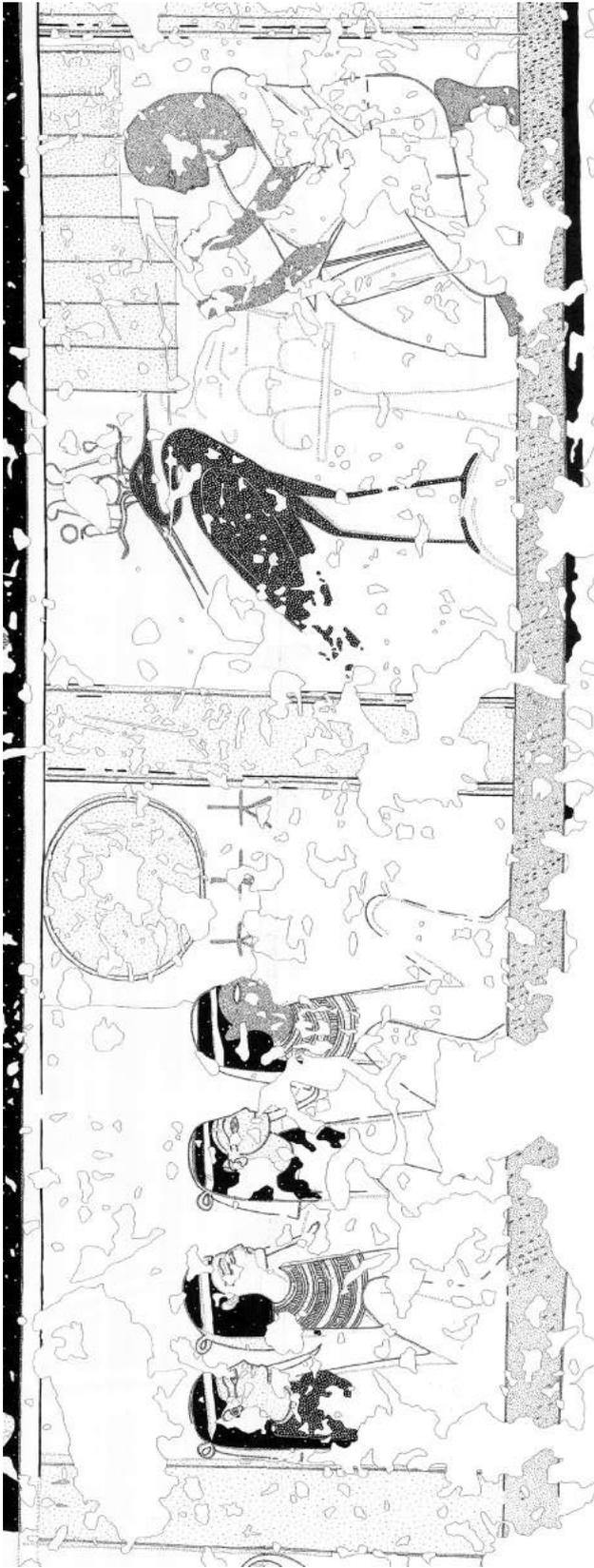


Fig. 29: TT 65. vignettes of BD 17 and 135 (drawing by Krisztián Vértés).