The Archaeological Expedition of the University of Pisa at Dra Abu el-Naga (M.I.D.A.N. Missione Italiana at Dra Abu el-Naga), under the direction of Prof. Marilina Betrò, has carried out from November 11 to December 10, 2010, the 10th field season at Dra Abu el-Naga, in the area of Theban Tomb 14 and tomb M.I.D.A.N.05.

To this field season contributed the following members of the expedition:

Marilina Betrò, Paolo Del Vesco, Gianluca Miniaci, Federica Facchetti, Gianluca Buonomini, Giorgia Cafici, Elena Tiribilli, Silvia Zago, Paolo Marini, Maria Antonietta Ricci, Renata Schiavo, Pierluigi De Rosa (University of Perugia). The Supreme Council of Egyptian Antiquities was represented by our inspector, Said Ahmed Said Ahmed Said, who always assisted us with competence and helpfulness.

The clearance of the forecourt had been started during 2007 and had brought, in 2009, to the identification of the wall bordering the northern side of the court, which had been cleared for an average height of 1.5 m and to a length of about 10 m (Fig. 1).
The afore mentioned field season focussed on the archaeological investigation of M.I.D.A.N.05 and TT 14 forecourt, as well as the areas north and north-east of them, so that to obtain a better understanding of the two tombs relationship with the surrounding archaeological landscape, and a more accurate view of the architectural and historical details of the investigated structures and their finds (Plan A).

**The forecourt**

During last season, the northern wall was cleared further, until reaching its corner with what seems to be the northern wing of the wall closing the courtyard on its eastern side, opposite to the main entrance of the tomb M.I.D.A.N.05. This wall is built of a filling of stones covered by mud bricks and whitish plaster. Its external surface was also originally coated by plaster. Part of this structure is still covered by a thick alluvial layer, which was not yet removed in this season (Fig. 2). The

![Fig. 1 - View of the northern side of the forecourt. The entrance to M.I.D.A.N.05 on the left.](image1)

![Fig. 2](image2)
southern wing and the eastern part of the wall were not yet investigated and they still lay covered by sand. The progress of work in the forecourt revealed many different mud brick structures, which, through the centuries, occupied it. Some of them almost certainly pertain to later buildings, although nothing more precise can be said until the area will not be completely excavated, removing everywhere the filling and reaching the ground floor. In the southern part of the courtyard, in front of the modern door to TT 14, the excavation revealed the original small forecourt belonging to the tomb of Huy itself: it is partly delimited by a wall, on its north side, built in large mud bricks, and partly excavated into the rock, on its western side; both sides were originally covered by a whitish plaster layer (Fig. 3). Traces of a niche in the western side may hint at the lodgement of a stela (Fig. 4). This small forecourt is a very interesting feature, since only in rare cases cluster tombs keep evidence of the boundary walls delimiting the single smaller courtyards inside a greater forecourt.
Two new tombs

During the clearance of the northern side of the courtyard of M.I.D.A.N.05, below the debris and flash floods layers, the entrance to two new tombs, presently unknown and unrecorded, was brought to light. The two tombs were cut into the northern rock wall delimiting the court (Fig. 5).

The two small tombs present both a small window to the left of the main door (facing it), an unusual feature, already observed in M.I.D.A.N.05, which could be typical of the transitional architecture phase between the saff-tomb type and the T-shaped Theban chapel. In M.I.D.A.N.05 the subsequent closing of the window by mud-bricks - dating not later than the first half of the 18th Dynasty - is clearly visible. A preliminary exploration and clearance of the two tombs was started in the here reported campaign, but their complete investigation will be carried out in next seasons. The two rock-cut tombs are both filled by debris and alluvial layers, created by numerous flash-floods. Traces of human disturbance can also be recognised in both, since the alluvial layers were partly destroyed by looters who dug their way into the compact sediment.

On the surface debris of the easternmost of the two burials (T.1)
a fragment of a statue pedestal in sandstone was found. The fragment preserves part of a symmetric double offering formula, carved and painted, and the remaining of a right foot, whose position, compared with the inscription, allows to suppose that the statue represented a couple (Fig. 6). The northern wall of the tomb shows what seems to be a great niche, probably designed to host a statue. On the western wall of the room traces of a thick brown layer of plaster, without any painting, are visible, possibly suggesting that the tomb was unfinished or indicating a later attempt to reuse it. In front of the entrance, a vaulted access, made of mud bricks and partly broken at the top, was found (Fig. 7). The eastern part of this structure was built against a huge boulder, lying in the courtyard, which was completely covered by debris, sand and mud before our clearance revealed it.

In the westernmost of the two small tombs, T.2, all the loose filling, due to human action, has been removed, revealing many thick alluvial layers of mud and compact sand.
The surrounding area

In 2009 the excavation of the area situated to the north and north-east of M.I.D.A.N.05 was started in order to remove the high load of loose debris covering the hill slope and to enable the excavation of the tomb courtyard. Two new shaft openings were revealed (P.1 and P.2) together with the remains of a large mud-brick structure covered by a thick and compact collapse layer. What was indicated as a shaft (K.03.7) in a plan published by the German Archaeological Institute, actually turned out to be just a wide cut in the bedrock apparently made in order to obtain a levelled surface on the slope. Part of the work of the season 2010 focussed on the same area, continuing the clearance activity.

P.1 bottom lies at only 60 cm of depth and it is perched by a sub-circular hole which connects the shaft to a small underlying chamber, probably not pertaining to it. An unplastered mud-brick wall was built on the eastern side of the shaft, almost certainly in the 19th century, as a retaining device to prevent the collapse of the surrounding debris; nonetheless, under that one, mud-bricks with a thick white mortar, part of the original structure surrounding the shaft opening, were still preserved in situ (Fig. 8).

In order to remove the debris from the transverse hall (room “a”) of M.I.D.A.N.05, a limited clearance activity was also carried out in the second shaft (P.2), to the north of the tomb (Fig. 9). Debris had indeed entered the northern part of M.I.D.A.N.05 hall through a breach...
in the rock-cut wall separating the tomb from the nearby shaft. As this preliminary investigation revealed, the breach was indirectly caused by cutting into the rock of the tomb hall at the time of its building, by this way making the rock thinner. However, the crack did not open in ancient times but probably later: the wall in fact had been prepared and painted, as some traces show. The completion of the clearance of this shaft is planned for the following season. Amongst the debris filling the shaft, a fragmentary statue has been found, laying over an alluvial layer (Figs. 10a and 10b). The function of the large mud-brick structure situated to the north of the tomb courtyard is still undefined, but an interesting feature was revealed: adjoining the main structure made up of clayey floors and carefully plastered mud-brick walls, a sector of overlapping levels of mud-bricks and limestone chips was found. The whole structure was covered by its own collapse, a compact layer of mud-brick pieces, stones and white mortar and plaster fragments, and the entire area suffered of an intensive looting activity with the excavation of numerous robber pits (Fig. 11). The pits were clearly concentrated in the area of the mud-brick structure, and at least two of them were left exposed for some time as evident from the presence of thin mud layers.
(occasional rains) and rests of a honeycomb.

In these areas a series of small vases have been found (Fig. 12), as well as a nice fragment of funerary mask (Fig. 13) and a number of shabties in blue faience.
New wall paintings in M.I.D.A.N.05

During the last part of the season, once removed the filling of the shaft up to the level of the breach, the work was set up in the inner part of M.I.D.A.N.05. with the intent to remove the deposit in the northern half of the transverse hall. The clearance of the upper layers revealed the remains of painted scenes on the eastern wall of the hall. The surviving decoration, although in some instances very damaged by the flash-flood action, allows to reconstruct, under the khekerw frieze, an offering scene, with the owner of the tomb giving his back to the northern wall and probably sitting in front of an offering table (only the shoulder of the dead and traces of the offerings are detectable). Beyond the table a male figure, whose red breast and arms vividly contrast with the wall background, stands in front of the dead. His only preserved arm seems raised in the offering gesture. About half meter behind him, rows of relatives and friends sitting at the banquet must be, for the moment being, only supposed: just a female figure in the upper row is preserved in the portion of the scene so far brought to light (Fig. 14). She sits on a chair with her arms stretched out toward an offering table now destroyed; only a part of the woman was painted, while the lower part of her body and the chair are simply sketched in red. A short caption faces the woman, in a column of painted hieroglyphs, whose last part is readable $s\tilde{a}.t-f\ mr.t-f$, [...] “his beloved daughter [...]”. The name of the woman is unfortunately lost.

Fig. 14
Behind her, some jars or red loafs are visible over an offering table, under which is an amphora, with its conical cap and a blue lotus flower twisted around its body. Over the scene and over the woman a painted band of hieroglyphs, larger in size than the previous ones and probably running all over the scene, is inscribed: [...] d.t n k₃ n[..]. On the left of n the inscription is lost but it is still clearly detectable part of an arm, to read a or dj. It is really regrettable that the wall plaster was broken in this point, since this hieroglyph is all that survives of the still unknown name and titles of the owner of this tomb.

Main finds

The main finds from the above mentioned investigated areas came from the loose filling deposit and cannot be connected, presently, to any well defined context. Besides the already mentioned fragments of sculptures, a beautiful fragment from the head of a limestone statue, with its still vivid colours well preserved on the wig and the collar, while, unfortunately, its face is missing, had been found in 2009 in the upper layers of the forecourt (Fig. 15); part of another statue, inscribed for a wab-priest Ahmose, had been brought to light during the same field season (Fig. 16), as well as many fragments of inscribed or decorated blocks. Abundant, as usually, were funerary cones, belonging to different owners of the surrounding tombs in the area,
known and unknown: Nebansu, captain of the High Priest of Amun, whose tomb, very near, was found by the DAIK mission (Davies-Macadam 514); Benegy, steward of the princess hnw.t-m-p.t (Davies-Macadam 260), and others. As already said, a great quantity of bright blue faience shabties, belonging to a lady named Tahetesmontu, datable to the Third Intermediate Period (or even to the end of the Ramesside period), have been found scattered all around the site, which proves that her burial must be in the neighbourhood, possibly on a slightly higher terrace of the Main Hill (Figs. 17, 18).

Her name had been previously read as t3-pr.t-s-Mntw, but one shabty among the newly found exemplars allowed the slightly different reading. The inscription, in three columns painted on the front part, is rather unusual. Other significant finds of the season were the numerous fragments of painted coffins and cartonnages (Figs. 19, 21, 22). The most relevant
or fragile finds were consolidated by the expedition restorer Gianluca Buonomini. A well represented category was also basketry, with many samples of different fragments of ropes, mats, baskets (Fig. 20).
Monitoring and consolidation works in TT 14

Although this season program work did not include TT 14, a thorough monitoring of its paintings and structural conditions was carried out, as each year. In particular, a very detailed study of the rock mass of TT 14 and some consolidation interventions were made by Pierluigi De Rosa (University of Perugia, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering), in view of next excavation campaign in TT 14, planned for next season (Fig. 23).

See “Report of structural geology field data collected in November 2010 at Dra Abu el-Naga”
Dra Abu el-Naga
Italian Archaeological Mission 2010
Preliminary Plan