
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 my direction, has carried out from November 10 to December 3, 2009, the 9th field season at Dra Abu el-Naga, in the area in front and north of Theban Tomb 14 and tomb M.I.D.A.N.05, the new tomb discovered in 2004 west of TT 14 (Fig. 1). I wish to express my deep appreciation for their help and support to our work during this season to the Director General of Southern Upper Egypt, Mansur Borak; the Director General of the West Bank, Mustafa Waziri, the Director of the Northern Sector of the West Bank, Mohammed Abd el-Aziz, and the Chief Inspector Yahia Abd el-Alim. The SCA inspector assigned to our mission was Ramadan Ahmed Mohammed, whose cooperation has been precious to us1.

Primary goal of the present season has been:

1. Continuation of the clearance of the forecourt, according to the SCA concession of April 21, 2009.

The clearance of the forecourt of TT 14 and the new tomb M.I.D.A.N.05 had been started during 2007, bringing to light the upper part of the rock façade of the new tomb and its main entrance, up to its northern side. The remaining part of the façade and the

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northern part of the transverse hall of M.I.D.A.N.05, still filled by flash flood and loose deposits, could not be cleared further, because of the big amount of debris, dust and rubble accumulated in time along the slope of this part of Dra Abu el-Naga hill, over and in front of that tomb. It was therefore necessary to proceed preliminarily with the clearance of the area north and north-west of M.I.D.A.N.05. (Fig. 1)

Our work was also aimed to the definition of the area of the forecourt of the two tombs and their relationship with the surrounding archaeological landscape, so that to obtain a more accurate understanding of the architectural and historical details of the investigated structures and their finds.

After the necessary bureaucratic procedures, proper work started on November 11. In order to safely reach and delineate the north side of the forecourt we started removing the debris situated to the east and the south of the modern wall enclosing the new road to the tombs of Roy and Shuroy. We proceeded the excavation following the archaeological stratification on succeeding steps. On the rock slope of the mountain, exactly above the main entrance of the tomb M.I.D.A.N.05, we found a rock cut platform,

![Fig. 2](image)

remains of mud-brick walls with thick white mortar which probably pertain to the surrounding wall of a funerary shaft (Fig. 2). In a later phase a dry mud-brick wall was built in order to retain the debris filling the shaft and allowing the plunderers to reach the bottom of the structure.
To the north of the rock-cut platform a huge robbery pit was found and after removing the loose filling produced by the robbers we identified the opening of another big funerary shaft (Fig. 3).

On the north side of it a dry stone wall was built by the robbers in order to retain the surrounding debris. A smaller pit was also dug by them outside the eastern side of the funerary shaft following what is actually the northern part of the rock facade of M.I.D.A.N.05.

The northern side of the forecourt (Fig. 4) was identified and cleared for an average height of 1.5 mt and to a length of about 10 mt.
It shows the remains of a mud-brick wall built directly upon the rock slope of the mountain continuing with a better preserved brick-wall with thick white mortar which finally rests on a stone and mortar wall.

Just to the north of the main entrance of M.I.D.A.N.05, in the north-western corner of the forecourt a part of the original deposit was spared for the moment, photographed and digitally drawn as it clearly shows the stratification of the succeeding flood deposits which reached the court and, obviously, entered the tombs. In the remaining part of the forecourt was reached a layer which should be situated at about 1.60 mt over the original rock-cut floor.

To the north of the northern side wall of the forecourt the remains of a mud-brick structure were found. The original function of this building is not yet clear, but it may represent the superstructure of a tomb. It was covered by a thick collapse made of mortar, mud-bricks and stones and it was badly damaged by many ancient robbery pits and tunnels.

Some of the modern retaining walls surrounding the entrance of TT 14 were demolished in order to proceed with the excavation and new dry stone retaining walls.
(Fig. 5) were built along the northern and the eastern edge of the cleared area so as to preserve the steps dug through the stratification of the sloping deposit.

Fig. 5

Most of the finds of this season consist in faience shabties, few terracotta shabties, fragments of painted coffins and cartonnage and funerary cones (Fig. 6). The fragments of funerary equipment clearly derive from the numerous pillages made in the area in ancient times, up to the beginning of the 20th century, and attested by the robbery pits found during our investigation.

Fig. 6

A part of the finds was also carried here by the flash floods or fell down by the upper part of the hills: this is certainly the case, for example, of the many funerary cones of the Captain of the First prophet of Amun, Nebansu (Fig. 7).
In this season Maria Cristina Guidotti and Federica Facchetti studied the pottery from the tomb M.I.D.A.N.05 and its court. They reconstructed five new vases and completed ten others that had been left unfinished from the last seasons. Those new vases are mainly little jars dated from New Kingdom until Saite Period. Painted pottery fragments dated to the New Kingdom were also found. All pottery fragments were labelled and assembled in accordance with their morphological features, silt or slip. A big jar filled with bandages and resin remains, which probably contained the embalmers’ discards, was also found. In many cases the fragments of a re-assembled vase were found in very different contexts, sometimes both from inside and outside the tomb. Each vase and many interesting fragments have been filed, photographed and drawn.

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