

**THREE NEW ROCK-CUT TOMBS AT DRAA ABU EL-NAGA**

Abou Zaid, O.

*Egyptology dept, Faculty of Archaeology, Aswan Univ., Aswan, Egypt.**E-mail address: [omarabouzaid76@gmail.com](mailto:omarabouzaid76@gmail.com)***Article info.****Article history:**

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**Abstract:**

*This paper deals with three new rock-cut tombs discovered in Draa Abu el-Naga at Thebes during the field work of the new Theban tombs project (NTTMP) which was started in 2014 with my colleagues Ali Asfar, Ahmed Ezz, Ahmed el-Tayeb, Omar Hassan, Hanan Hassan, Mohammed Beabesh, Mahmoud Hassan, Hussein el-Amir, Waleed Youssef, Ahmed Hassan in order to document and register all the newly uncovered tombs beneath the houses of Qurna. Many of these tombs were uncovered for the first time during the course of this project. In addition to publishing several epigraphic tombs of similar design, in a damaged or deteriorated condition, this paper demonstrates that they date to the Middle Kingdom. The discovery of tombs from this period constitutes a significant addition to the project.*

**1. Introduction**

The "new Theban tombs mapping project (NTTMP) [1] has been undertaken by a team consisting of A. Tayeb, O. Fathi, H. Hassan, M. Baebesh and M. Azab, and has been in progress since 2014. This is the second article devoted to the project work in Draa Abu el-Naga, the first paper concerned the tomb NTTMP 47 which dates to the New kingdom [2]. During the past hundred years, many missions have worked in Draa Abu el-Naga not only due to the considerable geographical extent of this area, but also because of the presence of various architectural types of tombs, dating from the Middle kingdom (especially those of the Egyptian warrior kings of the XVII<sup>th</sup> dynasty- Ta'o I, Ta'o, Kamose –[3]) to the Roman period [4]. The tomb in ancient Egypt was the place where life ended and the afterlife began, and the tomb's decoration often gives much information

about the owner's social and family life, particularly if inscriptions are preserved. Yet in cases where the tomb's inscriptions and reliefs about the owner's life, such as the tomb's size, architectural complexity, and its location in context [5]. The significance of the tombs in question (NTTMP28, NTTMP90, NTTMP101), fig (1) is not as that of the new tombs at Draa Abu el-Naga (North, Middle and South) [6,7] particularly since all of their inscriptions were erased or damaged, but rather that they attest a new archaeological extension during the Middle kingdom to the Draa Abu el-Naga cemetery, which was published in this paper, allows the maps in Kampp's publication [8] and also Polz's map [4] to be updated. Three tombs will be added to the catalogue of tombs in the necropolis, specifically in Draa Abu el-Naga including complete documentation (Description, Type, Date) and registration numbers.



Figure (1) Shows site map of the three tombs (After, Google Earth)

## 2. The Studied Tombs

### 2.1. Site and Location

#### 2.1.1. NTTMP 28

Located in middle [9] Draa Abu el-Naga with the following coordinates: (N/ 2846 514.43) (E: 462109.027). The site of this tomb, fig. (2) is distinguished by bad lime stone which probably reflects the social position of the owner [5]. Its site is close to (NTTMP 47) which was published previously and both were uncovered in 2014/2015 [2].



Figure (2) Shows the new tomb NTTMP 28 at North Draa Abu el-Naga; **a.** site map (After, Google Earth) **b.** location (After, Polz 2005)<sup>(a)</sup>

#### 2.1.2. NTTMP 90

The tomb NTTMP 90, fig. (3) is located in south Draa Abu el-Naga (close to old

Sahet Sheikh el-Tayeb) with the following coordinates: (N: 2846385.714) and (E: 461537).

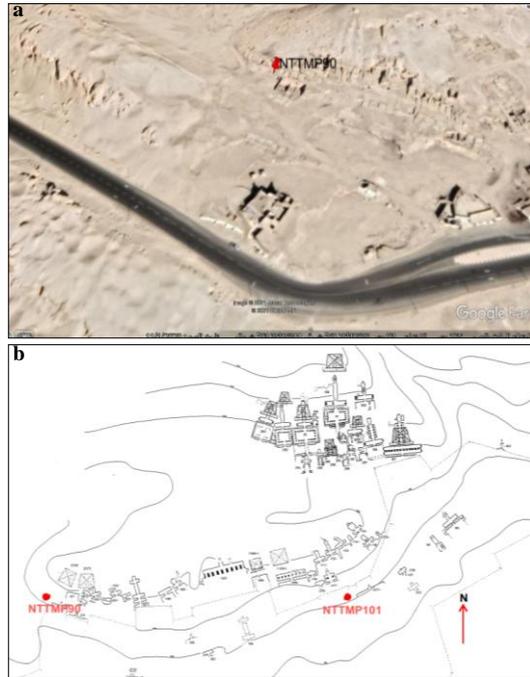


Figure (3) Shows the new tomb NTTMP 90 at middle Draa Abu el-Naga; **a.** site map (After, Google Earth) **b.** location (After, Kamp 1996)

#### 2.1.3. NTTMP 101

The tomb, fig. (2-b & 4) is located in south part of Draa Abu el-Naga with the following coordinates: (N: 2846403.722) and (E: 461810.092)



Figure (4) Shows the new tomb NTTMP 101 (After, Google Earth)

### 2.1. Description

#### 2.1.1. NTTMP 28

It is a rock-cut tomb, fig. (5) facing south, fronted by a forecourt leading to the main entrance of the tomb which measures 1.80 m, then a transverse passage measuring 9.20 m × 2 m, followed by an elongated passage measuring 16 m × 3 m. This tomb

was inhabited by the villagers in modern times between 2005-2007 the authorities took action to protect the necropolis by moving the inhabitants to a new village (New Qurna). As result the effects of human activity are in evidence both outside and inside this tomb. On the outside, the mud-brick walls and stone-walls show traces of the modern occupation around the tomb and its forecourt, particularly the presence of modern mud-brick walls inside the court. This evidence clarifies the vertical and horizontal occupation of the outer parts of the tomb. The effects of daily life activities are also clear inside the inner parts of the tomb, within the traverse passage.

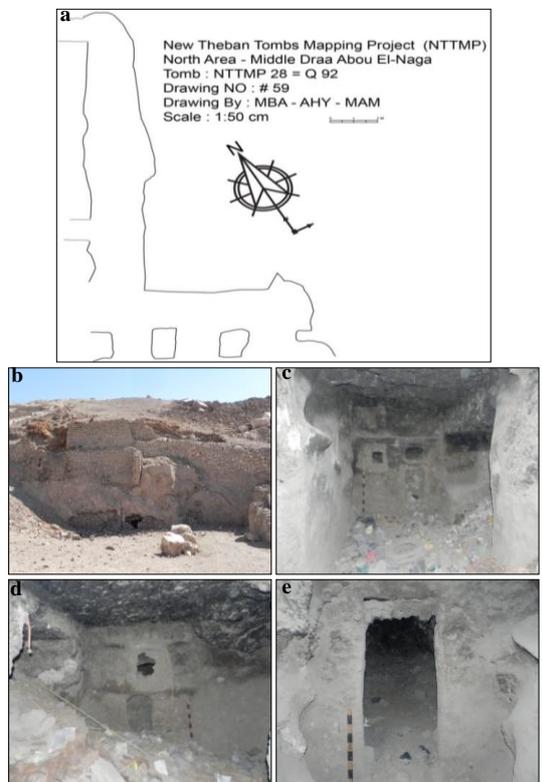


Figure (5) Shows NTTMP 28 tomb; **a.** plan, **b.** forecourt and buried entrance, **c.** & **d.** traverse passage, **e.** entrance of the elongated passage.

### 2.1.2. NTTMP 90

NTTMP 90, fig. (6) is a rock-cut saff tomb facing south, measuring about 17 m length and fronted by a forecourt leading to three intact entrances each one about 1.50 m, followed by a transverse passage measuring 10 m × 1.75 m, then an elongated passage of 11.60 m × 1.60 m ended with a niche, fig. (6-a, b), beyond which is a small tran-

verse hall, probably added later, which measures 4 m × 2.50 m. At the eastern side of this hall there is a shaft (2.53 m L. × 1 m. W. × 6 m. D.).

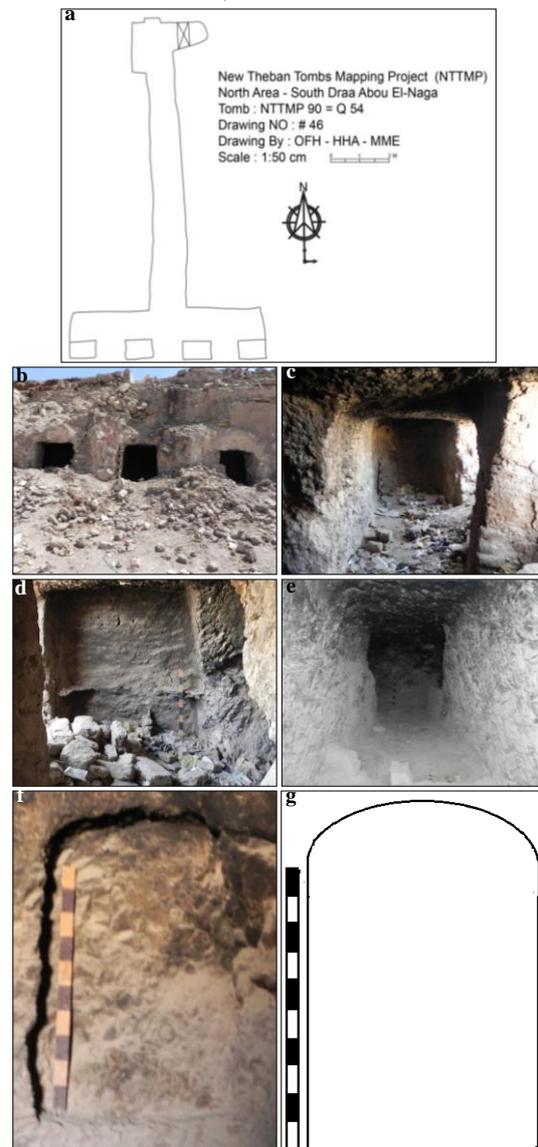


Figure (6) Shows NTTMP 90 tomb; **a.** plan, **b.** façade of saff entrances, **c.** inner view of saff façade, **d.** entrance of the elongated passage, **e.** inner room with shaft, **f.** & **g.** Niche of the tomb.

### 2.1.3. NTTMP 101

It is a rock-cut tomb, fig. (7) beginning with a forecourt of unclear dimensions, leading to the main entrance of the tomb (2.68 m), followed by an elongated passage (20 m × 2.68 m), (blocked with a modern mud-brick wall), ending with an irregular chamber (3 m × 2.50 m) probably an unfinished later extension.

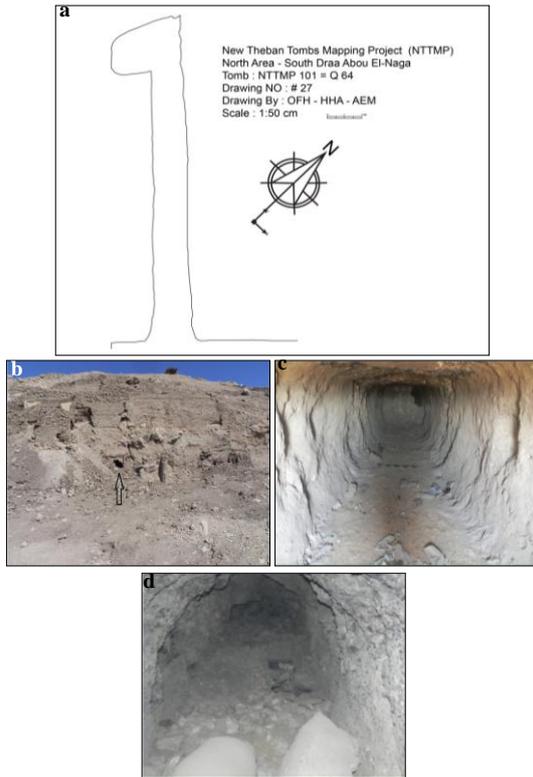


Figure (7) Shows NTTMP 101 tomb: **a.** plan, **b.** entrances, **c.** elongated passage, **d.** irregular chamber

### 3. Results

In general, inscriptions, artifacts, objects, and samples, subjected to a methodological analysis permit the examination and assessment of the date of any tomb [10]. The tombs in question exhibit none of these categories of evidence, so, the best criteria for dating them are the architectural layout and architectural structures subjected to analysis by typological comparison [11,12]. Kampp based her classification of Theban tombs on the study and comparison of around 600 tombs, which she classified into two main groups:

- 1) Tombs without interior supporting elements (Pillar/Column).
- 2) Tombs with interior supporting elements [8,9].

#### 3.1. NTTMP 28 & NTTMP 90

In the case of NTTMP 28 it seems that the irregular wall of the elongated passage indicates later reuse, as does the unfinished small corridor at the end of the tomb. However, for NTTMP 90 it could be said

that the chamber was recut later in order to enlarge it, but this chamber seems to be unfinished, and the shaft of could have been added later. Another unique feature of this tomb is the number of *saff* pillars of its façade (4 pillars), although the ideal number, according to Kampp, is 6 Pillars; no tomb type in Kampp's classification has four *saff* pillars, as do the tomb in question (NTTMP28, NTTMP90) [8,9]. Therefore these two tombs could classified as (IIIb), fig. (8), taking into consideration that there is no need to create (on the part of the author) a new classification (IIIc) derived from that of Kampp (IIIa, IIIb) [8,9]. Future excavation may uncover new rock-cut tombs with various numbers of pillars of this type. Table (1) shows the tombs similar to NTTMP 28, NTTMP 90 along with tombs of the same period in order to approximate the date. According to Kampp's classification of type (IIIa-b) [8] and the table above, these two tombs probably date to the Middle kingdom, specifically because of the squared corner of the entrance of the elongated passage.

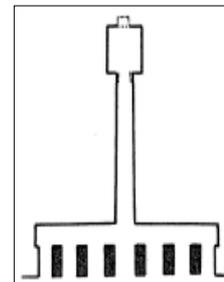


Fig (8) Shows type IIIb of Kampp (After, Kampp, 1996)

Table (1) The tombs similar to NTTMP 28, NTTMP 90 from the same period

No.	Tomb no. [8]	Owner	Site	Period
1	TT81	Tun.i <sup>[13]</sup>	Sheikh Abd el-Quma	MK [8] / Amenhotep I to Tutmosis III [8,14]
2	TT 103	Dig.i	Assasif	Mentuhotep II [15]
3	TT 117	? (Used by Djedmetefankh) [14]	Sheikh Abd el-Quma	XI Dynasty [14]
4	-9-	?		MK <sup>[9]</sup> [8]
5	-20-	?		MK
6	-76-	?		MK
7	-107-	?	Draa Abu el-Nagan	MK
8	-282-	?	Qurnet Murai	MK
9	-288-	?		MK
10	-349-	?	El-Khokha	MK
11	-351-	?		MK
12	-425-	?		MK
13	-427-	?		MK
14	-428-	?		MK
15	-488-	?	Sheikh Abd el-Quma	MK
16	-549-	?		MK
17	-550-	?		MK

#### 3.2. NTTMP 101

This tomb could be classified as type IIIa of Kampp, fig. (9) [8,9]; it belongs to group 1 (without interior supporting eleme-

nts) [8,9]. The squared corner (right angle) of the beginning of the elongated passage is the same as those found in MK tombs [8]. One more piece of evidence for dating this tomb to the MK is the shape of the end of the elongated passage of this tomb which is the same as in the tomb of Dagi (TT103), the vizier of Mentuhotep II. This tomb was started before he became vizier, and its plan was modified when he was appointed to this office [15]. It is notable that the concentration of this tomb-type is in Assasif, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and Deir el-Bahari [16]. Therefore, the tomb in question could have been reused later, perhaps its inner parts were left unfinished. Table (2) shows the contemporary and similarity among (NTTMP 101) and tombs of same period to specify the approximate date to them. The tombs in question are classified as group1 (without interior supporting elements) of Kampp (Type IIIa and IIIb). These tombs also have the distinctive architectural feature that the beginning of the elongated passage shows the squared corner (└┘) which distinguishes the MK tombs. Other tombs in group 1 of Kampp display different beginning of the elongated passage (└┘), which dates to the Seventeenth dynasty and the NK [8]. According to the chart of Kampp for Draa Abu El-Naga, of tombs of Type IIIa and IIIb there is one of each class. Therefore the new tombs presented here will allow us to modify Kampp's chart, fig. (10-a), adding a new extension of the Middle kingdom tombs in Draa Abu el-Naga as follows, fig. (10-b).

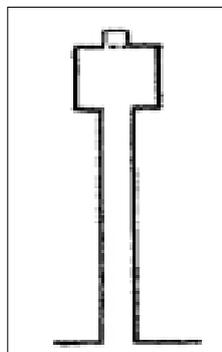


Fig (9) Shows type IIIa of Kampp (After, Kampp, 1996)

Table (2) The contemporary and similarity among (NTTMP 101) and tombs of same period

No.	Tomb no.[8]	Owner	Site	Period
1	TT 60	Intefigir	Sheikh Abd Qurna	Sesostris I [8,14] (MK)
2	TT 61	User		Ahmosse I, Tuthmosis I [8], Tuthmosis III [14]
3	TT 82	Amenemhat		Hatshepsut/Tuthmosis III [8,14]
4	TT 119	?		Hatshepsut/Tuthmosis III [8,14] / MK[8]
5	TT 270	Amenemwia	Qurnet Murai	XIX Dyn [14], (Usurped from XI dynasty) [14]
6	-4-	?	Sheikh Abd Qurna	MK <sup>9</sup> [8]
7	-12-	?		MK
8	-14-	?		MK
9	-24-	?		MK
10	-27-	?		MK(re-used in NK)
11	-71-	?		MK
12	-73-	?		MK
13	-77-	?		MK
14	-79-	?		MK
15	-80-	?		MK
16	-84-	?		MK
17	-85-	?		MK
18	-90-	?		MK
19	-94-	?		MK
20	-264-	?		MK
21	-363-	?		MK
22	-366-	?		MK
23	-426-	?		MK?
24	-449-	?		MK?
25	-535-	?		MK?

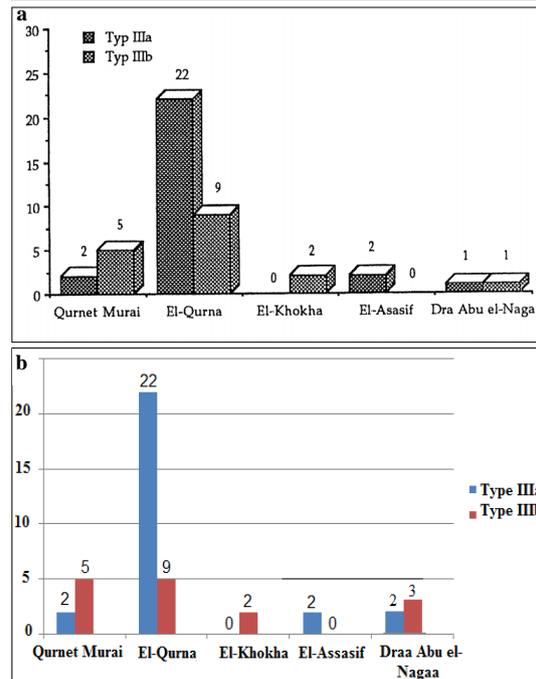


Fig (10) Shows **a.** chart of distribution of tombs of Types III a-b at Thebes, **b.** new chart of the distribution of tombs of Types IIIa-b including the three new tombs at Draa Abu el-Naga (After, Kampp, 1996)

#### 4. Discussion

At Thebes, the royal cemetery of the kings of Middle kingdom was located in El-Tarif, including the tombs of the kings named Intef and in Deir El-Bahari [17]. Wherein was situated the tomb of Mentuhotep II and the early tombs of the high officials of the Middle kingdom (probably from the third decade of the reign of Mentuhotep II [18] until the first years of king Amenemhat I) [15] in particular, the courtiers of Mentuhotep II cut their tombs in the northern cliff of Deir El-Bahari [19,20] during the reign of their king [21] in order to overlook his tomb [15]. In addition an unfinished mortuary temple of the early Middle king-

dom was found behind Sheikh Abd el-Qurna [22]. Later, some high officials of the Middle kingdom with Theban origins moved with their kings to establish a new capital at Lisht [20] under Amenemhat I and Senwosert I [23]. "Saff" is an Arabic word that means "row", and the *saff*-tomb is a new style of tomb façade with rows of pillars cut into the hill slopes or into the ground, which first appeared in the Eleventh Dynasty under the Intef Kings at El-Tarif [15,16]. The *Saff*-tomb consists of a row of pillars, beyond which a corridor leads to a chapel with one or two columns [15]. Some scholars have suggested that the façades of the Hatshepsut temple and of early Eighteenth dynasty tombs were influenced by the façade [*saff*] of the MK tombs [22]. In fact, there are three *saff*-tombs at El-Tarif: 1) Saff el-Dawaba (dating to Intef I -Sehertawy-), Saff el-Kisasija (Intef II-Wahankh-) and Saff el-Baqar (Intef Nekhtebtepnefer) [24]. In each cemetery of the Middle kingdom, the tombs' owner established and fashioned it to be his eternal house (*hwt n nhh/ pr dt*) [25, 26]. to put his body (*ht*) inside it [27].

## 5. Conclusion

*The inhabitants of Qurna occupied the whole necropolis, particularly Draa Abu el-Nagaa, for a long period of time. Regarding human activities, there is clear evidence of their daily life, using the tombs as houses, bedrooms, bathrooms, and sometimes as byres for animals or for birds. As a result, the majority of these tombs lost their inscriptions and reliefs, and sometimes tomb-robbers dug illegally inside these tombs, so there are many architectural features that were transformed by destruction or by the addition of new elements such as modern shafts, which make it challenging to date these tombs. The tombs in question have no inscriptions or reliefs, and their surfaces are damaged due to the above mentioned factors. This is the first time that the NTTMP has recorded tombs dating to the Middle kingdom, and there are some additional newly uncovered tombs in Draa Abu el-Nagaa from various periods currently being studied which may add yet another new corpus of data concerning the Theban necropolis.*

## Endnotes

a) It was so difficult to collect the three new tombs in a detailed map because

the distance between the NTTMP28 and NTTMP90 more the 675m.

- b) The name Inn.i with (D35 𓂏) dates back to MK. But same name with (N35 𓂏) dates back to NK.
- c) To the end of the table all tombs date back to MR.

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