

Tell el-Retaba (West)

Season 2019



Abstract: Excavations in 2019 in Area 4 at the western edge of the site of Tell el-Retaba confirmed that the settlement activity, albeit different in nature, continued here from the Second Intermediate Period well into the Twentieth Dynasty of the late New Kingdom. This part of the site, which was a settlement in the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period (Phase G in the site chronology), was turned into a cemetery after it had been deserted, and used throughout phases G2 and G1 and into Phase F5, that is, into the early Eighteenth Dynasty. Despite this long period of use, only two cases of supraposition of tombs were recorded, both of them in 2019. In the Eighteenth Dynasty (Phases F4–F2), the excavated area was again a settlement of mud-brick houses. A rich assemblage of small finds and a battery of ovens bear testimony to a lively industrial activity or craftsmanship of its inhabitants and their long-distance contacts. The discovery of a walkway, dated to Phase D4, is an intriguing detail of Twentieth-Dynasty military architecture. Isolated finds from the Third Intermediate Period (Phase C) demonstrate the spread of the settlement, known from previous excavations, further east on the tell.

Keywords: Retaba, Second/Third Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, settlement, fortress, moat, cemetery

The Tell el-Retaba archaeological site, approximately 35 km west of Ismailiya, has been investigated by the Polish–Slovak Archaeological Mission since 2007. Having skipped a season in 2018, the team resumed excavation in the northwestern part of the tell. Fieldwork was concentrated in Area 4, located north of the Migdol,

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which was the western entrance gate to the fortress of Ramesses III. Continuation of research from 2017 in Squares X195-215/Y60-85 covered the following areas [Fig. 1].

The excavated area was limited by private modern houses and service areas in the north and west, remains of the northern tower of the Migdol in the south and a modern asphalt road running across the

tell in the east. The area itself is cut by a deep moat from the Nineteenth Dynasty fortress, reaching down to natural ground and separating the archaeological layers east and west of it.

The findings of the 2019 season are presented here in a diachronic sequence, from the earliest to the most recent (for the phasing, see *Table 1*).

1. SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (PHASE G)

The exploration of the Second Intermediate Period layers continued in 2019 in squares adjacent to those opened in 2017, under the Ramesside platform and in the deep moat (Hudec, Jarmužek et

al. 2018: 96–100). The settlement and successive cemetery, identified already in previous excavations, were further investigated. [see *Fig. 1*].

Table 1. Phasing of Area 4 (established after fieldwork in 2019)

Phase	Dating	Main features
G3	Second Intermediate Period (SIP)	Early open settlement and infant graves
G2	Second Intermediate Period	Cemetery
G1	Second Intermediate Period	Continuation of the cemetery
F5	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Continued funerary activity in the cemetery in Area 4, but different burial practices
F4b	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Cemetery overbuilt by a settlement
F4a	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Settlement of the so-called Green Houses
F3b	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Industrial activity between settlements of the so-called Green and Black Houses
F3a	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Settlement of the so-called Black Houses
F2	Early Eighteenth Dynasty	Scattered settlement remains
F1	Late Eighteenth Dynasty	No archaeological record yet
E4	Nineteenth Dynasty	Earliest fortress of the Nineteenth Dynasty, core of Petrie's Wall 1, moats; infant burials
E3	Nineteenth Dynasty	Fortress of the Nineteenth Dynasty, extensions of Petrie's Wall 1; moats, infant burials
E2	Nineteenth Dynasty	Fortress of the Nineteenth Dynasty
E1	Nineteenth Dynasty	Settlement and cemetery in the ruins of the fortress
D4	Twentieth Dynasty	Ruins of the levelled Nineteenth Dynasty fortress; fortress of Ramesses III: Petrie's Wall 2
D3	Twentieth Dynasty	Fortress of Ramesses III: Petrie's Wall 3
C	Third Intermediate Period	Scattered settlement remains

1.1 OPEN SETTLEMENT: PHASE G3

An irregular oval pit <2929>, lined with mud bricks and mud mortar, may yet move the history of the tell deeper into the past. Some of the pottery fragments from the fill of this structure date to the end of the Middle Kingdom. These pottery fragments, along with other discoveries, suggest that the tell may have been occupied (perhaps intermittently) for at least 1500–1700 years. The irregular oval structure <2929> [Fig. 2] with a diameter of about four Egyptian cubits (over 2 m) could have served as a well.

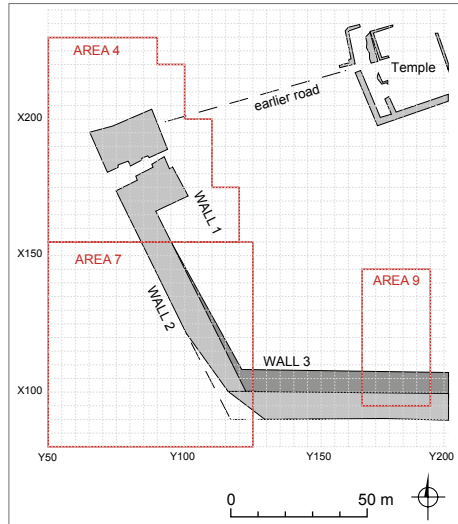


Fig. 1. Second Intermediate Period occupation in Area 4 investigated in 2019; inset, western part of the site with Area 4 (Tell el-Retaba Project | drawing L. Hulková)

It was dug into sandy gravel Nile deposits. Geologists and soil surveyors assume that there was a lake or wetland to the north of the settlement. From there water could have seeped into the well. Drinking spots, wells and cisterns are mentioned in ancient Egyptian written and iconographic sources. The decree of pharaoh Pepi I (23rd century BC) mentioned two types of wells: *shedet* and *enemet* (Driaux 2016: 45). Wells were still an important feature of the landscape in the Tumulat valley (wadi), where Tell el-Retaba is located, much later, in the 19th century. The eastern part of the wadi was even called “Valley of the Seven Wells” (Hudec, Fulajtár, and Stopková 2015: 248, Note 4).

The pottery from this structure was heavily fragmented and mixed with shells and animal bones. It was most

likely dumped here as rubbish. One of the sherds was worked probably into a kind of tool, maybe a shovel S3759 (SU 2929). There was also a spindle whorl S3740.

Further remains of Building {2400} were uncovered to the north (Hudec et al. 2019: 19). Walls [2884], [2889/2891] and [2888] were rather thick, although poorly preserved; they enclosed one room and what was probably an outer space to the north, filled with ashy deposits. There were almost no finds in these contexts except for pottery and one flint tool S3702. The scarcity of other settlement remains and the terrain sloping down to the northeast suggest that the outskirts of the Second Intermediate Period settlement have been reached in this part of the tell, an assumption that only further investigations can prove or disprove.



Fig. 2. Irregular oval structure (well?) <2929> (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo L. Hulková)

1.2 CEMETERY PHASE G2

After the buildings of Phase G3 were abandoned, the area was used intensively as a cemetery in the following phases, G2 and G1. Another seven mud-brick tombs were discovered in squares Y70/X195 and Y70/X200, as well as Y75/X200. The concentration of tombs in this area is surprisingly high. For the first time in this part of the tell the tombs were in direct supraposition. The well or the hydrological conditions may also have determined the northwest spread of Second Intermediate Period burials. Most of these were of very small children [see Fig. 1] and were therefore simple structures with small rectangular burial chambers under a gabled roof. They could sometimes have nothing but a gabled roof built of mud bricks, and only a few were larger structures.

1.1.1 Tomb {2902}

The small mud-brick tomb of a child is possibly one of the oldest structures in the cemetery, dating perhaps even to Phase G3 [Fig. 3]. It seems to stand over the edge of the well <2929>. The tomb consisted of three pairs of slanting bricks, covered with an approximately 3 cm thick bonding mass to form a gabled roof and a kind of small burial chamber at the same time (overall dimensions 76+x×50–62 cm, inner 55×29 cm). The chamber is longer (and wider?) than would be necessary, the part by the head apparently reinforced with extra bricks on the outside. Inside, the burial chamber was filled with a finer, sandy humus deposit. It was very sandy especially in the west of the chamber. The burial was of a newborn/foetus (less than 6 months), lying on its right side, the head to the east, facing north.



Fig. 3. Tomb {2902} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo L. Hulková)

1.1.2 TOMB {2923}

The tomb {2923} was heavily damaged, most likely by the construction of the Ramesside moat [Fig. 4]. The preserved walls of the burial chamber (which measured 1.44 m by 0.92 m, inside dimensions 1.31 m by 0.68 m) consisted of a maximum

of three courses of mud bricks. Two individuals were buried in the chamber: a mature woman (40–60 years) and a newborn/foetus (2970). The position of the legs of the female skeleton (the rest was poorly preserved) suggests that the body was lying on the left side, the head to the



Fig. 4. Burial in Tomb {2923} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo V. Dubcová)



Fig. 5. Burial in Tomb {2940} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo K. Smoláriková)

south and the knees of the contracted legs pointing west. The foetus was placed in contracted position under the right leg of the woman lying on the left side, head to the southwest. The woman had a bronze ring S3752 on her finger.

1.1.3 TOMB {2940}

The tomb was found in 2017 (designated then as {2501}) but could not be opened then due to time constraints [Fig. 5]. It turned out to be a small, rectangular, mud-brick tomb with gabled roof (outer dimensions 1.30 m by 0.60–0.70 m; inner 0.85 m by 0.30–0.35 m). Sherds appear to have been wedged under the slanting roofing bricks to keep them in place. The chamber contained the skeleton of a small child (*infans*, about 7 years old) and the skull of another child (*infans*, 2–3



Fig. 6. Mud-brick structure of Tomb {3007} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo K. Smoláriková)

years). A large red-polished jar contained the remains of a newborn/foetus (*circumnatale*, six months old). Also placed in the tomb was a handmade vessel.

1.1.4 TOMB {3007}

A small tomb with the burial chamber formed by four pairs of mud bricks propped against each other (outer dimensions 0.90 m by 0.50 m, 0.30 m high; inner 0.80 m long, 0.29 m high) [Fig. 6]. A brick standing on edge closed off the southern end of the chamber, slanting only slightly and bonded to the structure with a clay mass. The other end was closed off with another brick, probably standing on its longer side. The bricks were placed in whitish sand (natural?) at the bottom of the burial pit. The top ridge in the roof was not filled with either a bonding mass or brick fragments. The chamber was much too big for the burial, a child skeleton (newborn, *circumnatale*, less than six months old) located in the northern part of the space. It lay most likely on its back with the head to the south. The right arm was alongside the body, the left crossed over the abdomen. The legs might have been pulled up, but the bones are too badly preserved to be sure. A red-burnished juglet was found standing by the right side of the head. An animal skeleton, deposited as a part of the grave goods, was found in the southern part of the burial chamber. The chamber was filled with a loose yellowish brown fill (3008).

1.1.5 Tomb {3013}

The small and simple mud-brick tomb {3013} consisted of just three pairs of slanting mud bricks, propped against each other (outer dimensions approxi-

mately 0.65 m by 0.43, 0.35 m high; inner width 0.17 m). Buried in a shallow and narrow pit under this structure was the skeleton of a newborn/foetus (*circumnatale*, less than six months old), lying on a layer of whitish sand. It was on its back, the head to the south. A small red-burnished juglet lay on its side, directly over the chest and face of the skeleton.

1.2 CEMETERY: PHASE G1

The cemetery was used for a long time, stretching into the early Eighteenth Dynasty (Hudec, Jarmužek et al. 2018: 101–103). Two of the tombs explored this season were of clearly later date than the structures described above.

1.2.1 Tomb {2912}

Mud-brick tomb {2912} must be somewhat later than the rest of the burials because it partly overlies tomb {2940}. This structure oriented east–west was built for an infant and consisted of a rectangular burial chamber with gabled roof. The construction of the roof is irregular; it is made of three pairs of slanting bricks, the western part consisting of three bricks placed one over the other. The top was covered with a thick, roughly rectangular mass of bonding material (outer dimensions 0.91×0.77×0.42 m; inner 0.62×0.32 m). The skeleton {2915} was of a very small child (*circumnatale*, less than six months old). It was lying off the main axis of the burial chamber, on its back, with the head to the east, facing north.

1.2.2 Tomb {2925}

A large mud-brick tomb {2925}, it was also one of the later structures because it overlay tomb {2923}. The deep Ramesside

moat <2413> truncated it, but enough was preserved to reconstruct the architecture at least in part (outer dimensions of the tomb 2.40+x m by 1.51 m, 0.88 m high; inner dimensions of the burial chamber: 1.90–2.00 m by 0.82 m, 0.42 m high). The rectangular burial chamber was covered with an inclined barrel vault, backed against a western gable. Bricks were arranged in three courses with the fourth course, laid in a header bond along the long walls, extending some 0.20–0.22 m beyond the outline of the chamber to support the vault. The west wall of the burial chamber was higher, functioning also as the western gable, rising half-a-brick over the height of the whole. Most of the single layer vault had also been truncated by the moat. The extant part has backing bricks at the bottom of alternating rows, preserved only on the eastern side. They lie flat on a platform of headers, not askew as in some of the Tell el-Dab'a tombs (Forstner-Müller 2008: 29). At the eastern end, the vault was covered with standing bricks; three were visible inside the chamber, the east wall is the most irregular when seen from the inside of the chamber. The mud bricks are set in a thick layer of bonding mass, similar in composition to mud bricks, but containing more gravel. The vault is covered with a similarly thick layer of the bonding mass.

The fill of the burial chamber (2948), lying under a layer of mud-brick debris most probably from the destroyed vault, seems to have been intentional. It was a fine, well sorted, sandy layer different from the gravel filling the grave pit outside the chamber walls. Down by the skeleton and underneath it, the fill was less regular, consisting of broken bricks and blobs of bonding mass, as well as pockets of sand and fine white gravel.



Fig. 7. Burial with the grave goods in Tomb {2925} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo L. Horáková)



Fig. 8. Two clappers S3727 and S3728 from Tomb {2925} (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo R. Rábeková)



Fig. 9. Grave goods from tomb {2925}: beads S3726, S3729, and S3730, scarabs S3725 and S3732, toggle pin S3734 and two bone inlays with carved decoration S3731 and S3733 (Tell el-Retaba Project | photos R. Rábeková/drawings V. Dubcová)

ond scarab with ornamental decoration—a central spiral flanked by floral motifs at top and bottom (S3732) (Ben-Tor 2007: Pl. 36, No. 27, motif group 3E4: panels, cross bars on the margin and combining motifs with formulae (3C); the same in Brunton 1930: Pl. 19:23)—was found in the fill of the tomb [see *Fig. 9*].

The fill also yielded a toggle pin S3734 and two bone inlays with carved decoration S3731 and S3733 presumably from a wooden box [see *Fig. 9*]. Two ivory hand-shaped amulets, so-called clappers

S3727 and S3728, were deposited over the bones of the primary burial [*Fig. 8*]. The head of the goddess Hathor in profile can be recognized on the upper side of clapper S3727, despite heavy abrasion of the surface. Clappers were among the oldest rhythmic instruments of Ancient Egypt, but they also had a symbolic and magical meaning as an amulet associated with the goddess Hathor (Morris 2017). Items of this kind have parallels coming from the Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period and New Kingdom.

2. EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY (PHASE F)

The Ramesside moat was partly uncovered already in 2017 (Hudec, Jarmužek et al. 2018: 101–106; Hudec et al. 2019: 27–39). The area east and west of it, explored in 2019 (squares Y75–85 X205–210), is limited on all sides: by the moat <2413> on the west, the modern road on the east, the Migdol on the south and modern private buildings on the north.

Several layers and structures from the Eighteenth Dynasty settlement appeared also on the other side of the moat, below the remaining part of the mud-brick platform of the Twentieth Dynasty fortress Wall 2 (squares Y60–65 X200–210) [*Fig. 10*].

Conditions in this part of the site were challenging. According to local informants, the area had been excavated early in this century. The documentation, however, is not available. A long trench, approximately 14 m long and 2 m wide, was traced through the area from the Ramesside moat <2413> to the asphalt road. Fieldwork started in 2017 was continued in 2019. Intensive building activity in later periods (Ramesside, as well as Third Intermediate Period) had either truncated or disturbed

earlier structures and layers. As observed elsewhere already, the surface here had been levelled under the fortress, obviously cutting away the upper parts of the downsloping ground to the north and east. Moreover, the disturbed surface material in this small area was mixed with material from layers that had been excavated close to 20 years ago. Even so, the fieldwork uncovered several structures that could be attributed to the settlement phases.

2.1 EARLIER SETTLEMENT PHASE (PHASE F3)

The earlier phase of the Eighteenth Dynasty settlement discovered in the eastern part of Area 4 (north of the Ramesside Migdol) can be attributed most likely to Phase F3. A few mud-brick structures were uncovered, most of them incompletely preserved, heavily damaged by the construction of the Ramesside moat <2413> as well as by later building activities (Phases D and C).

Excavations below a building from a later phase {2768} revealed the remains



Fig. 11. Ovens [2866] and [2897] from the Eighteenth Dynasty period (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo K. Smoláriková)



Fig. 12. Walls [2768] and [2934] most likely from a Phase F2 building (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo V. Dubcová)

of two silos, [2989] and [2986], as well as a low rounded wall [2982]. They seem to be contemporary with a larger building {2499}, discovered partly in 2017 (Hudec et al. 2019: 27, Fig. 20). The stratigraphic position and phasing will become clearer once the excavations have been completed. Other contemporary or slightly later structures were uncovered further north, together with a small rounded wall [2952], another wall or part of a building [2950] and some adjoining structures [2958] [see Fig. 10]. These structures cannot be clearly reconstructed because they were truncated or destroyed by the construction of the Ramesside moat. However, their disposition, including installations like grinding places and fireplaces, indicates domestic and/or minor craft activities. Below these structures were other architectural remains, which could not be completely investigated in 2019. Furthermore, there is another set of walls [2998] and [2999] and at least two ovens, [3002] and [3003], representing most likely an even earlier phase (F3b/F4?).

Two clay-lined ovens [2866] and [2897] were discovered in the western part of Area 4 (west of deep moat <2413>) [Fig. 11]. They most likely belong to the oven [2374] and its predecessor [2409] (excavated in 2017), thus forming a whole battery of ovens surrounded by a wall [2875] (Hudec et al. 2019: 37–39, Figs 38–39). Further ovens may be located to the south, below the Migdol and platform, since they are in line with an oven discovered already in 2011 [664] (Rzepka et al. 2014: 59, Fig. 30).

The western part of Area 4, below the remaining Ramesside platform, was intensively occupied also in the earlier phases of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Remains of a one-brick thick building delin-

ating two rooms [2374] were discovered below this structure. There was another badly preserved wall [2837] (earlier Phase 4?), from an even older structure.

2.2 LATER EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY REMAINS (PHASE F2)

The latest settlement remains, which can be attributed to the Eighteenth Dynasty, lay clearly above the remains belonging most likely to Phase F3a (the so-called Black Houses) and for this reason they can be attributed to Phase F2 of later Eighteenth Dynasty date. Only a small part of a major building (house?), lying directly below the Migdol, could be excavated. A wall [2768], one-brick-thick, was most likely part of a room with a later wall [2934] (half-brick thick) internally dividing the space [Fig. 12]. The excavated fill contained a lot of ashes (perhaps coming from the fireplace/oven below it) and pottery. This building [2768]/[2934] was associated with layers and mud-brick destruction covering several older structures. They have delivered a number of small finds attesting to different domestic and craft activities, e.g., a loom weight S3649, a fragment of an alabaster vessel S3701, several flint tools (seven items), small fragments of metal objects (four items), three faience beads and a fragment of a faience vessel S3667. There were also fragments of ostrich eggshell and one pierced shell bead or amulet S3681 (*Clypeomorus bifasciata*, *Cerithiidae* family).

Scattered remains of architecture were found below the Ramesside platform in the western part of Area 4. There was a longer wall [2799] and below it, small parts of two walls [2829], [2830], with associated layers. Only a few small finds could

be attributed with certainty to this phase, including one quern fragment, two flint tools and a metal fragment.

The phasing of Eighteenth Dynasty structures is still preliminary, but it is clear that it is more complex than previously thought as far as the early part of the period is concerned. It appears that at least Building {2767} and perhaps {2499} were individual houses. The other structures seem to be walls, courtyard enclosures and craft installations (silos, ovens). The small finds, such as grinders and querns, sometimes even *in situ*, numerous flint tools and pottery, demonstrate domestic

and craftworking function. Some luxury items were also discovered, such as a rectangular faience or steatite plaque S3698 decorated with a relief carving of the so-called formulae of *anra*-signs combined with branches (Keel 1995: § 433, 470, 479; Ben-Tor 2007: Pls 82–84: motif group 3C-formulae), a glass eye bead S3750 and four crude clay beads, fragments of alabaster and faience vessels with a painted sherd S3667 representing so-called lotus-bowls (or marsh bowls of Pinch 1993: 308–315).

The excavated area also produced some raw materials: ostrich eggshell, sea shells and pigments (four lumps of red ochre).

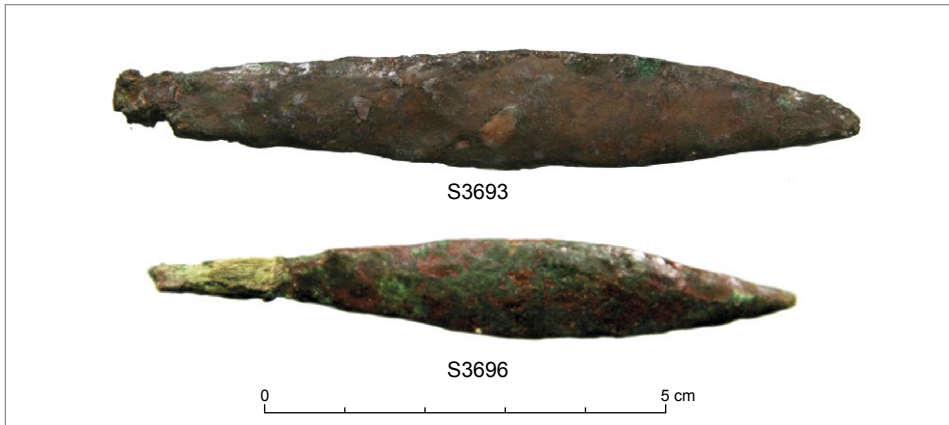


Fig. 13. Two arrowheads from Phase F2 in Area 4 (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo R. Rábeková)

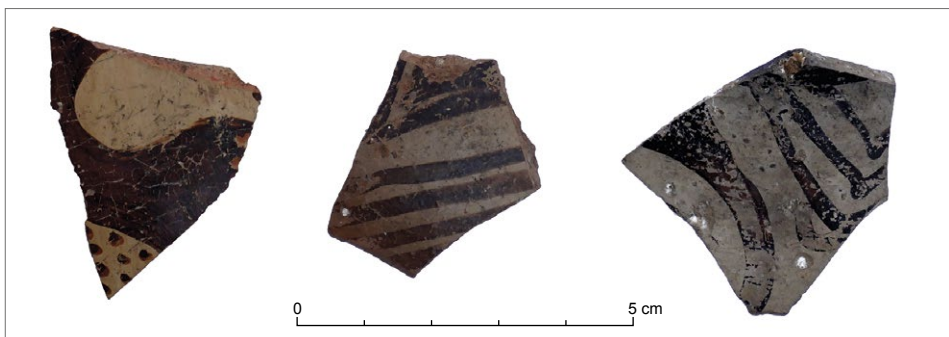


Fig. 14. Mycenaean sherds from Eighteenth-Dynasty contexts in Area 4 (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo A. Wodzińska)

The presence of these raw materials indicates a network of long-distance contacts with other parts of the country, especially with the Red Sea area and the Sinai. A murex shell (Muricidae family, *Murex forskoehlii*) is one example, seldom present in the Gulf of Suez (Rusmore-Villaume 2008: 94–95), but quite frequent in the Mediterranean Sea (Alfaro and Mylona 2014). The numerous ostrich eggshell fragments could also represent a trading commodity, although local ostrich breeding cannot be excluded (Phillips 2000).

Links with the Mediterranean are further attested by three small sherds coming most likely from the Aegean. They are in all likelihood fragments of Mycenaean (Late Helladic) closed vessels with one item coming presumably from a rounded or straight-sided alabastron (Phase LH IIA–B) decorated with a rock pattern (Mountjoy 1986: 26, Fig. 22:1), another from the same phase

because of its fabric and the third perhaps with a multiple stem motif being probably a bit later (LH IIB/IIIA₁) (Mountjoy 1986: 55, Fig. 61:6) [Fig. 14].

The importance of the settlement is further corroborated by a relatively high number of metal artifacts (rings, needles) and fragments, but especially weapons. Two arrowheads S3693 and S3696 have now been added to a dagger and a knife found previously in Black Houses 1 and 3 (Rzepka et al. 2014: 62–64) [Fig. 13]. They are of an elongated leaf-shaped form with a wooden shaft preserved on one of them; similar items are known from Gurob, Fadrus and Aniba, among others (Thomas 1981: Pl. 24, No. 529; Säve-Söderbergh and Troy 1991: 172–174, Pl. 43.3; Steindorff 1935: Pl. 64, Nos 6–7). A large copper-alloy shaft S3742, perhaps from a spearhead, was found in the vicinity of the Black House {2499}.

3. NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH DYNASTIES (PHASES E AND D)

A structure consisting of a stretch of mud mortar about 2 m wide and about 20 cm thick (2360) was uncovered during the examination of the Rameses III defense wall (Petrie's Wall 2). It ran along the inner side of the wall, 2 m away from it. The mud mortar was reinforced with pieces of irregular greenish mud bricks [Fig. 15]. An irregularly high and wide, mud-stone mixed layer had been discovered earlier alongside the internal side of this wall, but its function at the time was ambiguous. It was previously interpreted as the border of the bottom line of a sand rampart (Hudec, Černý et al. 2018: 41).

Wall 2 was built on a sand-filled shallow moat from the Nineteenth Dynasty in Area 4. The inner side of the defense wall was aligned with the deeper moat underneath, which had been filled with drifting sand. Since walking on this windblown sand surface is difficult, it is assumed that the discovered structure (2360) constitutes the remains of a purpose-built transport route/walkway enabling workers and/or soldiers to deliver and distribute building materials. Transport in ancient Egypt is associated with the Nile River and sailing rather than with land (Förster and Riemer 2013). An ancient land road for

transporting building stone from Jebel Qatrani to Lake Moeris dates from the end of the Old Kingdom. The road was paved with fossilized tree trunks and was about 2.10 m (4 ancient cubits) wide (Harrell and Brown 1995). Closer to the Retaba road by structure and date was a slipway along the Second Cataract in Mirgissa, used from the 19th to the 15th century BC (Vercoutter 1970: 193, Fig. 1; Creasman and Doyle 2010: 20). This 4-m wide structure was built of wood, mud bricks and mud mortar. Wooden sledge tracks were evident on the slipway. Such traces were absent from the Tell el-Retaba transport route/walkway. Therefore, the

structure presumably was not intended for pulling cargo, but rather for materials brought on foot by workers and/or soldiers (as depicted in the tomb-chapel of Rekhmire, TT100) (Davies 1935).

Structures, which seem to be of later (Twentieth Dynasty or maybe even Third Intermediate Period) date because they are evidently built over the deep moat belonging to the Nineteenth Dynasty fortress (Wall 1) and into the sand rampart (Hudec, Černý et al. 2018: 42) include the remains of a silo [2789] with fragments of a mud-brick-built fireplace (or a small silo?) [2793] and associated mud-brick debris ([2795]–[2796]).

4. THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (PHASE C)

Overlying the New Kingdom remains were several structures from the Third Intermediate Period, thus testifying to the continuity of site occupation in Area 4. There were two silos [2772] and [2773] (diameters of roughly 1.72–1.75 m)

and a fireplace enclosed with a mud-brick wall [2812]. All these structures were partly cleaned already in the 2017 season and were truncated by an earlier trench. Thus the material coming from them was largely mixed.



Fig. 15. Bottom line of a sand rampart (2360) (north is at bottom) (Tell el-Retaba Project | photo J. Hudec)

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