

CHAPTER 3

REPORT ON THE 1984 EXCAVATIONS
CHAPELS 570 AND 571 AND ADJACENT GROUND

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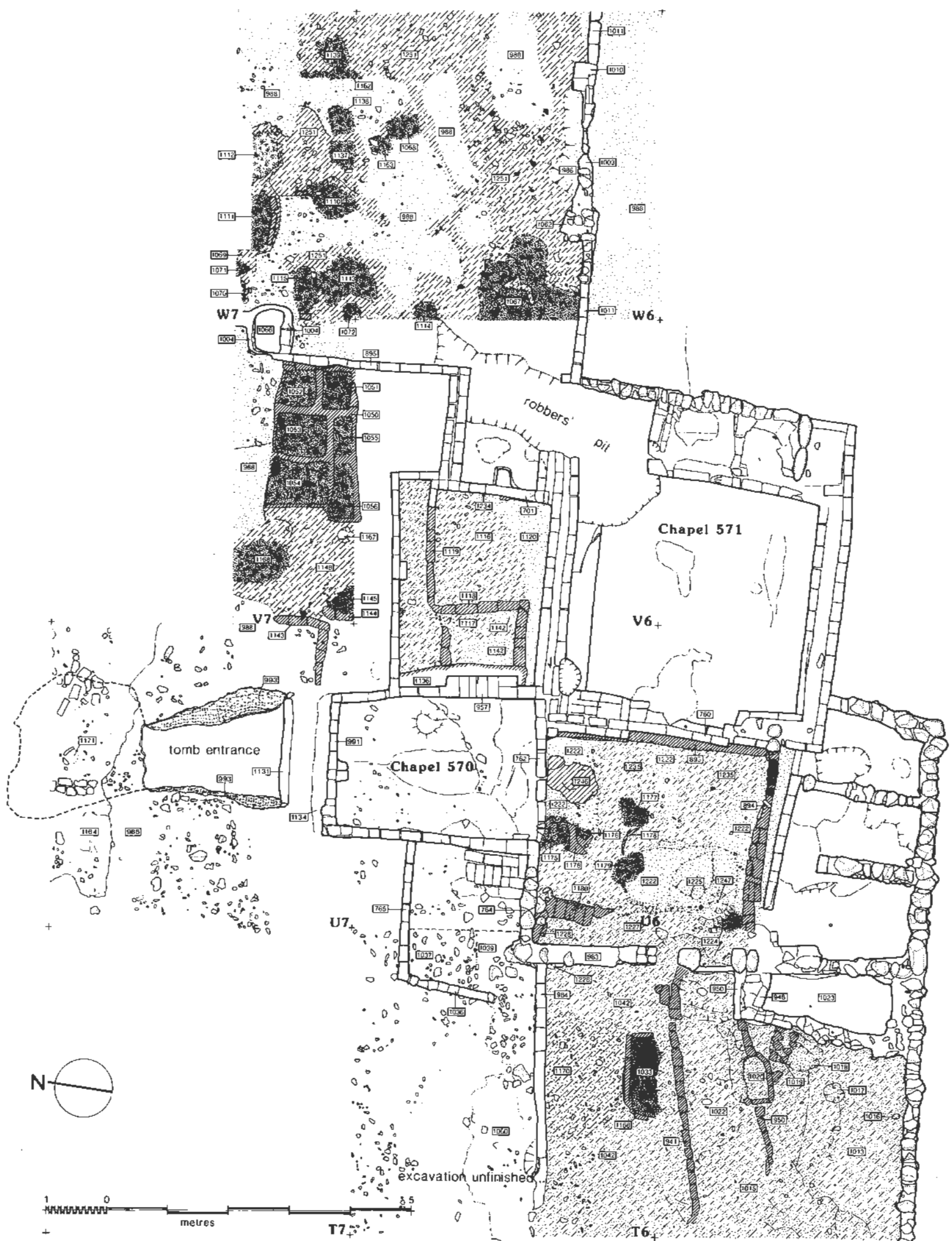
3.1 Introduction

In 1983 an entirely new area of the site was opened up, in the south-east corner of the site grid (*AR I*: vii, Figure 0.2; Chapter 3). It lies to the east of the Main Quarry and alongside the lowest point on the floor of the little valley that runs eastwards up into the plateau. It is thus below the main part of the line of chapels dug in 1921. Excavation rapidly uncovered the remains of two rather denuded chapels with distinctive plans standing on their own. The numbers 570 and 571 were given to them. By the end of the season traces had already appeared of earlier walls in the forecourt of Chapel 571, but there was insufficient time to expose them properly (*AR I*: 39). The 1984 season began with the intention of completing what remained to be done around the chapels, and then of extending the excavation to the east into new ground. By the end of the season, however, the amount of new ground uncovered was small. Two discoveries were responsible: the existence of traces of an earlier phase generally beneath the two chapels, and an unsuspected rock tomb beside Chapel 570.

Figure 3.1 summarises the season's results in terms of these two aspects. Some further excavation also took place on the west, in square S5, but this has not been shown. The outlines of the chapels themselves have been rendered in outline, without hatching. As far as possible, hatching and ground details have been confined either to the traces of the earlier phase, or, in squares W6 and W7, to ground which must belong in part to the second phase, but probably saw a continuation of the kind of activity which characterised the first.

One point should also be noted about the chapel architecture. It concerns a clarification of the shrine area of Chapel 571. When cleared of rubble in 1983 the shrine seemed to consist of a solid bench [712] which had supported a single partition of stones [750], creating a small compartment [749] at the south end. Further scraping of the hardened surface of the bench has now revealed the outlines of a second partition wall of brick towards the middle of the bench. This is below the level of the patch of gypsum plaster [939] representing the original bench surface. The bricks presumably belong to the footings of a wall which originally rose above the bench level. This brings the shrine of Chapel 571 into line with the standard shrine design of three contiguous niches. In Figure 3.1 this new information has been added to the plan.

In *AR I*: 37-8 it was suggested that the brickwork in front of Chapel 570 was perhaps the remains of a third chapel. The excavation of square T6 has shown that this was not so. The brickwork belongs to a small rectangular enclosure, its only feature the bricks in the south-east corner which are likely to have



[(Facing page). Figure 3.1. Plan of Chapels 570 and 571, emphasising the remains of the first, pre-chapel phase (originals by L. and C. Hulin)].



Figure 3.2. The plant-growing plots beside Chapel 570, looking east. Note wall [895] in the background.

formed a step.

3.2 Traces of an earlier phase of use

The two chapels were built on ground which had previously been used for another purpose. The evidence is of two kinds: traces of significant soil change in the ground itself, and the buried foundations of walls. The latter, however, do not form a network independent of the chapel walls. The builders of the chapels ignored some of them and left their stumps buried beneath the floors, but with others they incorporated them into the masonry of the chapels. It is now impossible to distinguish in every case which of the chapel walls were entirely new, and which represent adaptations of walls left standing from the previous

phase. In Figure 3.1 the hatched lengths are those which we judge more certainly to belong to the earlier phase and not to have been left standing.

The clearest evidence for what was going on before the chapels were built comes from square V7, where only a two-metre wide strip was excavated. The eastern part was occupied by a small and somewhat irregularly made example of the common type of garden plot in which the Egyptians grew vegetables and flowers (Figure 3.2). Its distinguishing feature is the subdivision into small square beds defined by walls which ideally were probably one non-royal cubit square. [1] Our example consists of a network of narrow walls which probably began as bricks set on edge [1050]. They created six rectangular plots [1051-1056] filled with black soil enriched with fine organic material. Samples of this have been kept for future identification of botanical specimens. The plot rests directly on the desert surface [988], but on the west this had been trampled to leave a hard-packed surface [1148], which reappears over much of the site. On the plan, Figure 3.1, the ground on the south is left blank. This had been cleaned down to the desert surface [806, 956] last season. It is possible that the packed surface was removed along with the overlying rubble, but not that the plots extended any further south into square V8. At the east end the edging wall of the plots runs beneath the enclosure wall [895] which belongs to Chapel 570, and provides a statement of relative chronology.

The neatly defined group of plots filled with easily distinguished dark soil provides a key to understanding other patches of dark enriched soil which are either amorphous, or are associated with fragments of brickwork or marl plaster. We can suspect them of being the remains of other growing plots damaged by the subsequent chapel-building. Two such patches occur in square V7: [1168] and [1145] with remains of brick edging [1144]. Other patches occur in squares U5 and U6, beneath the court in front of Chapel 571. Four have been separately distinguished: [1175/1176] with mortar remains [1178], [1177], [1179] and [1224]. Unit [1178bis] may be the remains of an edging wall which has lost its soil content. The ground in this area had been much disturbed when the chapels were built or were in use. This left a large and irregular hole in the south-west corner of the court [1225, 1247], and a general spread of packed marl [1235] over the original desert sand [1222].

A further plot lay in square T6. It was a single rectangular plot, measuring 1.25 metres by at least 50 cms. and consisting of a bed of black enriched soil [1033] surrounded by an edging of bricks [1166]. The ground to the north contained a patch of brick fragments, stones, organic material and sherds [1170], but whether connected with the plot or the building of Chapel 571 is hard to say.

This last plot stands in what looks like an ornamental relationship to a pair of parallel walls [941, 950] which seem to form the edges to a path running east-west. Opposite the plot the southern wall was interrupted by an oval compartment of brick [1020], which contained, however, only rubble. These

[1] Examples are common in tomb scenes from the Old to the New Kingdom, e.g. Duell 1938: Plate 21; Naville 1906: Plate CXLII; and have occasionally been found in the excavation of Middle and New Kingdom sites, e.g. Vercoutter 1967-68: 275-8, Plate LIV(b); Vercoutter 1970, Plate Xa; Shinnie 1951: 8-10, Figure 3; Griffith 1924: 303, Plate XXXIV.2; Borchardt and Ricke 1980: 237, Plan 73, Haus N49.9.

walls had not been in use at the same time as the chapel, despite the fact that the entrance to the chapel forecourt, between two sets of boulders, had been on the same line. Instead they formed just part of a layer of packed rubble and marl plaster [1042, 1015, 1013] which formed the floor of a larger outer courtyard.

We can follow the line of the southern wall of the pair for some way to the east. It became for a short distance part of the foundation for one of the rooms of the Chapel annexe [950/948]. It then reappears in the forecourt as an eroded foundation course [894] almost parallel to the front wall of the rest of the Chapel annexe. At its east end it had been strengthened with four re-used basalt hammer-stones, marked in black on the plan (Figure 3.1).

From this corner the wall turns north [895] and eventually merges with the masonry of Chapel 571 [760]. Another fragment of this enclosure probably remains in the north-west corner [1228, 1180], and it is quite possible that wall [762] also belongs to it. Much of it had been eroded down to floor level by the time that the site was abandoned.

No examination of the ground beneath the forecourt of Chapel 570 has been made, but inside the Chapel the floor has been entirely removed (Figure 3.3). This has exposed more foundations [1118, 1119, 1136], surrounded by packed fill from the Chapel floor [1116, 1117]. Wall [1119] was one which was utilised by the chapel builders. At its east end the brickwork merges with the front of the Sanctuary, but traces of its separate existence [1234] can still be detected where it runs beneath the Sanctuary "window" [701].

3.3 Squares W6 and W7

The record of these two squares (of W7 only a two-metre wide strip has been excavated) looks at first sight like a continuation of the first-phase ground just outlined, and to a degree it is. Where it differs is in chronology. Most of the exposed area lay within an open rectangular court. On the south side it was bounded by a wall of bricks [1011], interrupted by thickened portions [1062, 1010] which were presumably buttresses, and may have flanked an entrance at [1003]. To judge from the amount of rubble found this wall cannot have been very high. It turned to run northwards to form the eastern boundary to the court only just beyond the eastern edge of the excavation. Stones from the foundations form a line on the desert surface along the western edge of squares X6 and X7. On the west the boundary wall was partly destroyed by the modern robbers' pit. It survives to run north from Chapel 570 [895], and was clearly standing at the same time as the Chapel, and contemporary with it. As it approaches the northern edge of excavation it changes line, creating a clearly defined small oval enclosure [1004]. It contained a deposit of black enriched soil on its floor [1066].

The interior of the court contained little that was distinct. Primarily it was open ground marked by patches that differed in colour, consistency and ultimately in composition. The plan reproduced in Figure 3.1 is a careful approximation which highlights the principal features. In places once an amorphous covering had been removed the natural sandy desert showed



Figure 3.3. The interior of Chapel 570, with the floor removed revealing earlier walls. View to the west.

through [988]. Large areas bore, however, a compacted surface [1251] which differed from others around and beneath the chapels in the large quantities of small sherds that were present. Several mostly amorphous patches of dark enriched soil occurred, principally along the northern side of the excavated area. These comprise an irregular inner row [1072, 1114, 1113, 1115, 1110, 1137, 1163, 1068, 1138, 1162 and 1139], and a group still partly covered on the north by unexcavated ground [1070, 1071, 1111 and 1112]. The last, unit [1112], had been reduced to a series of darkened patches. Those along the north side also had the remains of edging, with either bricks still definable (around [1111]) or with the edging reduced to a hardened marl surface [1069]. The principal exception to this pattern is the large patch of dark enriched soil in the south-west corner [1067]. The western part of this (as of [1114]) had been disturbed by the digging of the robbers' pit, and its nature and significance were not appreciated when this part was cleared in 1983. Unit [1067] did, in fact, extend to the edge of the robbers' pit, but was not planned in detail and is

therefore omitted in Figure 3.1.

The patches of dark soil along the north part resemble those from beneath the chapels. In particular, they seem to cluster in a linear grouping which extends across squares V7 and W7. This implies that they likewise date to the first phase, and the contrast between their condition and that of the oval enclosure [1004] bears this out. On the other hand, the largest patch [1067] and the general spread of the packed surface [1251] leave no doubt that they were laid down only after the southern wall [1011] had been built, the wall which seems to belong to the later, chapel phase.

Here it is as well to recall the way in which some of the first phase walls were retained by the chapel builders. If we look at the junction between wall [1011] and Chapel 571 as represented by its rear wall [751], it is clear not only that Chapel 571 was added later (cf. *ARI*: 38), but that its rear wall used rough stone masonry in contrast to the predominantly brick construction of wall [1011]. The robbers' pit has unfortunately severed the connection between walls [1011] and [895] which cuts across the area of growing-plots. Although the two were presumably joined originally to form a single line, they might not have been of the same constructional period. The dilemma of periods can be solved if wall [1011] is taken to represent a continuation of the first-period wall [1119-1234] beneath Chapel 570, and was retained, or at least allowed to stand, during the chapel phase.

If we accept this - that wall [1011] was a survivor from the first phase - then the history of the site makes much more sense. In the beginning, the ground was utilised for the growing of plants in beds of imported dark soil, the whole area protected by a series of irregular enclosures or stretches of wall following a staggered alignment. One of them, in the south-west corner, had an approach marked out on the ground by a pair of parallel walls and a pair of growing-plots. Whether any significance other than the needs of domestic economy lay behind this activity cannot as yet be answered. Subsequently the area was taken over for chapel building. Chapel 570 was built first, using some of the existing walls and destroying others. Chapel 571 was later built against one side, receiving its own addition in the form of the four magazine chambers on the south. Then, or later still, the rock tomb described in the next section was begun.

Further evidence is very much needed to clarify this sequence. It is more likely to come from opening fresh ground to the east and particularly to the north, where the desert surface slopes upwards towards another set of structures, part of which was excavated in 1921. Although called "chapels" by Peet (*COA* I: 101, Plate XXIV) the structures in question, nos. 540 and 541, are significantly different.

3.4 The rock-cut tomb

Initially the northward excavation around the chapels was confined to a two-metre wide strip crossing squares U7, V7 and W7. This was done because the surface of the ground gave no hint that ancient remains extended far in this direction. For a short distance the ground rises quite steeply, and in many places what passed for bedrock softened by weathering lay close to the surface.

In square U7 the north wall of the forecourt to Chapel 571 [991] was rapidly exposed. Beyond it on the north beneath the surface sand the ground was found to dip suddenly and locally, and the dip was filled with a tumble of mud-brick [1146] which, with the deposit [992], seemed to represent the collapsed rubble from the nearby courtyard wall [991]. It was only when this was lifted and the regularity of the space beneath was revealed that it was realised that a tomb must lie not far away. In consequence, the rest of square U7 was excavated.

The tomb entrance is an almost rectangular shaft [993], approximately 1.30 metres deep, measuring about 2.00 by 1.10-1.75 metres. East and west walls have been left roughly cut from bedrock, but on the south a vertical facing wall of brick [1131] has been added. The tomb chamber opens directly from the north face of the shaft. Once inside the tomb all surfaces become very irregular. In part this must be a result of the decay of the roof, which left a deposit of marl [1172] on the floor, but it also reflects an originally rough appearance, particularly evident from the irregularity of the floor. This is one sign that the tomb had not been finished and had not been used.

The rubble [1146] which partly filled the shaft had spilled down into the tomb. It lay not directly on the bedrock floor [988], but on an accumulation of organic rubbish [1140] (Figure 3.4). When removed, apart from a group of sherds from a vessel which could have fallen or been thrown in afterwards, no artefacts were found, or other sign that a burial had ever been there. Once planning and recording were finished the entrance was blocked with brick.

It is of some interest to know whether the tomb was merely unfinished, or had once contained a burial which was taken away when the Village was abandoned. In the original excavation report Peet and Woolley speculated on the relationship between chapels and tombs, and concluded that the absence of tombs in the vicinity of the chapels was an accidental consequence of the poor quality of the local rock. Chapels had been intended for tombs, but most of the latter had been dug on the top of the plateau, where they had been subsequently robbed (*COA* I: 94-5; *AR* I: 10). The Amarna chapels, like their counterparts at Deir el-Medina, were not typical funerary chapels, however. With their benches and other domestic features they appear to have had a part to play in the lives of the villagers independent of funerary rites. The latter when they occurred may simply have taken advantage of buildings already in existence for another purpose.

With our rock tomb we have, first of all, the general impression from the interior condition that it had been left unfinished and never used. We can also, however, consider the filling material which was found undisturbed. It consisted of tumbled brick [1146] beneath a covering of sand [1165], and over a deposit of rubbish [1140]. If the tomb had been used and the burial anciently removed for interment elsewhere when the village was abandoned we might have expected to find the remains of the blocking material to the chamber cast aside when it was opened. Nothing like this was present, however. The tumbled bricks which partly filled shaft and chamber lay in a deposit which sloped evenly down from south to north, and seems to have been continuous with the rubble layer [992] that ran to the base of the courtyard wall [991]. Both the plans and the

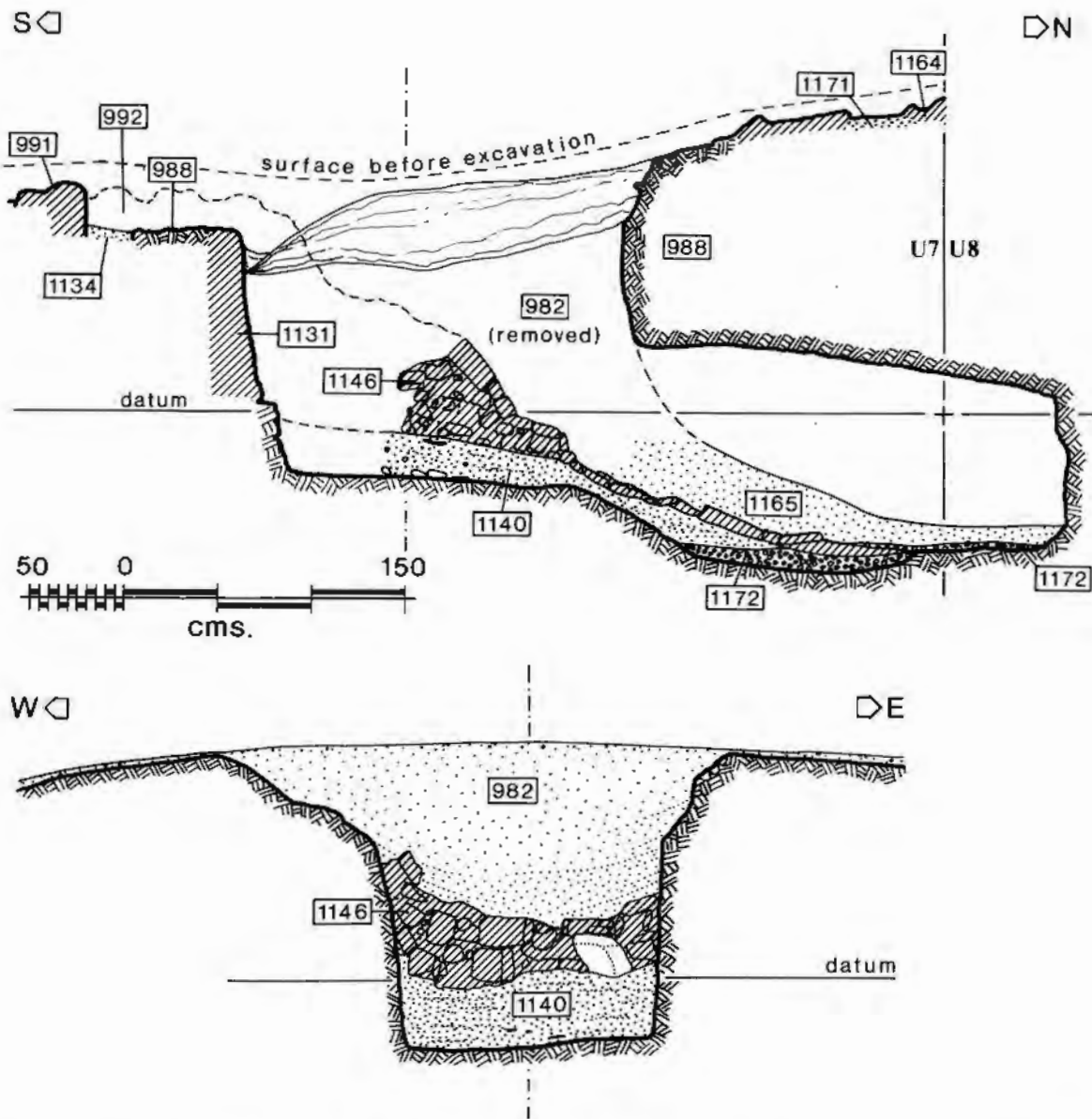


Figure 3.4. Sections across the rock-cut tomb: section 113 (above), and section 112 (below). By the time that section 113 was drawn part of the fill had been removed. Broken lines indicate approximate original surfaces (originals by L. Hulin).

Key to units: [991]: wall belonging to Chapel 570 courtyard; [992]: rubble layer; [1134]: sand-filled foundation trench for [991]; [996]: marly bedrock; [1164]: marl brick rubble; [1171]: grey-brown soil; [982]: yellow sand; [1131]: marl brick retaining wall; [1146]: marl brick rubble; [1165]: yellow sand; [1140]: grey-brown sand containing organic patches; [1172]: nodules of marl fallen from roof of chamber. Datum line is 67.72 metres above sea level.

sections imply that this rubble is from the collapse of wall [991], and came to rest there after an accumulation of rubbish [1140] had built up on the floor of the shaft. We can thus be fairly positive in saying that the tomb was never used. Yet the adjacent chapels had been finished and, to judge from the pottery found inside Chapel 571 (AR I: 140-43) and from the burnt patches on the floors of



Figure 3.5. The rock-cut tomb, looking north.

both of them (*ibid.*: 36, Figure 3.2), they had been used. The archaeological record from Chapel 570 provides the most direct evidence so far for the secondary relationship between chapel and tomb.