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Geomorphology of Dra Abu el-Naga (Egypt): The basis of the funerary sacred landscape

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1 **Geomorphology of Dra Abu el-Naga (Egypt): the basis of the funerary sacred**
2 **landscape**

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15
16 **Abstract**

17 A geological and geomorphological analysis has been performed in the necropolis of
18 Dra Abu el-Naga in order to understand the role played by these two factors in the
19 development of the sacred landscape. The investigation focuses upon two aspects of
20 the development of the necropolis, the selection criteria for tomb location and the
21 reconstruction of the ancient funerary landscape. Around 50 tombs were surveyed,
22 analysing the characteristics of their host rock and classifying them according to a
23 modified Rock Mass Rating Index, in order to understand how rock quality affected
24 tomb construction. This analysis resulted in the definition of five rock-quality classes (I
25 to V) from very good to very poor rock. The geological study also resulted in a
26 proposed geological-geomorphological model for the evolution of this zone of the
27 Theban necropolis that complements previous works by other authors. Due to the lack
28 of precise dating evidence this chronology is a relative one and is based on the
29 chronology given by other authors for similar deposits and events. Two catastrophic
30 events, represented by mega-landslides, have been identified, the first one predates
31 the deposition of early Pleistocene fluvial deposits, and the second one possibly
32 occurred during the middle-late Pleistocene. Two weathering surfaces developed
33 under wetter than present climatic conditions and have been tentatively correlated to
34 the mid-late Pleistocene humid period and the African-Humid Period (early-mid
35 Holocene).

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