The Visitors’ Graffiti in Two Tombs of Beni Hassan
(Ameny and Khnumhotep II)

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Abstract

The tombs of Beni Hassan contain distinctive scenes of daily life, thus they have been attractive for both ancient and modern visitors. The hieratic graffiti that were left by the ancient visitors reflects the significance of these tombs. Thus, this article examines the New Kingdom visitors’ graffiti in two tombs of Beni Hassan (Ameny and Khnumhotep II). It also sheds more light on the location of these graffiti on the walls and their connections with the original decoration of the tombs.

Introduction

The site of Beni Hassan is located about 23 km south the modern city of El-Minia in Middle Egypt on a hillside near the eastern bank of the Nile. The site contains several necropolises dating from the Old Kingdom to the Late period; however, the necropolis of the Middle Kingdom is the most important one. It is rightly famous for its thirty-nine rock-tombs cut in the upper part of the cliff on the east bank of the Nile. They belong to high-ranking officials of the Sixteenth Upper Egyptian Nome during the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties, including the actual nomarchs. Only twelve of these tombs are decorated with unique iconography, historical inscriptions, and vivid scenes of daily life displayed on their walls.

Scenes of daily life were the most popular topics in these tombs because they depicted a wide range of everyday activities such as brewing, backing, butchering, cooking, wine making, hunting, fishing, fowling, harvesting, irrigation, laundering, pottery, stone working, weaving, dancing, singing, and game playing.

It seems that the decorated tombs of the upper part of Beni Hassan were attractive not only to modern people but also to the ancient Egyptians who visited these tombs and recorded their visits. A few

1 My sincere thanks go to Prof. Naguib Kanawati (Macquarie University), for his kindly support and providing me with the photographs of the graffiti. I would like also to thank Dr. Chloé Ragazzoli (Université Sorbonne-Paris IV), Prof. Ursula Verhoeven (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), Prof. Robert J. Demarée, for reading the manuscript, giving me valuable comments, and correcting my English.


4 Rabehl, Das Grab des Amenemhat, 6.

5 M. Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, 2nd edition (Lanham-Maryland, 2008), 36.

6 M. Bommars, “First Intermediate Period Tombs at Beni Hassan: Problems and Priorities (including BH no. 420 and the Unpublished Box Coffin Fragment BH3Liv),” SAK 41 (2012), 44.

7 Bommars, “First Intermediate Period Tombs at Beni Hassan,” 45.

8 Spanel, “Beni Hassan,” 176.

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visitors’ graffiti (Besucherinschriften) were inscribed in hieratic on the walls of the tombs of Ameny (BH. No. 2), and Khnumhotep II (BH. No. 3), most of them dating back to the New Kingdom.9 In Ameny’s tomb, there is one visitors’ graffito commemorating a trip to the tomb, while there are three visitors’

Fig. 1. The tomb of Ameny (after Newberry, Beni Hassan I, pl. 4).

Fig. 2. The Graffito on the South Wall of the Tomb of Ameny (background drawing after Newberry, Beni Hassan I, pl. 17).

9 A. Peden, The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt: Scope and Roles of Informal Writings (Leiden, 2001), 79; it is noteworthy that there is one badly hieratic graffito penned on the wall of the tomb of Amenemhat. On (AQ p.?) 35 he attributed this text to the Thirteenth Dynasty. However, the author of the text does not mention his identity or the purpose behind his visit.
graffiti at the tomb of Khnumhotep II, which record the presence of four scribes in the tomb. In addition, a large amount of Coptic graffiti in many other tombs can be found as well.10

Previous Studies on the Visitors’ Graffiti of Ameny and Khnumhotep II

These visitors’ graffiti were first described partially by the German Egyptologist Karl Lepsius who came with the Prussian expedition to Egypt from 1842 to 1845. Lepsius made only one facsimile for the largest graffito in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, and did not mention the others in the same tomb; furthermore he overlooked the graffito in the tomb of Ameny.11 Before him Champollion gave some approximate drawings and transcriptions for these visitors’ graffiti in his Notices Descriptives.12 These records are too approximative and incomplete to be of much help. The general publication of all the upper tombs of Beni Hassan, by Percy Newberry and Georg Fraser from 1890 to 1893, mentioned only one graffito in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, whose facsimile is included.13 Most mentions of these graffiti in subsequent literatures have thus depended on the inaccurate records of Champollion.14 It is remarkable that there are no published photographs for any of these graffiti, or their exact locations on the walls.

In this context, my paper aims at publishing these visitors’ graffiti from the tombs of Ameny and Khnumhotep II, with a proper edition and a full description, including their precise locations on the walls. Each graffito is presented with its transcription, transliteration, translation, and commentary. Moreover, I provide recent photographs of these graffiti, which modern conservation contributed to make more visible and legible. Finally, this paper tries to shed more light on the relation between the location of the graffiti and the decoration system of the tomb.

The Visitors’ Graffiti in the Tombs of Ameny and Khnumhotep II and Their Locations

a) Visitors’ Graffiti of Ameny (BH 2; fig. 1)

South Wall

This tomb seems to contain only one New Kingdom visitor’s graffito, which is inscribed on the south wall of the main chamber and consists of ten hieratic lines. The eastern half of this wall shows the tomb owner sitting on a chair. In front and under him are four rows of priests and offering carriers.15 The visitor’s graffito lies in the second row between two of the offering bearers (fig. 2). Interestingly the scribe has carefully chosen a blank space on this wall to insert his text.
Transcription

(1) iw.t pw ir.n sS.........r mì[?].........r.f (?)................(?)
(2) hn² hmns.w........sn.f Sn(?) s' pî it R²..............
(3) .....msw s?.....kw.................rs.............hr
(4) ii......................pî hî²,w (?)................
(5) gm.n.f s hw-w-nfr mt Imny.................m hb (?).........
(6) l............h[.t] (?) h(n)k.t..... kî.w.......m b[.t].....nfr...
(7) .....m²-hrw "h²,n dd.n.k s$ Tw-r (?).....in t (?)...sp²t (?)
(8) nb......(?)?......3bd 3.........n Imny.........
(9) "h²,n dd[..n].k.... dwAy R² (?)............... 
(10) dw[..]........nb.s (?)....mr.................

Transliteration

(1) Then the scribe came ...to visit...to him (?) 
(2) with friends ...his brother Sn (?) son of the father Re......
(3) ..........Mesu son of........entre........to watch......upon
(4) coming............................... (?) 
(5) he found it, the temple of Ameny.........in feast............
(6) ............finest beer......cattle......with (every) good things......
(7) justified, then you said; scribe Tw-r bring ......nom (?) 
(8) every......(?),......month 3........ Ameny....... 
(9) then you said ......praise to Re........................ 
(10) Praise ..............every............................

Translation

(1) Then the scribe came ...to visit...to him (?) 
(2) with friends ...his brother Sn (?) son of the father Re......
(3) ..........Mesu son of........entre........to watch......upon
(4) coming............................... (?) 
(5) he found it, the temple of Ameny.........in feast............
(6) ............finest beer......cattle......with (every) good things......
(7) justified, then you said; scribe Tw-r bring ......nom (?) 
(8) every......(?),......month 3........ Ameny....... 
(9) then you said ......praise to Re........................ 
(10) Praise ..............every.............................
Fig. 3. The graffito in the tomb of Ameny.

Fig. 4. Facsimile drawing of graffito, tomb of Ameny, south wall.
Palaeographical Notes

This is the only New Kingdom Visitor’s graffito in this tomb. Unfortunately this text is badly preserved and too much faded in most of it, thus this difficult state affected the transcription, translation, and consequently our understanding of some of its parts. It is clear that this text is inscribed by one hand. The signs are executed in small, elegant, and readable forms. Palaeographical features of the Eighteenth Dynasty handwriting could be seen in this graffito as well.

Line 1
a) This line is much faded, however it begins with a very secure reading: iw.t pw ir n sš.

b) : the reading of this group still problematic.

Line 2
a) The signs after the word h̄mns are illegible.

b) The pẖ group is very close to that of Eighteenth Dynasty writings especially in the two wings.17

Line 3
a) There are ink traces at the beginning of this line, but it is unclear to read it.

b) A possible reading is but that is still uncertain.

c) could be read as hr.

Line 5
a) The second part of this line, i.e., after the word Ameny, is uncertain reading. However, one can see maybe for m redistribute-hrw. After that m redistribute hb could be seen as well. No more obvious writing at the end of it.

Line 7
a) A few traces of ink can be seen at the beginning of this line.

b) The determinative of the scribe Tḥw-ṛ is written as vertical stroke.

c) The very faint sign at the end of this line could stand for but is still an unsecure reading.

Line 9
a) Although the word ⲙ ⲥ Ⲫ Ⲡ is partially faint, however one can clearly distinguish the star Ⲡ for dwā, in addition to the upper part of the outstretched arms of the man.

b) The last part of the line, after the horn of the animal, is too faint to transcribe it.

Line 10
a) Most probably this line starts with dwā. Unfortunately, the meaning of the most of this line is still unclear.

Notes on the Phraseology

Interestingly there are very distinctive phrases that strongly suggest this is a visitor’s graffito inscribed by the visitor who came to see the tomb of Ameny.

Line 1) This line started with a very common opening phrase iw.t pw ir n sš that always used as the incipit in the visitors’ graffiti especially from the Eighteenth Dynasty.

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16 This graffito is mentioned in the old publication of J. Champollion, Notices descriptives II, 423–24, in four short, incomplete, and inaccurate lines.

17 M. Megally, Considérations sur les variations et la transformation des formes hiératiques du papyrus; E. 3226 du Louvre (Cairo, 1971), pl. 6, k.
Fig. 5. The Tomb of Khnumhotep II (after Newberry, Beni Hassan I, pl. 22).

Fig. 6. The Graffito on the East Wall (South Side) in the Main Chamber (background after Newberry, Beni Hassan I, pl. 34).

Line 2) The expression indicates that the scribe has visited this tomb with his friends. The same expression is previously mentioned in visitor’s graffito in the tomb attributed to Antefoker at Thebes. It is obvious that the writing of $hnms$ in the current graffito is somewhat

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18 C. Ragazzoli, “The Social Creation of a Scribal Place: The Visitors’ Inscriptions in the Tomb attributed to Antefiqer (TT 60), (With newly recorded graffiti),” SAK 42 (2013), 299.
strange from that of Antefoker. The man holding the stick should come after (s) and directly before the determinative. Perhaps the rest of this line mentions the names of his friends.

Line 4) Predominantly this verb is used with the verb lw in the visitors’ formulae.

Line 6) It seems that the scribe of the text count several types of offerings to the Ka of someone, most probably the owner of the tomb.

Line 7) The name of the scribe is written in the same form in Ranke.\textsuperscript{19}

Line 9) the expression is frequently mentioned in some visitors’ graffiti from the tomb of Antefoker.\textsuperscript{20} Presumably the scribe of this graffito is make adoration to the god Re.

\textit{b) Visitors’ Graffiti of Khnumhotep II (BH 3; fig. 5)}

This tomb seems to include three New kingdom visitors’ graffiti inscribed in hieratic with black ink on the walls of the main chamber (forepart of the tomb). It is clear that the scribes chose to pen their texts in blank spaces on the walls as previously stated in the tomb of Ameny.

1) East Wall

This is the largest and longest graffito in this tomb. It consists of two visitors’ formulae inscribed together on the east wall (south side) among the scenes of daily life. The text lies between the feet of Khnumhotep II, while he is spearing fish in the marshland (fig. 6).

Transcription

\textsuperscript{19} Ranke, \textit{PN I}, 381, 28.

Fig. 7. Graffito in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, east wall.

Fig. 8. Facsimile drawing of graffito tomb of Khnumhotep II, east wall.
Transliteration

(1) iw. f pn ss nsw Imn-ms
(2) ŝm.t pw ir.n.i r m33 hw.t-nṯr n
(3) p3 (Hwfw R*) m35-ḥrw gm <n.f> s <s>
(4) mi p.t m hnw.s R* hr wbn
(5) im.s [?h. n ḫd.p.t n s.n tyw wšd] ḫf (df) s m sn-nṯr wšd hr tp hw.t
(6) nt p3 (R* Hwfw) m35-ḥrw ŝm.t pn ir.n
(7) ss Th-R* r m33 hw.t-nṯr nt p3 (R* Hwfw)
(8) m35-ḥrw gm <n.f> s <s> mi p.t m hnw.s r* hr wbn im.s
(9) h3 n.i whm p3 ŝm.[f]........................................hr
(10) nfr......

Translation

(1) This is his coming, the royal scribe Amonmose.
(2) Then I came [going what was I did] to see the temple of
(3) (Chufu-Re) [21] justified, <he> found it
(4) as if there were heaven in it, Re rising
(5) in it, [then he said: let heaven drip fresh myrrh] and pour fresh incense on the top of the temple
(6) of (Ra-Chufu)] justified. Then the scribe Iah-Re came (lit. going was what the scribe Iah-Re did)
(7) to see the temple of (Ra-Chufu)]
(8) justified. <He> found it as if there were heaven in it, Re rising in it
(9) would that I repeat the going ....................................on
(10) Beautiful........................

21 This reading is recommended by Prof. U. Verhoeven (personal communication).
Paleographical Notes

The handwriting of this graffito shows the most characteristic features and the regular style of the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty, which is a thick, bold, and compact hand. It is remarkable that the scribes of visitors’ graffiti, in the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty tend to write the signs independently from each other with a minimal amount of ligatures. This attitude could be seen in most of the visitors’ graffiti, and most literary hieratic texts of that time.

Line 1
a) The sign after m in the word šm[t, is most probably read as 📌.

Line 2
this form is very close to other Eighteenth Dynasty handwriting especially with the two wings 🙇‍♀️.

Line 4
a) 🌞 is considered the typical form of the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty 🌞.

b) 🤟 this form with the two long legs of the sky 🌟 was the popular form in the graffiti of the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty 🌟.

Line 5
a) 🐍: it is very similar to other Eighteenth Dynasty forms, where the scribe has tended to attach the tail of the cobra with the end of the viper 🐍.

b) 🐍: this form appears to be an unusual writing for 🐍.

All these parallels allow us to attribute this graffiti safely to the first half of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Notes on the Phraseology

Line 1–2) The opening phrase of the visitors’ graffiti remains fixed from the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards; nevertheless, a few differences can sometimes appear in some features of writing or spelling, e.g., iw.t pw: ḫən/ iw.t pw ḫnt/ iw.t[in]. The present opening formula in Beni Hassan, in the first two lines, is very unusual in that the scribe used the suffix pronoun f referring to the visitor himself, as well as the usage of the demonstrative adjective pn instead of the expected pw, which is used again in the second line. This usage of pn probably reflects Late Egyptian influences on Middle


23 W. Hayes, Ostraca, pl. 18, no. 87.
24 Megally, Considérations sur les variations, pl. 15, g.
25 Hayes, Ostraca, pl. 13, no. 65 vs.
26 Hassan, “A Visitor’s Hieratic Ostracon,” 185.
27 F. Hagen, “An Eighteenth Dynasty Writing Board (Ashmolean 1948.91) and The Hymn to the Nile,” JARCE 49 (2013), 76.
28 Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 221.
29 Navrátilová, Visitors’ Graffiti, 39, 75.
30 Hagen, “An Eighteenth Dynasty Writing Board,” 75.
31 Hayes, Ostraca, pl. 25, no. 140 rt.
32 Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 221.
33 It is worth mentioning that Wildung, Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige, 171, and Peden, Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt, 79, have attributed this text to the Nineteenth Dynasty.
Egyptian graffiti phraseology. It is worth mentioning that the verb *ii* is the commonest verb that used as a second verb in opening formulas, and this can be observed in the graffiti of Ithi-ibi-iqer at Asyut as well. While the formula of Beni Hassan uses the verb *Sm.t*, the latter verb describes the opposite meaning of the verb *iw*: from this point of view it seems unsuitable to the movement of coming to the tomb implied by the context of this formula. As far as I know, this construction by using a second verb in the opening formula, *ii- *Sm.t*, has never been attested elsewhere except for the visitors’ graffiti of Middle Egypt (Asyut and Beni Hassan).

The incipit of the graffito does not use *ir.n* after the verb *iw* as usual; while the scribe used it in the second line, but after the verb *Sm.m* which is unusual as well. The other interesting point is the use of the suffix pronoun *i* after *ir.n*, for which I know no parallel.

Line 3) The prayer formula starting at the third line with *gm.n.f s*[y], and continued until the fifth line is very short: either the scribe did not know a longer version or chose an abbreviated one, as it happens in visitors’ graffiti.

Line 5) Probably the scribe made a confusion in the spelling of the verb *Dfdf*, which is attested in most of the Eighteenth Dynasty visitors’ graffiti formulas in the following forms: . However, he wrote this verb in the form of that was basically means “pupil.”

Line 6) This second introduction formula uses again the same unsuitable verb *Sm.m*, followed by a very strange and uncertain name reading *Tft-R*. 

Line 9) The scribe ended his text with a very interesting sentence, expressing the wish to repeat this visit-*Sm.t* again.

2) North Wall

This graffito lies on the north wall (east side), above a bitch that stands at the feet of the standing figure of Khnumhotep II (fig. 9).

Transcription

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35 I would like to thank the reviewer of the paper for this comment.
38 Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 221.
Fig. 10. Graffito in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, north wall (east side).

Fig. 11. Facsimile drawing, graffito, tomb of Khnumhotep II, north wall (east side).
Transliteration

(1) hw.t pw ir.n sš Hnumw-ms r m3ḥ hw.t-npṛ
(2) [nfr] n p3 (Hwfw) R° m3ḥ b[rw] gm.n.f s[y]
(3) [nfr sy] ḫr-[ib.f] ḫ (hw.t-npṛ) s[hr n dd.n.f] ḫw p.t m sn[p]
(4) wʾd [ddff].s.t m ṣn.y w ḫr ṭp.t].-ḫr ṭp.t] s.t n.t
(5) hw.t-npṛ nty [pš (Hwfw R°)] m3ḥ-[hr:w] lm.s

Translation

(1) Then the scribe Khnummose came to see the [beautiful] temple
(2) of (Chufu-Re) justified, he found it
(3) more [beautiful] in [his heart ] than any other temple. <Then he said>: may heaven rain with fresh
[incense],
(4) [pour] myrrh [on the top of it] of
(5) the temple of god in which [(Chufu-Re)] is staying.

Palaeographical Notes

The hieratic inscriptions are clear and readable throughout most of the text, but there is some ink faintness in some places of it. The handwriting of this graffito shows similarities with other graffiti and texts dating to the Eighteenth Dynasty as it can be seen in table 1. Through these similarities we can safely date it to the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Line 1)

a) T: this sign is very similar to T, and most probably read as Ç.\footnote{Möller, Paläographie II, 508.}
Notes on the Phraseology

Line 1) This visitors’ graffito starts with the opening formula that was commonly used in these kinds of texts, where the scribe mentions that he came to visit the temple of a god who is called (Chufu-Re)]. Lines 2–3) gm.n.f sy nfr sy hr lb. Sometimes this section is followed by (r hw.t nfr) as in the present text, but one can also find (r hw.t nfr nb.t nfr.t),\(^42\) (r ‘t.t wr sy m hrf mi t p.t),\(^43\) or (r hw.t (?) nb n dmi nb).\(^44\) In the present text one expects the formula to be gm.n.f sy nfr.ti instead of sy, as nfr is an old perfective used as virtual adverb clause.\(^45\) However, in this text, the scribe substituted a clause with an old perfective as adverbial predicate. The reason behind this usage may be the wish to emphasize the adjective, and the stress is here upon the predicate nfr and not upon the subject.\(^46\)


\(^43\) Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 233; Navrátilová, Visitors’ Graffiti, 52.


\(^45\) Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 233.

\(^46\) Megally, “Two Visitors’ Graffiti,” 233.
Lines 3–4) Interestingly the scribe introduces some variations in this formula, where he inverts the expression $hwi\; p.t\; m\; \nicefrac{n.ty.w}{ntr}$, and adds the adjective $wAd$ to the incense, an adjective usually used for the myrrh. He inverted $d\; d\; f\; m\; sn-nfr$ to be $m\; \nicefrac{ntyw}{ntyw}$ as well.

3) North Wall

This graffito also appears on the North wall, where it is inserted within the hieroglyphic inscription belonging to the original decoration of the tomb (fig. 12).

Transcription

Fig.14. Facsimile drawing graffito in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, north wall.
**Transliteration**

(1) *hw.t pw iry sʊ lkr n db�.w*

(2) *Tw-ry r m33 hw.t-ngr nt (....s....) m3�-ḥrw*

(3) *gm.n.f sy nfr sy ḫr ib.f r hw.t-ngr nb.t*

(4) *ḥf <n> dd.nn.f .......... ss k3.t.w ḫpd.w*

(5) *ḥt nb.t nfr[t]....wḫḫb[t]... n k3 (....ḫ3.t ?...) m3�-ḥrw*

(6) *in sʊ lkr n db�.w ss ḫšb ḫt*

(7) *dd[.n].f Tw-ry*

**Translation**

(1) Then the scribe of excellent fingers Toury came
to visit the temple of the god (........s....) justified
(3) He found it more beautiful in his heart than any other temple.
(4) Then he said:........... alabaster, oxen, and fowl,
(5) and all good and pure things.............. to the ka of (......Hat?...) justified
(6) By the scribe of excellent fingers, grain account scribe.
(7) said to him: Toury.

**Palaeographical Notes**

The palaeography of this graffito bears the same features of the two previous graffiti in Khnumhotep’s
tomb. It can consequently be dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty as well.

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Verhoeven suggested that it could be read as Snofru, because Beni Hassan was called Menat-Khufu and before Menat-
Snofru (private email).
Line 1)  
   a) This is an interesting form of where the scribe started it from the left.  
   b) The signs at the end of this line are illegible.

Line 4)  
   a) The middle part of this line is too much faded and difficult to be read.

Notes on the Visitors’ Formula

Line 2) The scribe states that he visited the temple of the god; however, the remaining signs inside the cartouche cannot refer to Khufu unlike the two other visitors’ graffiti of Beni Hassan. A very clear can indeed be read inside this cartouche, indicating that it refers to a different royal name.

Line 4) It is remarkable that the scribe use the verb “ḥ” with the two walking legs instead of the auxiliary verb “ḥ” that is commonly used in the visitors’ graffiti. This kind of writing mistake is very common in students’ exercises, especially the book of Kemyt.48

Line 6) The scribe Toury49 stated his post in this graffito as “Reckoner of the grain.” Similar titles related to grain accounts were already known such as , “Reckoner of emmer and upper Egyptian barley.”50

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49 This name is written in Ranke, PN I, 382–87, in close form to that of our graffito .

50 W. Ward, Index of Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom, with a Glossary of Words and Phrases Used
Display Similarities of Graffiti in Tomb-Chapels

(1) Most of the visitors’ graffiti are written in the first room (forepart) of the tomb, such as those left by the Eighteenth Dynasty visitors of the Middle Kingdom tomb of Antefoker (TT60), or by the New Kingdom visitors in the New Kingdom tomb of Nakht (TT61). In the tomb of Sobekhotep (TT63) the graffiti were placed in the first room of the tomb as well. Now the visitors’ graffiti of Beni Hassan can be added to this list. It seems that this part of the tomb was favored by the graffitist over the deep and dark places of the tomb because some natural light was available.

(2) It is remarkable that most of the visitors’ graffiti in tombs should actually be inserted within the original decoration, and complies with the rules of the tombs’ decorum. This can clearly be observed in these graffiti from Beni Hassan, especially in the case of the tomb of Khnumhotep II (fig. 15). In this case, the scribe was very keen not only to insert his text among the scenes, but also to embody it among the original hieroglyphic inscriptions of the tomb. In this latter case, the graffiti follow the same direction as the original text (from left to right). Thus, some modern scholars considered these graffiti of the tombs as “positive reactions to the decorative programs of the private tomb chapels.” One of the best examples of this positive reaction can be seen in the tomb of Nakht (TT61), where the visitor carefully chose a specific image to inscribe his own graffiti, which could then be related to motifs of the scene. Such an attitude confirms that they understood the symbolic meaning of these representations. Thus, the location of the graffiti was not left to chance.

(3) Most of the visitors’ graffiti, as in the tomb of Antefoker (TT60) and Beni Hassan, are written within scenes of daily life such as travels, crafts, trades, animals feeding, and hunting, or presentations of offerings to the owner of the tomb. These locations could reflect the intended response of the author of the graffiti to the deceased’s wish to encourage the visitors of his tomb to take part in his funerary cult.

(4) Sometimes the margins of the scenes are used as framing lines for the graffiti themselves (fig. 16), whereas, the scribe at Beni Hassan used the lower margin of the scenes as a framing line for one of his texts (fig. 7).

(5) The scribes have carefully chosen blank spaces on the walls to insert their texts, where they do not cover the original decoration of the tomb. Sometimes the scribes of the visitors’ graffiti paid little attention to the original decorations of the monuments. This attitude can be seen in the pyramid complex of Senusert III at Dahshur, where the texts are written onto the decorated painted relief surfaces.

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52 According to H. Navrátilová, “Graffiti Spaces,” 324, most of the Memphite graffiti which were found in situ are placed on the walls of the entrance passage or on the walls which are opposite to the entrance.
59 Ragazzoli, “The social Creation of a scribal place,” 274.
Fig. 16. C. Ragazzoli, “The Social Creation of a Scribal Place,” 275, fig. 3.

Fig. 17. C. Ragazzoli, “The Social Creation of a Scribal Place,” 287.
in some cases, with little regard to the Middle Kingdom relief decorations. These decorations had a specific significance for the representation of Twelfth Dynasty royal ideology.62

(6) As can be seen from the graffiti in the tomb attributed to Antefoker, in the tombs of Beni Hassan, and other necropolises,63 the scribes were tempted to inscribe some of their texts in scenes involving movement such as walking men, such the offering bearers (figs. 17), and in the space between walking legs (fig. 18).64 The same attitude can also be seen in the mastaba of Ptahshepses, room 3, on the southern part of the northern section of the west wall; underneath the last line of offering bearers there are two graffiti, one of them belonging to the scribe Ptahemwia.65 Such a positioning is very clear in the graffiti of Beni Hassan as well (fig. 6).

Identification of the Monument

It is remarkable that most of the graffitists were very careful to identify the monument they were visiting, and usually the identification of the monument is accompanied with the name of its owner. However, the graffiti that identify both monument and its owner are more than monument identification alone.66 Perhaps, there are two possible sources that allow the scribes of the graffiti to identify the monuments and their owners; the first one is that the scribe knew the owner of the monument in advance and thus dedicated his visit especially for him. The second is that he identifies it through the original texts or earlier graffiti that he found it inside the tomb.67 In visitors’ inscriptions found in tomb-chapels, the scribes used various terms to identify the monuments as can be seen in table 2. Usually they are able to identify the owner of the tomb.

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63. Like the Ramesside tomb of Neferronpe (TT178).
65. Navrátilová, Visitors’ Graffiti, pl. 5.
Sometimes, the scribes of the graffiti are attributing the monument not to its actual owner but to a sacred entity as in the tomb-chapel of Antefoker. As for the identification of the tombs’ owners of Beni Hassan, Ameny and Khnumhotep II as Hw.t nTr nt (xwf.w Ra) is still controversial. According to the only graffito in the tomb of Ameny, one cannot realize the identification that attributes this tomb to (xwf.w Ra) as Wildung stated. However one can read Hw.t nTr nt Imny (line 5), and this could be a correct identification. Regarding the identification of the tomb in the graffiti of Khnumhotep II, the expression Hw.t nTr nt (xwf.w Ra) is found only in two of these graffiti. Nevertheless, the first cartouche in the third graffito (fig. 13), contains a very readable s inside it, and contains no clue that it should be read as (xwf.w Ra). Although, the second cartouche in this graffito is very faint; however one can read one of these signs as ⓐ. It is not possible to know if this is to be related to the title of Khnumhotep as k3ny- or not. Thus, most probably these graffiti displayed two different identifications to this monument. The one attribution to King Khufu is probably due to the name of this king inside a cartouche as noted in several of the graffiti on the walls of the tomb. The authors of these graffiti probably—and wrongly—thought that the place was devoted to this king. As for the suggestion stated that these tombs could have been associated with some cult to Khufu in earlier times is still uncertain.

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68 This tomb belongs to Senet, and some graffitists attribute it to Sobeknofrou, in addition to Antefoker.
69 Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige*, 172.
70 Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischen Könige*, 172.