

Graffiti from the New Kingdom in Tomb N13.1

After the discovery of Tomb N13.1 in 2005, a first registration and documentation of the graffiti covering the tomb walls took place. Altogether 148 graffiti were counted. They are written or painted on each wall and on both pillars, out of consideration for the original decoration. Most of

them cover the South wall (45 items); nearly the same amount is to be found on the North wall (41 items) as on the West wall with its niche (40 items). Only one graffito is preserved on the partly damaged East wall. Pillar A was used for 13, Pillar B only for 8 graffiti. Beside the many texts, there are several fine drawings of human beings and animals (among others hippopotamus, gazelle, lion, ram, bull/cow, dog, jackal). Offering tables with flowers are also depicted. The colour of the graffiti's ink is normally black, but some parts of texts and some pictures are painted in red. A small amount of the pictures, which are probably from a later date, is incised or picked into the plaster. The length of the text graffiti is varying from only one or two words until quite extensive texts with several lines in a column; one text is written in two very long lines covering several metres over the North and West walls. The script is over all Hieratic from very different hands, one text is written in less cursive hieroglyphs. Based on palaeography and the few dated texts, the graffiti seem to be written within the time span from the end of the 17th until the 20th dynasty. The titulary of Amenhotep III is found twice (pl. 5) in historical notes on the North wall (one is mentioning the 30th year), the names of Ramesses II occur twice on the South wall.

The current decipherment of the graffiti already shows many different sorts of text: there are to be found: a) teachings, b) prophecies, c) hymns, d) visitors' graffiti (mainly in the formula: "The scribe ... came to see the beautiful temples of ... in Asyut ..."), e) historical notes, f) offering formulas, g) miscellaneous¹⁸.

Within the groups a), b) and c) J. Kahl and myself could identify several beginnings of well-known Egyptian literary works:

- 1) Twice the "Teaching of Amenemhet I"
 - North wall, 6 lines: Helck's edition Ia-IIIc¹⁹
 - almost opposite on the North wall of Pillar B, 5 lines: Helck's edition Ia-IIe²⁰
- 2) Once the "Hymn to the Nile"
 - West wall, niche, 10 lines: van der Plas' edition I,1 -V,8²¹
- 3) Once the "Teaching of Khety"
 - West wall, 10 lines: Helck's edition Ia-VIc²²
- 4) Once the "Teaching of a man for his son"
 - South wall, 8+x lines: Fischer-Elfert's edition §1,1-1,4²³ with additional fragments
- 5) Twice the "Loyalist Teaching"
 - South wall, 6 lines: Posener's edition §1,1-4,9²⁴
 - almost opposite on the South wall of Pillar A, 22+x lines: Posener's edition §1,1-2,7 with additional fragments
- 6) Once the "Prophecy of Neferty"
 - Pillar A, 23 lines: Helck's edition Ia-IIIe²⁵ with additional fragments

Concerning group d), the visitors' graffiti, it is interesting that various Siutian gods and their temples are mentioned, so Wepwawet (Lord of Asyut), Anubis (Lord of the necropolis Ra-qereret),

¹⁸ It is planned, that J. Kahl will publish the groups d), e), f), g), I will focus on groups a), b), c).

¹⁹ W. Helck, *Der Text der „Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen Sohn“*, 1969, 7-23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-17.

²¹ D. van der Plas, *L'hymne à la crue du Nil II*, 1986, 7-51.

²² W. Helck, *Die Lehre des Dw³-Htjj I*, 1970, 12-45.

²³ W. Fischer-Elfert, *Die Lehre eines Mannes für seinen Sohn*, 1999, plates.

²⁴ G. Posener, *L'enseignement loyaliste*, 1976, 53-84.

²⁵ W. Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, 2000, 5-19.

Hathor (Lady of Medjeden), Osiris (Lord of Ta-djeser), but also Ptah, Thot, and Seshat. Exceptional is the repeated designation of a “temple of Djefai-hapi”²⁶.

This situation that classical school texts are written on tomb walls is – as far as we know – without parallel. The particular location of Tomb N13.1 on the highest level of the mountain allows a wonderful view over the necropolis, the town and the Nile, and in former times also over its temples. The possibility that teachers in ancient Asyut undertook field trips with their pupils to the top of the hill and had a rest in an old shady tomb while repeating and writing literary texts as well as visitors’ graffiti, was explained in detail by J. Kahl²⁷. The further study of the texts, their special spellings and readings, the datings, authors and the spaces, which were chosen for writing, will perhaps add new aspects on this interesting find and will enlarge the corpus of Pharaonic graffiti²⁸ with hitherto unknown material.

U. V.

²⁶ J. Kahl presented several lectures on this peculiarity and its interpretation in 2006.

²⁷ J. Kahl, in: GM 211, 2006, 25–29.

²⁸ For the corpus see now for example A.J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt*, PÄ 17, 2001.