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Any news from Dahshur? Recording Ramesside secondary epigraphy in the South Temple of Senwosret III

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Abstract

Following the report on graffiti in the precinct of Senwosret III at Dahshur, and an endorsement of the Memphite secondary epigraphy as a significant resource for New Kingdom hieratic studies, researches in the pyramid complex at Dahshur and its graffiti have continued. New excavations as well as a new home for previous finds literally helped to bring more graffiti and dipinti to light, and expanded particularly the Ramesside corpus of both textual and figural epigraphy. Materially, these are a rather varied group in terms of dimensions and appearance, and thus in regard to writing techniques and tools used for their production, and in terms of location and visibility. The contents of the Ramesside secondary epigraphy material are equally diverse, from devotional subject matter to delivery dockets related to demolition of the pyramid precinct, and imply therefore a variable and multidimensional status of the Middle Kingdom building in the latter part of its New Kingdom history. Given current changes in recording practices, this contribution focuses on identifying sustainable working methods for recording this type of secondary epigraphy. The task may prove to be a challenge, but the interpretive prospects opened by the Ramesside graffiti and marks in pyramid complexes may indicate it is worth the effort.

Introduction

Following a preliminary report on the 1992 to 2012 research of graffiti in the precinct of Senwosret III at Dahshur¹, and an endorsement of the Memphite secondary epigraphy in general as resource for New Kingdom hieratic studies², researches in the Middle Kingdom pyramid complex at Dahshur and its graffiti have continued.³ The present paper addresses two issues. First, although new finds are mentioned as well, the contribution highlights the results of revisions concerned with an already excavated material, either because of better conditions of access, or new technologies becoming available for their recording and study. Whilst this may be an obvious

1 Navratilova 2013.

2 Navratilova 2015a following Megally 1981, see also Ragazzoli 2017a.

3 A brief outline of the ongoing complex research in Arnold and Oppenheim 2015, recent seasons e.g. Arnold, Chen and Oppenheim 2018.

matter, an opportunity for revisiting the original record, although it is historically a fairly visible part of the hieraticists' work⁴, is not always provided for in the highly time-demanding excavation process, and it may require some encouraging. The need to revisit the record and/or the site is also setting requirements for recording methods, with digital photography and photogrammetry records providing an opportunity for repeated virtual collations.⁵ Second, the contribution focuses on discussing and identifying sustainable working methods for recording secondary epigraphy as encountered in the pyramid precincts in the Memphite area.

Both aspects, an encouragement for revised collations, and a discussion of recording methods, may contribute to a growing recorded corpus of highly contextualised hieratic texts offering insights in forms and functions of hieratic writing, as well as in the ancient writing practice and its actors.

New finds of secondary epigraphy in Dahshur

New secondary epigraphy finds at Dahshur were identified in seasons 2014, 2017 and 2018.⁶ A large number of secondary epigraphy finds was identified in the area of the so-called South Temple, or cult temple of Senwosret III. This temple structure appears to be the largest hitherto known Middle Kingdom temple building.⁷ Although it is excavated only in part, it hosts well over a quarter of known graffiti and dipinti fragments⁸ from Senwosret's pyramid precinct. Its colonnades, and possibly a hypostyle hall, were probably still extant, or at least in part still accessible to its New Kingdom visitors, given the presence of secondary epigraphic layers on the column stems from the South Temple.⁹ The temple's size, status and owner may offer an explanation for its popularity with visitors.¹⁰

4 Frequent collations and revisiting were practiced by Jaroslav Černý (Griffith Institute Archive, University of Oxford, Collection Černý, Cerny Mss. 17), as well as Battiscombe Gunn, including in cooperation with J. Černý (Griffith Institute Archive, University of Oxford, Collection Gunn, Gunn Mss. III).

5 Further see Urcia et al. 2018, Prada and Wordsworth 2018, compare also Lowe 2005.

6 Unpublished report on secondary epigraphy research in the complex of Senwosret III at Dahshur for season 2018, H. Navratilova, Department of Egyptian Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

7 About the structure, Arnold, Chen, and Oppenheim 2018, 44.

8 Preliminary report Navratilova 2013 identified about a quarter of graffiti known to date as from the South Temple or neighbouring areas, and the new finds are predominantly from this area to the south of the pyramid.

9 For column reconstruction see Arnold 2002, suggested locations of colonnades and the columned hall in Arnold, Chen, and Oppenheim 2018, *passim*.

10 Compare Navratilova 2017a.

A significant number of mostly dipinti was also identified on material from previous seasons, now hosted in the new Metropolitan Museum of Art Research Center and storeroom at Dahshur.¹¹ The new storeroom proved critical for pursuing the secondary epigraphy study, as it provided improved observation and recording conditions. The additional secondary epigraphy features were mainly identified due to better lighting conditions and access to fragments of reliefs and architectural elements housed in the new storeroom.

The graffiti logbook of activities in season 2017 registered almost 100 new and/or revised entries; some entries contain multiple fragments of clustered graffiti and dipinti. New identifications on previously excavated material were made on fragments from the 1990s to the 2010s, from across the pyramid precinct. Most of these identifications were textual dipinti made in black ink, a smaller number in red ink. Red ink specimens were represented both by textual and figural evidence. Dipinti identified on dados and doorframes agree with a pattern of distribution previously identified in the corpus.¹² Fragments of incised figural graffiti were also identified both in the revised, and in the new material. An identification of motivations behind choices of a subtractive or additive method for executing secondary epigraphy is as yet inconclusive.

New joins were made between new and previous finds, including on blocks with secondary epigraphy features. An illustrative example of new data and interpretive possibilities becoming available is the joining of fragments 17.302 and 94.989. Thanks to Adela Oppenheim's analysis¹³, the large and heavily graffitied doorframe 94.989 is now joined with a piece of relief-decorated neighbouring wall, which bears not only graffiti, but also a copyists' grid. The clusters of textual dipinti were thus located in an immediate vicinity of an artist's interaction with the Middle Kingdom decoration.

Challenges at Dahshur

One of the most significant challenges at the pyramid precinct of Senwosret III is the fragmentary state of most of the monument's original surfaces. This difficulty is alleviated by a very close cooperation of the epigrapher with archaeologists and artists in the MMA team. The archaeological context of graffiti has continuously proved to be an essential component in their interpretation.¹⁴ In short, graffiti without the context of their walls become a disembodied text or figure, which is an

¹¹ Oppenheim 2017.

¹² Cf. Navratilova 2013.

¹³ Personal communication, October 2018.

¹⁴ Articulated by Caminos 1976.

antithesis of what they were historically – artefacts embodying human experience of the space, which had been chosen as a specific location for the epigraphic performance.¹⁵

Another challenge is represented by the demands of the recording process, which has to be as efficient and as fast as possible, and produce durable, verifiable, and “archivable” records. The recording demands and expectations are naturally not limited to graffiti study and are widely debated in the epigraphy community.¹⁶ In the case of secondary epigraphy – as indeed in the case of rock texts and art – the aspect of vulnerability of our evidence is increasingly emphasised. The vulnerability has been recognised to have a complex character – both the epigraphic layers and the surface that carries them are fragile, which may lead to a complete phase-out of contact epigraphic methods, such as tracings. However, advantages and disadvantages of diverse epigraphic processes may be contextual and will be discussed further below.

Recording¹⁷

In season 2018 at Dahshur, recording of new finds from seasons 2014 to 2018 and of new identifications from earlier seasons used a combination of hand-tracing and photography. The pencil hand tracing (pencil on *Mylar*[™]) was followed by inking of select textual and figural graffiti on a separate sheet. The pencil tracing was done in contact with the original surface whilst observing conservation expert advice; inking was done by overlaying the pencil tracing on *Mylar*[™] with tracing paper, and consulting the original¹⁸, as direct inking on the original is not recommended.¹⁹ Photography record was also provided. As a large number of graffiti and dipinti fragments is located on surfaces of small fragments of walls (there are no complete outstanding walls in the superstructure of the pyramid precinct of Senwosret III), photogrammetry has not yet been considered as generally applicable, but it is being considered specifically for larger column fragments. Its use is planned for complex larger blocks

15 Cf. Frood 2013, Navratilova 2013, 2015b, Ragazzoli 2018a, 2013, Pelt and Staring 2019, Verhoeven 2013, 147

16 Dorman 2008, and the upcoming Davies and Laboury eds. 2020.

17 The recording aspect has been addressed more closely in the preliminary report (H. Navratilova, Department of Egyptian Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

18 A technique developed and perfected at the IFAO and used at the *Académie hiératique*, a specialized workshop organized by the IFAO and the CNRS, with instalments in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 so far.

19 Provisional inking in season 2018 used *Mylar*[™], which gives acceptable results, but is technically problematic as the ink takes rather long to dry out due to the non-absorbent qualities of *Mylar*.

with several layers of epigraphic activity, and particularly for the rounded surfaces of column fragments.²⁰

All tracings are intended for scanning and digital inking. In that context, the hand inking may appear as redundant, but I would like to make a case for a complex recording approach, especially for significant dipinti. Although contact methods, such as hand-tracing, are increasingly phased out in Egypt, and now banned in rock inscriptions recording,²¹ a detailed examination that is helped by the hand-tracing process is thus far difficult to replace for ostraca and ink-written dipinti. However, it is recognised that the conservation aspects, and a protection of the artefact must be given a priority when necessary.

The reasons for a seemingly reduplicated workflow rest in a specific aim of each of the recording methods.²² The pencil drawing and its digital version should aim at reconstructing the technique of writing, and indicate the brushstrokes' direction, composition and, if possible, sequence,²³ whilst the hand-inked version offers a more accurate rendering of the preservation of the ink, as nuances of shading of and damage to the ink can be captured relatively accurately. The analysis of a sign construction, or sign formation, has been shown to provide data on text production and on palaeography.²⁴

Further experimenting is needed for a development of accurate digital inking that would be capable of reproducing the fading and damage to ink in corresponding detail and accuracy.²⁵ This was thus far possible mainly in hardcopy inking, but it would be desirable to transfer this accuracy also to a digital format.²⁶

A development of extensive and varied recording techniques aims to provide not only a publishable record, but also a quality archival record that will offer verifiable data for future researchers and will have sufficient archive quality. Photography also allows for the use of digital colour manipulation, including the decorrelation stretch (with *DStretch*[®] plug-in).²⁷ Good results have been obtained on Ramesside red ink texts and figures in Dahshur using this method.

20 A. Oppenheim, personal communication.

21 Urcia et al. 2018, following Curci et al. 2012.

22 On challenges of graffiti recording on different surfaces now also Salvador 2020, in detail.

23 Compare Ragazzoli 2017b.

24 Recently Regulski 2018, with further references.

25 The options were amply discussed by the participants of the conference *Clamour from the Past*, held at the IFAO in June 2019.

26 See Urcia et al. 2018, following Curci et al. 2012. Note, however, that these complex methods require a dedicated team, equipment, and consequently a substantial expense. They may, however, become an epigraphic necessity following the elimination of contact copying.

27 Evans and Mourad 2018, Gourdon and Enmarch 2017.

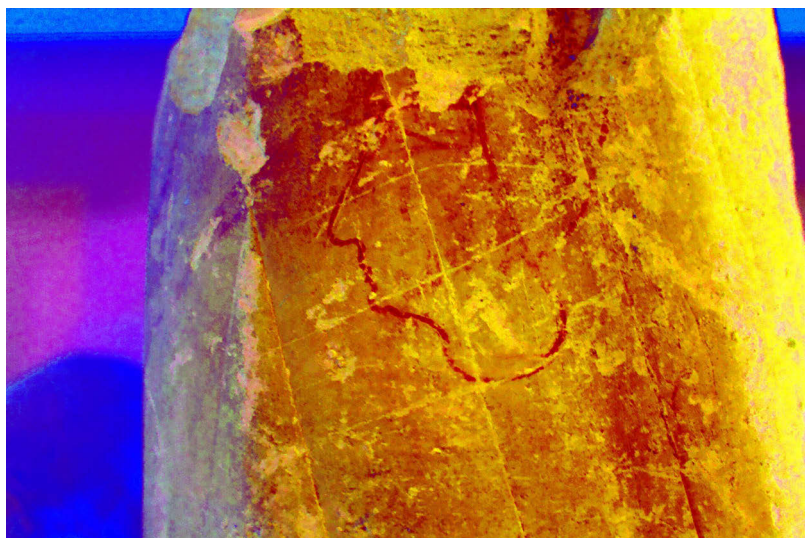


Fig. 1: *DStretch*[®]-adjusted image of a royal head, probably Ramesside. Fragment of a column from the South Temple of Senwosret III (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art; photo Hana Navratilova)

For future reference, digital modelling of the surface and epigraphic features, using orthophotography and photogrammetry,²⁸ could be used for the dipinti in pyramid precincts as well, with some profit, provided that archival standards for the digital data and an archival infrastructure adjusted to hold them would be available.

Dino-lite

The *Dino-lite* portable microscope was also used on ink dipinti. The *Dino-lite* provides additional level of detail and is especially useful for small and faded signs. Microscopes have been used with profit for a study of written texts on papyri (e.g. by James P. Allen in his publication of the Heqanakhte papyri²⁹). However, using the microscope during fieldwork presented potential obstacles. *Dino-lite*, being portable, resolved most difficulties. During the 2018 season at the Metropolitan Museum of Art excavation in the pyramid complex of Senwosret III at Dahshur, the *Dino-lite* was used on ink-written New Kingdom dipinti, in particular on fragment 94.989.

The large fragment no. 94.989 used to be a part of a painted doorframe from one of the shrines in the pyramid complex of Senwosret III. The doorframes were often

28 Wordsworth and Prada 2018, Salvador 2020.

29 Allen 2002, and further Regulski 2018.

used to host New Kingdom secondary epigraphy in this Middle Kingdom pyramid complex. There were several texts written in black ink on the doorframe's painted thickness. They contained dipinti that identified the pyramid owner and praised the temple as "the most beautiful among all the temples".

Individual hand-writing styles can be seen on the doorframe. But the individual signs have small dimensions and present some difficulty for reconstructing how exactly the individual signs looked like. The detail no. 1 (fig. 2) shows an outline of the hieratic signs as gleaned from a hand-tracing collated with photography record. The detail no. 2 (fig. 3a, b) shows the same part of the text copied from a *Dino-lite* shot, clearly outlining the individual strokes of the scribe's pen.

Recording workflow options

The ideal workflow in a setting comparable to Senwosret III would include epigraphic recording work to follow after a registrar's work and an interpretive perspective on the primary epigraphy layers. During fieldwork at Dahshur, this system is already practised by the MMA team. Photography, and other photographic techniques, are applied, as well as a hand-tracing. The latter could be replaced with a Chicago-style tracing on a digital photograph, inclusive using enhanced digital record if required, and followed by a collation with the original.³⁰

Photogrammetry and further adjustments of resulting digital images, including *DStretch*[®] have brought considerable results elsewhere,³¹ and parallel developments experimenting with Reflectance Transformation Imaging, photogrammetry, and other digitally supported and enhanced technologies have been applied to rock art and rock inscriptions,³² demonstrating the potential of these methods.

The workflow is naturally different in an extant monument with large square footage of graffitied walls,³³ when compared to the fragmented surfaces such as in Dahshur. Although the basic requirement of accurate, "archivable", and revisable record must remain the same, it may be easier to adopt the digital "Chicago" method as shown by K. Vértés, as large and fragile wall surfaces may prove increasingly difficult to trace by any other method.³⁴ On the other hand, it is evident that a complex and time consuming process including all the digital enhancements cannot be applied to all secondary epigraphy finds routinely. This is where the hand tracings

30 Vértés 2020, Der Manuelian 1998, outline for graffiti Navratilova 2015b.

31 Worsdworth and Prada 2018.

32 Urcia et al. 2018.

33 Compare Bell 1987 and Traunecker 1987.

34 See also Gülден 2018.



Fig. 2: A detail from door thickness 94.989, as traced by hand (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art; tracing and digital retracing Hana Navratilova)

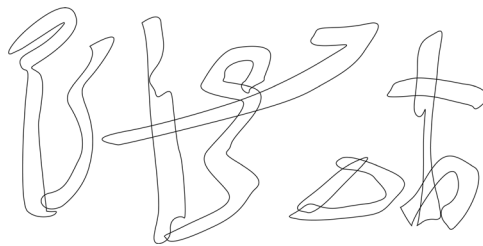


Fig. 3a, b: A detail from door thickness 94.989, a *Dino-lite* snapshot with tracing and digital inking (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art; tracing and digital retracing Hana Navratilova)

and hand inking of select dipinti, collated immediately on site, may be helpful, being conducive to an attentive observation.³⁵

A recorded, well-described and contextualised fragment, ideally already inserted into its approximate location and placement in the architectural and decorative scheme, would then be analysed as a secondary epigraphy artefact, and a result of an epigraphic performance³⁶.

Why attention to secondary epigraphy?

The recording techniques and processes as outlined above are time- and skill-consuming, expensive, and not seldom all of the above. They clearly offer advantageous new data on epigraphic layers that were either not observed before or documented relatively cursorily. However, it could be still suggested that the results of secondary epigraphy research on fragmentary corpora, as opposed to well-preserved texts and figures in their original setting (such as in the case of Theban material,³⁷ or indeed the Djoser chapels³⁸ in Saqqara, not to mention impressive square footage of temple graffiti³⁹), are not sufficiently informative and do not necessarily contribute to the broader perspectives of Egyptian archaeology and history.

On the example of the South Temple of Senwosret III at Dahshur, it may be argued that this is not the case. The following lines will offer a summary, outlining the changing character of secondary epigraphy in Dahshur's precinct of Senwosret III throughout the New Kingdom and its contribution to an interpretation of the temple's history. The characteristic New Kingdom phenomenon of visitors' inscriptions is not isolated and it did not remain unaffected by historical developments. Secondary epigraphy channelled the cultural and social concerns of diverse periods. As is gradually attested⁴⁰, the Thutmoside texts at Dahshur were frequently thematising historical knowledge and also political concerns as articulated within the Egyptian elites. They constitute part of a body of the Thutmoside dipinti evidence in the Memphite area that was concerned with the representation of contemporary kingship by non-royal persons.

The Eighteenth dynasty inscriptions developed a particular style, and the Eighteenth dynasty Memphite secondary inscriptions – like their counterparts elsewhere

35 Compare Gasse 2015.

36 Cf. Ragazzoli 2017c.

37 Ragazzoli 2017a, 2017b, 2013. All three contributions are concerned with man-made spaces; on rock graffiti see Dorn 2014 with references to previous work on the graffiti in the Theban mountain.

38 Navratilova 2015b.

39 Frood 2013, Salvador 2016, Cruz-Urbe 2016, Dijkstra 2012.

40 Navratilova 2013.

in Egypt – were already prone to a standardised formulaic structure with narrative markers⁴¹ – the rather well-known *iw.t pw-* style inscription.⁴² They began with a dating formula, more or less elaborate, that was continued by a variation on a historical text. The historical text inserts that are concerned with activities of Thutmose III, and which also have Abusir, and Medum⁴³ parallels, expanded the formulaic scheme. The Dahshur examples on fragments 94.I413, and 94.I411⁴⁴ are comparable to Saqqara and Abusir examples in the Step pyramid⁴⁵ and in the Userkaf Sun temple.⁴⁶ The Userkaf Sun temple graffito is better preserved than its Dahshur counterparts:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. [... ḥr ḥm n nswt] bjty (mn-<ḥpr>-r)
s; r' (dḥwtj-msw nfr-ḥpr.w) 'nh d.t r
nhḥ is.t ḥm=f ḥr d:ḥj [...]</p> | <p>1. [date under the Majesty of the King of Upper] and Lower Egypt, Men<kheper>re, Son of Re, Thutmose Neferkheperu, living for ever and ever. As His Majesty was in Syria [...]</p> |
| <p>2. [... t:rw fn]ḥ.w ḥbbḥ ḥ:w ḥr s.t=sn ḥr
wḏ iti=f imn-r' nswt nṯr:w</p> | <p>2. [As he trampled the lands of the Fen] khu and Hurrians in their place according to the command of his father, Amun-Re, King of gods (Amonrasonther).</p> |
| <p>3. [iw.t pw ir.n] whm.w nswt imw-
ndḥ r m; m(h)r pn p; 'tḥ ḥn' n; n ḥrj.w
n 't [...] sh; ?</p> | <p>3. [There came] the royal herald Amuned-jeh to see this pyramid. The Brewer and those of bread [production] ... scribe ?</p> |
| <p>4. [...]m-p.t imn-ḥtp sh; mntw-ḥtp
sh; dḥwtj-m-ḥ:t ḥwmš</p> | <p>4. [...]m-pet, Amenhotep, Scribe Mentuhotep, Scribe Djehutiemhat, Humesh,</p> |
| <p>5. [remnants of signs] [...] sh;</p> | <p>5. [traces of names and a title...] scribe?</p> |

In all three locations: Abusir, Saqqara and Dahshur, the graffiti appear to share a following structure, although not every graffito demonstrated all surviving parts:

41 Summed up by Ragazzoli 2013, Verhoeven 2012.

42 Ragazzoli 2013, Megally 1981, Navratilova 2015b.

43 Navratilova 2011.

44 Navratilova forthcoming.

45 See Navratilova 2015b, 140–141.

46 Navratilova 2015b, 61–63 with further references.

- a) Official date.
- b) Activities of the king, at which the writers/visitors perhaps did not participate directly but relate them, and relate to them as deeds of the king, whom they serve, affirming their own social position.⁴⁷ Location of the king (best preserved in Amunedjeh's specimen in Abusir) could be included as well.
- c) A gist of the visitors' inscription with a short visitors' formula.
- d) List of accompanying or subsequently arriving (?) personnel.⁴⁸

As most of hitherto known epigraphic features on the decorated surfaces of the South temple of Senwosret III appear to be datable to the Eighteenth dynasty, it may be suggested that this was also a possible date for other secondary features on the decorated surfaces, such as abovementioned copying grids. These grids appear on a number of monuments in Egypt and are increasingly being recognised as a secondary epigraphy feature.⁴⁹ The Eighteenth dynasty material attests thus to a relationship to an extant monument, which became a space of self-representation and representation, and quite possibly a link in the artistic tradition.⁵⁰

There is another element suggesting that training of artists and/or artisans involved them in visits to sites such as pyramid temples. One larger fragment with painted surface bears the opening of the "book of Kemyt" (o3.467).⁵¹ The first words of the so called "Memphite" letter formula – certainly obsolete in New Kingdom letter writing – were applied on a wall or a fragment of a wall. Dating of this piece is of course debatable, but its New Kingdom provenance is a possibility. In that case, it would contribute to the collection of Kemyt copies attested in the milieu of workmen employed at or frequenting a necropolis.⁵²

The Ramesside epigraphic material, assumed to come mostly from the Nineteenth dynasty (but still open to further dating adjustments), also appears on decorated surfaces (e. g. cartouche showing *stp-n-r* on 96.461 from the Pyramid Temple), but a rather conspicuous part is attested on undecorated plain and chiselled stone surfaces, suggestive of a change in material circumstances. The new finds from the South temple uncovered a broader range of Ramesside secondary epigraphy

47 Di Biase-Dyson 2015, 2019. See also Navratilova 2019.

48 In detail, Navratilova forthcoming.

49 R. Enmarch, personal communication June 2019, grids observed in tombs.

50 Cf. Navratilova 2017, compare Theban material – Ragazzoli 2017a.

51 Thanks to Aurore Motte for discussing this piece. On the work - selection of recent publications and discussions follows: Burkard and Thissen 2003; Parkinson 2002, Petersmarck 2012; Posener 1951; Barta 1978, Brunner 1957. Compare also Verhoeven 2012.

52 Goelet 2013.

than previously attested. Ramesside epigraphic production in the temple of Senwosret III differs from Ramesside graffiti in other locations.⁵³

The new finds from the South temple are particularly remarkable given a larger presence of figural graffiti and dipinti, datable to the Ramesside period. These, similarly to other graffiti ensembles, consist of divine, royal, human, and animal figures, symbols, such as the eye of Horus, and ceremonial fans. One group of Ramesside textual dipinti is accompanied by a divine image of a ram-headed deity (fragment 17.43), combining text and figure.

Dating some figural graffiti comes with its own challenges⁵⁴, but the Ramesside human and royal figures are reasonably certain, due to characteristic style of dress and accessories. A South temple column fragment (no. 389 from season 2017, subject to *DStretch*[®] adjustment, see fig. 1) bears an outline of a royal head with a Blue crown and an uraeus, drawn in red ink and with a Ramesside-looking profile.⁵⁵ There are also varied fragments of drawn and incised human figures in what is most likely a Ramesside dress.

The figures *per se* would be open to varied interpretive speculations, but their context is suggesting some key elements of the Ramesside use of the temple. First, the temple appears to have had its decorated surfaces damaged after the Eighteenth dynasty (cf. above). Second, another category, namely the Ramesside texts containing demolition dockets probably indicated the expected destinations of stones after parts of the temple had been dismantled. As further dockets had been identified after a rearrangement of finds in the new magazine at the MMA Research Center at Dahshur, is increasingly possible to reassess the growing evidence of the Ramesside use and eventually also at least partial destruction of the precinct. The Ramesside chapter of the temple history is captured in secondary epigraphy as a decisive link in the *chaîne opératoire*, in the biography of the temple that ended being largely commodified as a resource of stone.

Diverse characteristics of the dockets, having been previously identified, may now be put in a more reliable comparative perspective. There are at least two scribal hands and two destinations written as large dockets, and further hands that wrote smaller dockets. The docket uses as well as typology raises, however, also further queries regarding organization of the demolition and removal process. The docketed finds appeared in diverse parts of the precinct. A practical use of the dockets is also pointing toward a literate presence on site. Obviously, there were scribes who had written them, but also the responsible personnel who read them – either other scribes (administrators), or literate foremen of the workmen who were employed at

53 In general terms, both Memphite graffiti in pyramid precincts and their relatives elsewhere demonstrate changes in time, and adaptations to different spaces, cf. Dorn 2014.

54 Staring 2011.

55 Compare Ramesside ostraca e.g. Louvre N 498, or MMA 14.6.191 and 29.2.22.

the demolition site. The qualifications of some of the demolition staff allowed, as is shown in the above outlined growing number of figural graffiti, also some more or less sophisticated expression of their interests and experiences. Remarkably, not every figural graffiti author either had or had decided to use a writing kit, as there are also carved and scratched examples, despite the fact that writing kits must have been present on site.

The physical aspect of moving of the stone through and out of the pyramid complex is attested by intrusive fragments from other parts of the pyramid complex that were identified in the causeway area⁵⁶. The research in the South temple/causeway area is likely to bring more evidence for the nuances of the New Kingdom re-use of the pyramid complexes as attested by the example of the precinct of Senwosret III at Dahshur.

Secondary epigraphy evidence in the precinct of Senwosret III is also complemented by other, especially material culture finds datable to the New Kingdom. As has been already shown, the secondary epigraphy interpretation rests largely on an extended contextualisation with site conditions and other finds. In the pyramid precinct of Senwosret III, there is no shortage of contextual information, as the New Kingdom finds include also pottery, and possibly some tools that might have been used in the temple demolition (?). The pottery⁵⁷ indicates New Kingdom Eighteenth dynasty activity, possibly including ritual. The New Kingdom cult interest appear also to be attested by stelae. One stela fragment is possibly dedicated to Kha-ka(u)re, Senwosret III (the find dated October 22, 2018, no inventory number assigned yet). Later, probably Ramesside corpus of pottery may appear less distinctive, but still allowing to expect a cultic use of the complex, with decorated fine pottery, preceding or overlapping with the repurposing of most of its limestone.

Conclusions

The interpretation of secondary epigraphy has been expanded and articulated in the last decade, making this particular ancient writing practice an important element in understanding the aspects of personal experience of the ancient individual, and collective concerns of the ancient communities. It is increasingly accorded a role in the interpretation of an emic understanding of sites that have become subject to modern archaeological research⁵⁸.

The paper presented the role of secondary epigraphy as a vital witness to the monument biography, revealing diverse actors on site. An appreciation of the pyr-

56 A. Oppenheim and Di. Arnold, personal communication.

57 Consulted with Susan Allen, see also Allen 2000 and 2004.

58 Ragazzoli 2018b.

amid complex as a meaningful space⁵⁹ alongside its re-use for building material is suggestive of an understanding of the necropolis as a dynamic “urban” space open to diverse uses and re-uses, confirming the Ramesside tension between an image of a tomb as a stable memorial and lived experience of the fragility of the monuments. The fragility was articulated in the Ramesside text of Papyrus Chester Beatty IV.⁶⁰

Given the value of secondary epigraphy evidence, it is argued that its recording and archiving secures essential material. The recording processes are constantly evolving in response to new requirements of research, but also of conservation. A close observation remains irreplaceable, favouring a continued use of hand-tracings, if allowable in context of conservation. However, all methods are open to continuous revision and development.

Addendum

Concerning several aspects of documentation, space distribution and historical development of textual and figural ink graffiti (dipinti) in Asyut, cf. also the recently published edition Verhoeven (ed.) 2020.

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59 Cf. Theban tombs examples, see Ragazzoli 2017a.

60 Papyrus British Museum EA 10684, paragraph 4. Lichtheim 1976, 175–178.

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