Khaled Hassan

The Longest Visitor’s Ostracon Concerning the Temple of Deir el-Bahri. A Recombination of Two Pieces, Ostraca Cairo 430 and 432

Conditions of Use

You may use content in this website only for your personal, noncommercial use. Any further use of this website and its content is forbidden, unless you have obtained prior permission from the publisher (contact AT ifao.egnet.net). The copyright is retained by the publisher (Ifao).

Dernières publications

9782724707434 Regressus ad uterum Marie-Lys Arnette
9782724707557 Soufisme et Hadith dans l’Égypte ottomane Tayeb Chouiref
9782724707632 Archéologie française en Égypte Laurent Coulon (éd.), Mélanie Cressent (éd.)
9782724707625 BCE 29 Sylvie Marchand (éd.)
9782724707649 BIFAO 119
9782724707243 Les textes de la pyramide de Mérenrê Isabelle Pierre-Croisilou
9782724707588 La chapelle de barque en calcite Jean-François Carlotti, Luc Gabolde, Catherine Graindorge, Philippe Martinez, Jean-François Gout
9782724707748 Abréviations des périodiques et collections en usage à l’Ifao, 7e éd. Bernard Mathieu

© Institut français d’archéologie orientale - Le Caire
The Longest Visitor’s Ostracon Concerning the Temple of Deir el-Bahri. A Recombination of Two Pieces, Ostraca Cairo 430 and 432

KHALED HASSAN

INTRODUCTION

It seems that visiting ancient monuments of ancestors was a popular habit during the New Kingdom, particularly in the 18th Dynasty, and continued during Graeco-Roman times.\(^1\) Ancient visitors were keen to record their visits on the walls of the monuments i.e. tombs and temples.\(^2\) Visitors’ inscriptions constitute an interesting epigraphy, where the authors were careful to integrate them among the original decoration of the monument, and complied with the rules of tombs’ decorum.\(^3\) A few texts of this kind were recorded on three ostraca in hieratic script, all of which were found in the vicinity of Deir el-Bahri and date back to the first half of the 18th Dynasty.\(^4\) Each ostracon contains elements of the visitors’ formula, i.e. the incipit of the text \(ỉw.t\) \(pw\) \(ɪr\) \(n\) \(sš\) \( […] r\) \(mȝȝ\). These ostraca most probably did use this with a didactic aim, and they were probably considered as literary excerpts for students’ exercises.\(^5\)

In 2013 the first half of this ostracon (no. 432)\(^6\) has been published with a full commentary to its content.\(^7\) Dr. Chloé Ragazzoli drew my attention to its second half (no. 430), which was found like the first half in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo: after their recombination, the two texts form a large visitors’ inscription. This ostracon is therefore exceptional, both for being one of the rare ostraca that contain this kind of text and for recording the longest version of it on ostracon.

---

1 Den Doncker 2012, p. 25.  
2 Hassan 2013, p. 189.  
4 Hayes 1942, p. 25, no. 97, pl. XX; Hassan 2013, p. 188; Ragazzoli 2016; Hassan 2013, p. 184; Ragazzoli 2016, pp. 66–67. Another visitor’s formula is partially mentioned on ostracon O. Campbell 22 in a hymn dedicated to Amon. Cf. McDowell 1993, pp. 29–30, pl. XXXI.  
5 For more information about this hypothesis cf. Ragazzoli 2016, pp. 79–80.  
6 This number represents the serial number that has been assigned by a team at the Cairo University, who was authorized to make a classification of the whole ostraca that are housed in the basements of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and does not relate to the entry or the temporary numbers of the museums’ registers.  
DESCRIPTION

This new piece of limestone is about 16 cm high and 19 cm wide with nine incomplete hieratic lines. Now the whole ostracon, after recombination, consists of twelve lines in black ink. It is clear that the two pieces were written by the same hand and belong together. Some of the beginnings of the lines are broken and most of their endings are wiped off. The last two lines are broken, and thus most of their content is missing.

TRANSLITERATION

[1] [...] iw.t pw ir.n ss P2[...]
[2] [r mɔɔ ɔ ḫw.t-ntr] Dsr-dsrm gm.n.f [s.t ...]
[3] [mỉ p.t m bnuw s K] hr wbn im.s "h'.n dd.n.f hwi [...]
[4] [p.t m "n tyw wzd] df[š.s m snfr hr tt-hr.t n s.t wr.t nty NN]
[5] im.s "h'.n dd.n.f ir gh mɔɔ [...]
[7] [š]šššš, Mỉ bnr, iw.w br [...]
[8] htp di nsw ḫmn K nsw ntrw dt.f prt-brw [...]
[9] Kš.w, špd.w hỉ nb.t nfr.t wr(t) w'b(t) n [...]
[10][...] im:š? dd.n.f pɔ [...] Ms n [...]
[11][...] štty [...]
[12][...] rm [...]
Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]

Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]

Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]

Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]

Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]

Fig. 1. Photograph of O. Cairo Museum no. 430.

Fig. 2. Facsimile drawing by Kh. Hassan.

TRANSCRIPTION

[...]
NOTES ON THE PALAEOGRAPHY

As previously stated, the hieratic is written by the same hand throughout the text in a regular, compact, experienced, and well-organized appearance. The text is displaying the characteristic features of the early and middle of 18th Dynasty hand. The scribe was inclined to write each sign separately, thus the ligatures are relatively few; this attitude can be seen in the majority of the first half of the 18th Dynasty literary texts. In certain sections of the text, some signs are closer to their hieroglyphic shape than hieratic and this is clear in the forms of \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{h} \), \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{k} \). This could be a kind of renovation in the script in the middle of the 18th Dynasty, especially the time of Tuthmosis III, where the scribes tended to use full forms of the signs bringing them closer to the hieroglyphic forms.

1. \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{b} \) most probably stands for \( m\text{.my} \).
2. Both signs are identical to the forms in ostracon 140 r of Deir el-Bahri.
3. It is difficult to read the first sign, while the second sign \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{b} \) could be read as \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{h} \) but this is still uncertain reading.
4. The name of the scribe in the middle of the line is too faint to recognize it.
5. According to the context, most probably to be read as \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{h} \).

COMMENTARY

This ostracon displays a classical visitor’s text, descriptive, followed by an offering formula, most probably dedicated to the scribe of the text. The significance of this ostracon is that it constitutes, as far as I know, the longest visitor’s text written on ostraca.

1. \( s\text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{p} \text{y} \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{d} \): most probably the name of the scribe, identical to the one named at the end of the text (l. 10), being both the author and the beneficiary followed by the name of his parents. This way of writing the name of the graffitist with his filiation is known in the graffiti of the scribe Men in the tomb of Iti-ib-iqr with his title and the name of his mother and brother.

5. The meaning of this line after \( \text{\textsuperscript{b}} \text{h} \text{d} \text{d} \text{n} \text{f} \) is a bit unclear, where the text is wiped away and the reading of the rest of it is uncertain. However, based on the reading of the word as \( gr\text{n} \) and also the context, one could suppose that the text describes the monument at night: “As for the night, look […] it looks like wonder for the” and then mentions the four individuals of the text. As far as I am aware, similar text with the night or proper names in the middle of the formula is unknown.

11 Hayes 1942, pl. XXV, 140 r. Based on palaeographical point of view, perhaps this ostracon is inscribed by the same scribe as the ostracon of Senmur tomb, cf. Hassan 2013, p. 190.
12 Verhoeven 2012, p. 52.
6–7. The individuals of the text do not occur in any other published visitors’ graffiti; however some of their names are attested in other texts such as $\text{ḏd.n.f}$, but it cannot be proved that they are the same individuals. It is remarkable that two of the names are inscribed with the seated man as determinatives, while the others are inscribed without determinatives. The name of the scribe is preceded by $\text{ḏd.n.f}$; a similar expression is mentioned in the graffiti of the scribe Toury in the tomb of Khnum-hotep II at Beni Hasan.14

OFFERING FORMULA IN THE VISITORS’ INSCRIPTIONS

In her study Hana Navrátilová classified the visitors’ graffiti into four categories i.e. antiquarian (or) descriptive, signature, piety-oriented, and the stroll-formula. The antiquarian formula shows an interest for the visited monuments, mentioning their names, owners and/or architectural elements. At the same time piety-oriented graffiti do not show any interest for the monuments themselves, the visitors having just written prayers and invocations to the deities of the site, or to anybody else. These prayers and offerings could be considered as a kind of ritual act. As for the offering formula, sometimes it was attached to the antiquarian texts as a combination between them, or it was inscribed in a separate space as a single piety text with solely the signature of the scribe. Most probably the scribe of the text dedicated these offerings to the efficacious souls of the ancient owners of the monuments’ or to the benefits of the visiting scribes themselves. The offering formulae in these texts vary between brief texts to a long and detailed formula, maybe accompanied by some rituals. The position of these formulae also varied from one text to another as follows:

- at the end of the antiquarian formula (1, 3, 4 A–B, 5 E);
- in the middle of the text, sometimes embedded in the antiquarian formula (2 A). This latter kind is very rare;
- pure offering text with the signature of the scribe at the end, maybe this text constitutes a piety formula (2 B, 5 A, C–D);
- the incipit $\text{ḥtp di nsw}$ was regularly used as an introduction to the offering formula (2 B, 4 A, 5 A–E), however it could start with $\text{pr.t hrw}$, or with the offerings directly.

13 PN I, p. 97–17.
14 Hassan 2016, p. 49.
17 Navrátilová 2006, p. 6. Most of the graffiti found in tombs in the area of Deir el-Bahri relate to this type. Published by Marciniak 1974, and translated by Sadek 1983, pp. 67–91; Sadek 1984, pp. 65–86.
18 Ragazzoli 2013, p. 287.
20 Navrátilová 2007, p. 53; Verhoeven 2012, p. 57; Ragazzoli 2013, p. 288.
Funerary Temple of Sahure

[1] ḫȝ.t sp 2, ṣbd 3, ṣḥ.t, [sw] 7, ḫr ḫm [n] nswt bitj [...] ʿ.w.s
[2] ʿw.t pw īn ss ḳmn-m-[ḥȝ.t ss ʿn]-nmti
[3] ṭ mȝȝ ḫ.w.t nṯr n.t ḫm n nswt bitj ṣẖw-rʿ mȝʿ-ḫrw
[4] gm.n.f sī nfr ḫr ib.f r ʿ. t wr sj ḫr f
[5] mū t ṭ p ḫ ḫ.w.t nṯr ʿn ṭ dd.n.f nfr wi
[7] [...] nȝ n kȝ ʿḥʿ n ṭ sỉ ṣẖ-m-ḥȝb sỉ ṣẖ nḏs ṣẖ-m-ḥȝb

[1] Year 2, month 3 of akhet, day 7, under the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, [...] l.p.h.
[2] There came the scribe Amenemhat, [son of scribe Anat]-menti
[3] to see the temple of the Majesty of the King of Lower and Upper Egypt, Sahure justified.
[4] He found it beautiful in his heart, in his eyes [it] was great.
[5] As heaven lit in white by moon, thus he said: this is beautiful
[6] [the temple of ka of the Majesty] of King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sahure, justified

North Chapel, Djoser Complex – Saqqara

A

[1] īw.t pw īn ss ḫ(-ms) š ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ
[2] ḫ.m nṯr n.t ḫr wbn ʿḥʿ n ḫnw.s ṭ ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ
[3] ḫ.w.t nṯr n.t ḫr wbn ʿḥʿ n ḫnw.s ṭ ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ
[4] ḫ.w.t nṯr n.t ḫr wbn ʿḥʿ n ḫnw.s ṭ ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ
[5] ḫ.w.t nṯr n.t ḫr wbn ʿḥʿ n ḫnw.s ṭ ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ
[6] ḫ.w.t nṯr n.t ḫr wbn ʿḥʿ n ḫnw.s ṭ ṭ mȝȝ ṭ mȝȝ

[1] There came the scribe Ah(mose), son of Iptah to see
[2] the temple of Djoser. He found it as if [there were] heaven in it, Re
[3] rising in it. Then he said let be caused that there come loaves of bread, [...], bulls,
[5] May the heaven send down myrrh, and provide incense for it.
[6] (Written) by the scribe, schoolmaster Stethemheb, and the apprentice scribe Ahmose.
The Longest Visitor’s Ostracon Concerning the Temple of Deir el-Bahri

B23

[1] htp di nsw [...] nb nṯr.w im.yw
[2] htp di nsw lm-nr nb ns.wt t˘.wy bn.t.y nṯrw im.y[w]
[3] pr.t hrw t, bnk.t, k2, ṣpd [...] ym? h.(wt) nb.(w)t r [...] 
[4] [...] iw br hzw.t? n k3 n w2 mn [...]? bs [...] 
[5] ? [imḥb ...] lm-n-h₂t m3-hrw.

[1] The offering that the king gives to [...] lord of gods that are in?
[2] The offering that the king gives so that Amun-Re, lord of the thrones of the Two Lands, foremost of gods in [...] may give
[3] Offering of bread, beer, bulls and fowl [...] and all [good and pure] things
[4] which are on an offering-table [...]? for the ka of the [...] 

The Tomb of Khnum-hotep II, Beni Hasan24

[1] iw.t pw ỉry šš ikr n db’w 
[2] tw-ry r m2ח hw.t-nṯr nt (… s ... ) m3-hrw
[3] gm.n.f sy nṣy br lb.fr hw.t-nṯr nb.t 
[4] ‘ḥ’ <.n> dd.n.f [...] šš k3.w ṣpd.w
[5] ht nb.t nṣf[t] [...] w[b[t] ... ] n k3 (… ḫ2.t? ...) m3-hrw
[6] šš ikr n db’w šš ḥsb it
[7] dd[n].f Tiw-ry

[1] Then the scribe of excellent fingers Toury came 
[2] 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.

The Tomb of Iti-ib-iqr, Assiut

A25

[1] iw pw ir.n šš Mn 
[2] ii r m2ח hw.t-nṯr nṣf.t n hw.t-
[3] hrw nb.t Mdd (n) gm.n.f sy 
[4] nṣf.t br-lb.fr hw.t-nṯr nb.t nṣf.t ‘ḥ’ .n

25 Verhoeven 2012, p. 52.
[5] ḏd.n.f htp-di-nsw Wsir nb ëš-ình Ḥnw nb
[6] Rȝ-ḳ[rr.t] ir.n ss ḫkr wn mȝō gr
[7] mȝō[ìkr] bt wḥ tp mrr ṭmn.t.w
[8] n kw ss Mn sð wʻb n Wp-wt.w Wp-wt.wt
[9] ms[n] nb.t pr Nw.t sn.f ḏw.w

[1] Then the scribe Men came,
[2] having come to see the beautiful temple of Hathor,
[3] lady of Medjeden. He found it
[4] more beautiful in his heart [than] any other beautiful temple. Then
[5] he said: May the king give an offering to Osiris, lord of Ta-ankh, and Anubis, lord of
[6] Ra-qrer[eret]. Made by the truly able scribe, the true
[7] silent one, with [able] character, the humble one, beloved by the people.
[8] For the ka of the scribe Men, son of the wab-priest of Wepwawet Wepwawet,
[9] born by the lady of the house Nut. His brother (is) Duau.

B²⁶

[1] ḫwt pw ir.n ss Ḥp-ì-m-wȝs.t r mȝȝ ḥw.t-nṯr nfr.t nt wp-wt-wt
[2] gm.n.f sy nfr.ti [ḥ r.[f.] r ḫw.t-nṯr nb.t [nfr.]} r ḫw.t-nṯr Đf.l Ḥpǐ
[3] n kw ḫy ḫkr Ìt(i)-ib(i) pr.t-brw t ḫntk kȝ.w ḫpd.w prr.t nb.t ḫr […]
[4] m (i)b.t nb.t ḏw.(t) nb.t wʻb.(t) n kw n ḫy ḫkr Ḥ.dǐ.

[1] There came the scribe Kha-em-wast to see the beautiful temple of Wepwawet.
[2] He found it more beautiful in his heart than any other temple and the temple of Djefai-Hapi.
[3] For the ka of the excellent spirit Iti-ibi, offerings of bread, beer, bulls, fowl, and all of what
[4] comes out […]
[5] and all good and pure things for the excellent spirit of Ghedi.

The Tomb of Antefoker, Thebes

A²⁷

[1] [ḥtp d(i) nsuw] Wsjr Ḥnt[y-ṃntyw …]
[2] [ḥȝ....ḥpd] ḫt nbt nfr(t) wʻb […]
[4] m ṭpt mȝō […] mȝō-ḥrw […]
[5] […] m […]
[6] […]s
[7] [ss ṭmn-m]- ḫȝ t jr [ḥtp] d(i) nsuw […]

²⁶ Kahl 2012, p. 186.
[1] *Offerings given by the king* and Osiris Khenty-Imentyu …
[2] *a thousand … and fowl* and all things good and pure […]
[3] that come out *on the offering-table* in Karnak […]
[4] on a just mission […] justified […]
[5] […]
[6] […]
[7] *[the scribe Amenem]hat makes/making (?)* "[Offerings] given by the king" […]

B28
[1] htp d(i) nswt Wsjr Hnty-Jmntyw (m) t h(n)kt jḥ ṣpd
[2] [ḥtp]-hrw m hr(y)t-nṯr snmt m ḏwȝt s[wrj] ḫr bbt
[3] mȝwt ḫt nbwt tp ḥḏ-dsr n kȝ ḫȝ ḫb
[4] ḥkr shyw šw m ḫjī rd(w) ḫȝ f ḫ ḫw-ḏw jṛ(w) mȝ t
[5] ṭ mty šś mȝ m ḫt mw[t.f šś ḫȝ-ms-s(w)-nfr mȝ-ḥrw ms […]
[6] mȝ(j)m(y)-r(ȝ).f šś ḫwty ṭḥm m ḫȝ nb jmḥb

[1] *Offerings given by [the king] and Osiris Khenty-Imentyu (of) bread, beer, meat, fowl, votive offerings in the necropolis, breathing in the Duat, drinking from a fresh stream, all things useful in the sacred land for the ka of the precise-minded, excellent of counsels, devoid of evil, who has turned his back against the wrong, who accomplishes maât with exactitude, the true scribe from the womb of his mother, the scribe Ramosenefer, justified, born of […]

C29
[1] htp d(i) nswt Wsjr nb […] n kȝ n(y) šś […] ḫȝ-[ms

[1] An offering given by the king and Osiris, lord of […] to the ka of the scribe […] Iahmes

D30
[1] htp d(i) nswt Jmn-Rʿ nswt nṯrw
[3] Jnw ḫnty ḫȝ ḫ ḫȝ ṭḥ m ṭ nb(t
[4] ṭḥ;m st <ḥȝt>?
[5] šś Snfr

[1] Offerings given by the king and Amun-Re, king of the gods,
[2] and Osiris, lord of the great hall, and Ptah, great at the south of his wall,
[3] and Anubis, foremost of the white land, (for) the pure of face in all places,
[4] free of leg in the <secret?> place,

E

[1] jw(t) pw jr-n šš Jmn-m-h esports smsw Ḏhwty-ms ms-n[…]
[2] r mzz j/s pn n(y) tṣty] Jnt.f-jkr wn-jn.f nfr hr jb[.π]
[3] […] nw hpr shw n(y) dt wnn mn.f […]
[4] […] jm sḏd htp d(i) nswt
[5] Ws+jr Hnt[y-Jmntyw … Jmn]-RÉ nṯrw nbw br(y)t-nṯrw prt
[6] brw (m) t h(n)kt [ib] ḥpdw šs snṯr mḥt ht nbt nfr[t]
[7] wὓ[b.t] dd pt kmz ḫnt [ḥ]py m ḥtpw.f n kɔ n(y) Jnt.f-jkr m3ʾ-ḥrw

[1] This is a visit made by the scribe Amenemhat, son of the elder of the forecourt
Djebutymose and whose mother is […]
[2] to see [this] tomb of Antefoker. And it was perfect in his opinion
[3] […], useful for eternity. His name shall exist […]
[4] […] saying: “Offerings given by the king,
[5] Osiris Khent[y-Imntyu … Amun]-Re and all the gods of the necropolis. A votive
[6] offering (of) bread, beer, ox, fowl, alabaster, incense, oil and all the pure good things
[7] that are given by the sky, fashioned by the earth, brought by the flood as his offering to the
ka of Antefoker true-of-voice.”

31 Ragazzoli 2013, p. 313; Garis Davies, Gardiner 1920, p. 28, pl. XXXVI–XXXVIa, no. 33.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

DEN DONCKER 2012

GARIS DAVIES, GARDINER 1920

GOEDICKE, WENTE 1962

GOLENISCHEFF 1913
Golenischeff, W., Les papyrus hiératiques no. 1115, 1116 A et 1116 B de l’Ermitage impérial à Saint-Pétersbourg, Saint Petersburg, 1913.

HAGEN 2013
Hagen, E., “An Eighteenth Dynasty Writing Board (Ashmolean 1948.91) and the Hymn to the Nile”, JARCE 49, 2013, pp. 73–91.

HASSAN 2013

HASSAN 2014
Hassan, Kh., “Publish and Study a Group of Hieratic Ostraca from the Egyptian Museum of Cairo (Deir el-Bahri and Deir el-Medina)”, PhD Dissertation, Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University, 2014.

HASSAN 2015a

HASSAN 2015b

HASSAN 2016

HASSAN 2017

HAYES 1942
Hayes, W.C., Ostraka and Name Stones from the Tomb of Sen-Mut (no. 71) at Thebes, MMAEE 15, New York, 1942.

HAYES 1960

KAHL 2012

MARCINIAK 1974

MCDOWELL 1993

MEGALLY 1971
Megally, M., Considérations sur les variations et la transformation des formes hiératiques du papyrus E. 3226 du Louvre, BdE 49, Cairo, 1971.

MEGALLY 1981a

MEGALLY 1981b

MEGALLY 1991
Navrátilová 2006
Navrátilová, H., “The Phraseology of Visitors’ Graffiti”, in M. Bárt, F. Coppens, J. Krejčí (eds.), 
Navrátilová 2007
Navrátilová 2010
Ragazzoli 2013
Ragazzoli 2016
Römer 2008

Römer 2014
Sadek 1983
Sadek 1984
Staatliche Museen 1911
Verhoeven 2012