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The Hieratic Graffiti in the 18th and 19th dynasties

"Paleographic and linguistic study"

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(Part 1)

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Introduction

Egypt has rightly been described as "*Das klassischen Lander der Graffiti.*" Here mankind has left his most casual and intimate inscriptions in more places and over a longer stretch of time than anywhere else. In Egypt, There are Pictorial, Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic graffiti, and – alas – also modern vandal's graffiti. In the following study I will concentrate only on hieratic graffiti from Eighteenth and Nineteenth dynasties (the golden age of Egyptian graffiti), which were written with ink or scratched on the walls of tombs, temples and rock cliffs, where some were written by people who lived and worked in these places or visited the monuments.

Aim of Study

The study aims to present an inventory of the hieratic graffiti of Egypt from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth dynasties followed by a brief a social history of this graffiti and overview of the development of the hieratic signs and forms.

Definition of Graffiti

Graffiti is the plural of Italian word "graffito", meaning "scratch". In Egyptology, the word "graffiti" was first used by Mariette. Although it is not an easy task to find consensus on a precise definition of the term, "graffiti, (can be) defined as unofficial writings and drawings that are incised, scratched or painted on rocks, walls or artifacts, provide a graphic testimony to attitudes towards earlier monuments", created by visitors or other individuals.

Features of Graffiti

The hieratic graffiti in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth dynasties is characterized by several features; they are: 1) unofficial writing and drawings, 2) created by visitors or others, 3) found at an important necropolis, such as the cemeteries of Memphis and Thebes, 4) based on appropriation of space, 5) written with ink or scratch, 6) do not reflect the political or economic situation, but express the religious situation and private life, 7) depended on the fixed writing system, 8) interact directly with other decorations, 9) provide us with information about their authors and 10) on either natural or man-made surfaces.