

The so-called Daily Life Scenes in the XIXth Dynasty and the workers' speeches : TT 212, TT 217, TT 266

1. Introduction – the New Kingdom's context

The “daily life” scenes are widely depicted in elite tombs, since early Vth Dynasty, illustrating work in the field, livestock, crafts and so on. In the New Kingdom, these topics are more restricted. They were drastically rarefied after XVIIIth Dynasty to give way to other kind of topics, more religious and/or mythological, as well as workers' speeches which are inserted in those “daily life” scenes. The graph below shows only tombs containing such speeches.

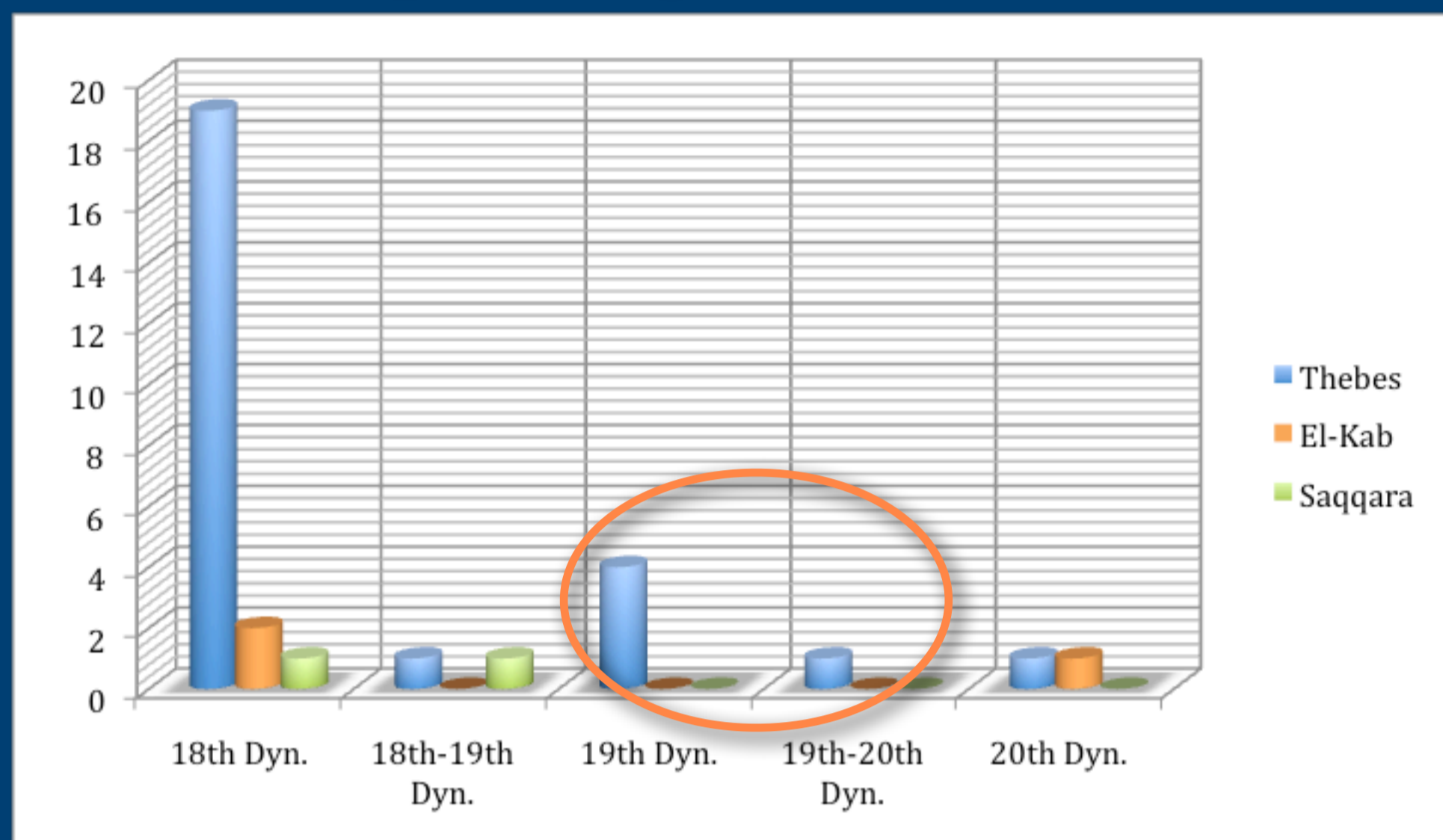


Fig. 1 - Distribution of workers' speeches during the New Kingdom

During the XIXth – early XXth Dynasty, workers' speeches are only found in Theban Necropolis : one tomb at Dra' Abou el Naga (TT 16), two at Gurnah (TT 31, TT 331) and three at Deir el-Medina (TT 212, TT 217, TT 266).

2. Deir el-Medina

“Daily life” scenes are quite a rare pattern at Deir el-Medina. Of the fifty-three Deir el-Medina tombs identified by the Porter & Moss, four have “daily life” scenes (+ tomb n° 1126 depending on Corteggiani [1]) and three contain workers' speeches.

TT	Owner's title	Datation
TT 212	Scribe in the place of truth	1 st half of the reign of Ramesses II
TT 217	Sculptor	Ramesses II
TT 266	Chief craftsman of the lord of the two lands in the place of truth on the west of Thebes	XIX th - early XX th

2.1. TT 212 Ramose

The scribe Ramose, owner of TT 7, TT 212 and TT 250, inserted “daily life” scenes only in TT 212. The chapel is highly damaged, so that only a few remains of a farming scene could be put together. Here is the inscription above the ploughman :

The servant *pth-s'nh* says to his master, the scribe *r'-ms*, justified: “The field is in very good state. Their barley will be excellent, while you are [?] and you are [?]. My face is towards *imn.t* and *h3y-nwy.t-nfr.t*.”

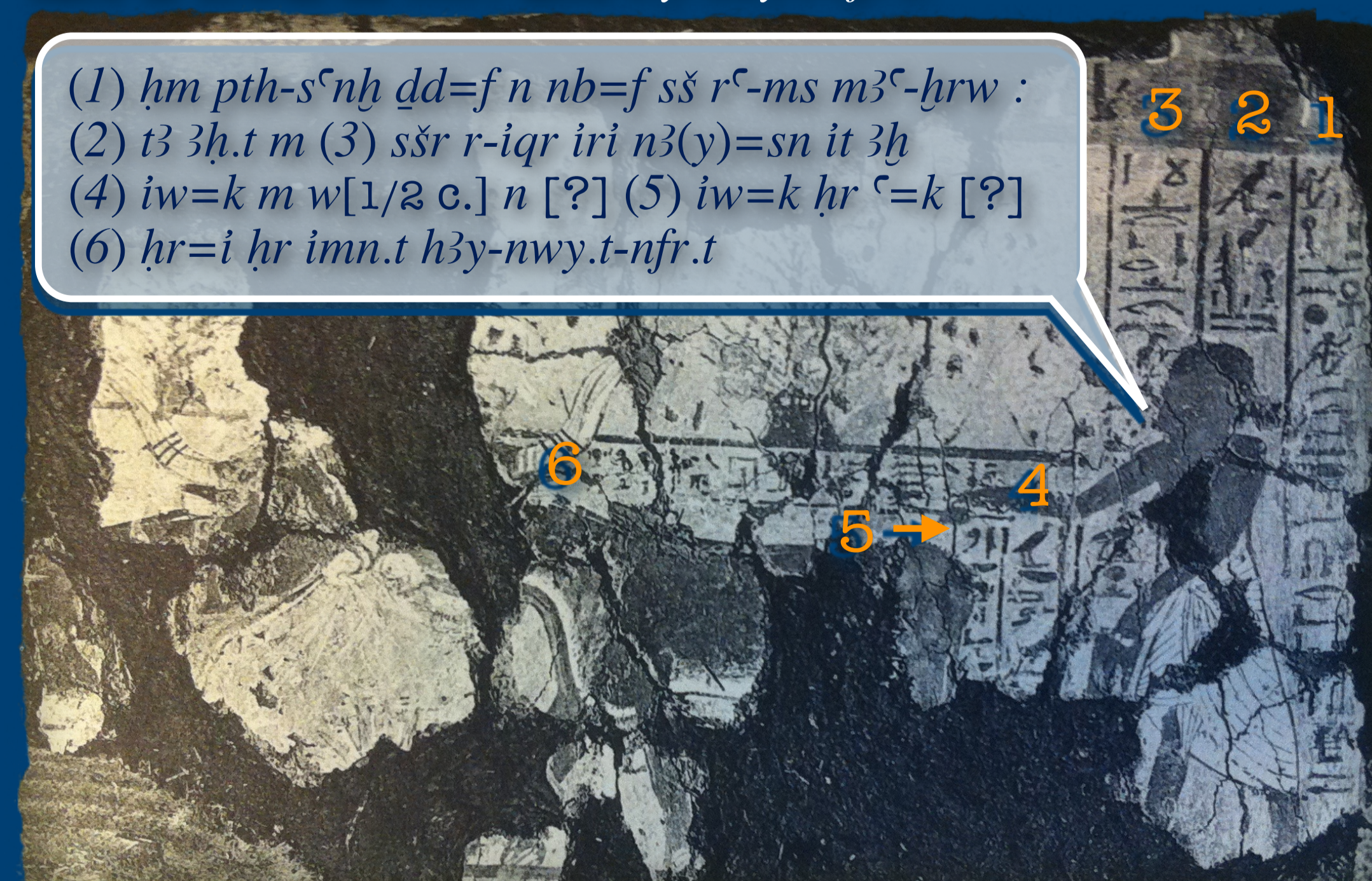


Fig. 2 - Plowing scene (Bruyère, BIFA0 (1923-24), pl. XIX)

iri n3(y)=sn it 3h is an analogical future III, here with an Old Perfective predicate. The *iri* SN Ø *sdm* construction is likely to be initially a Late Egyptian dialectal feature from Lower Egypt [2]. Finding it in a XIXth Theban tomb is a key factor in

defining the state of language used in those New Kingdom speeches especially since this one is not otherwise known.

2.2. TT 217 Ipy & TT 266 Amennakht

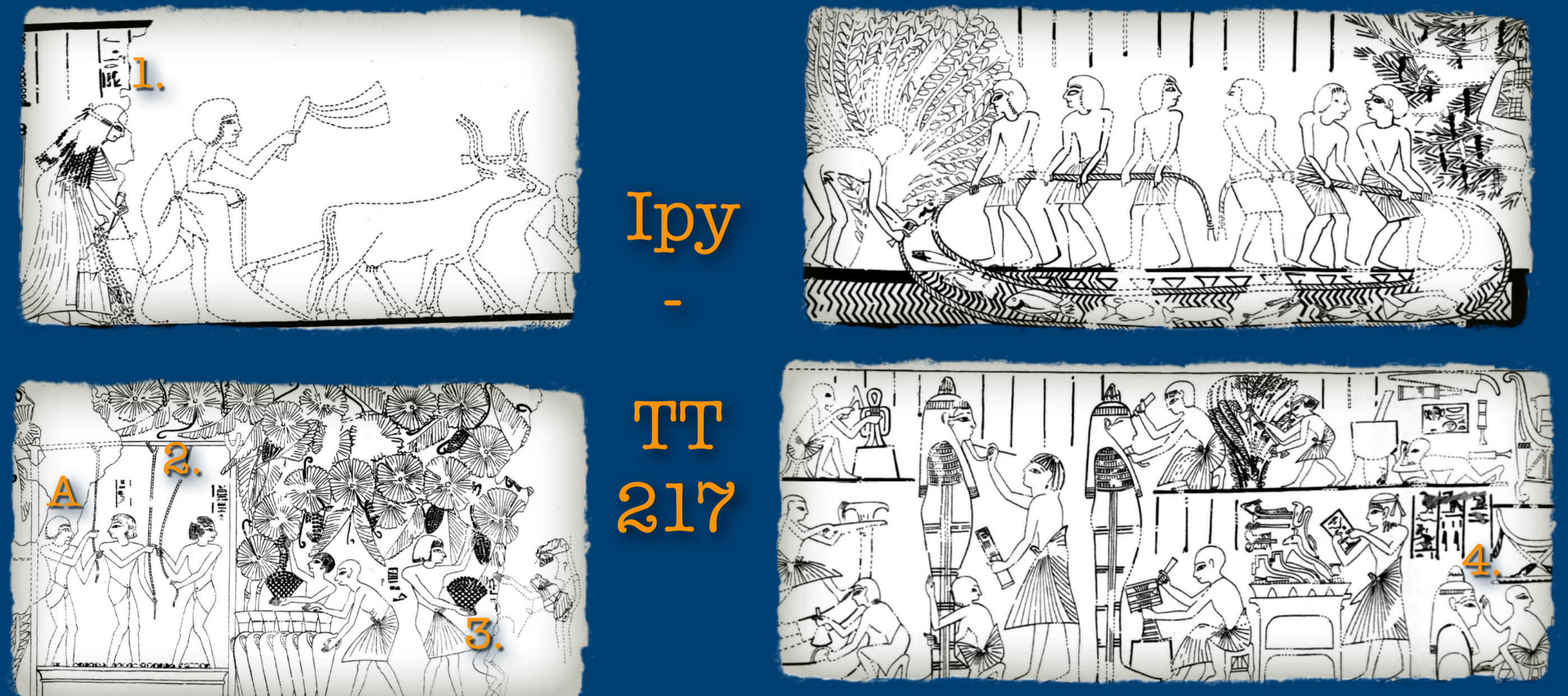


Fig. 3 - «Speeches» in TT 217 (de Garis Davies, 1927, pl. XXX, XXXVI-XXXVII)

Both tombs are incomplete as shown by the empty columns above, illustrating farming, fishing, crafts and grape harvesting scenes. They would have contained workers' speeches, titles and/or names (see 1-4). Because of the lack of inscriptions, the current research leads to a dead end. The wine press scene (see A) in TT 217 could possibly be an exception. Better drawings or high-resolution pictures would be needed, but this scene is not anymore in situ (cf. DeM online photographs on IFAO website).

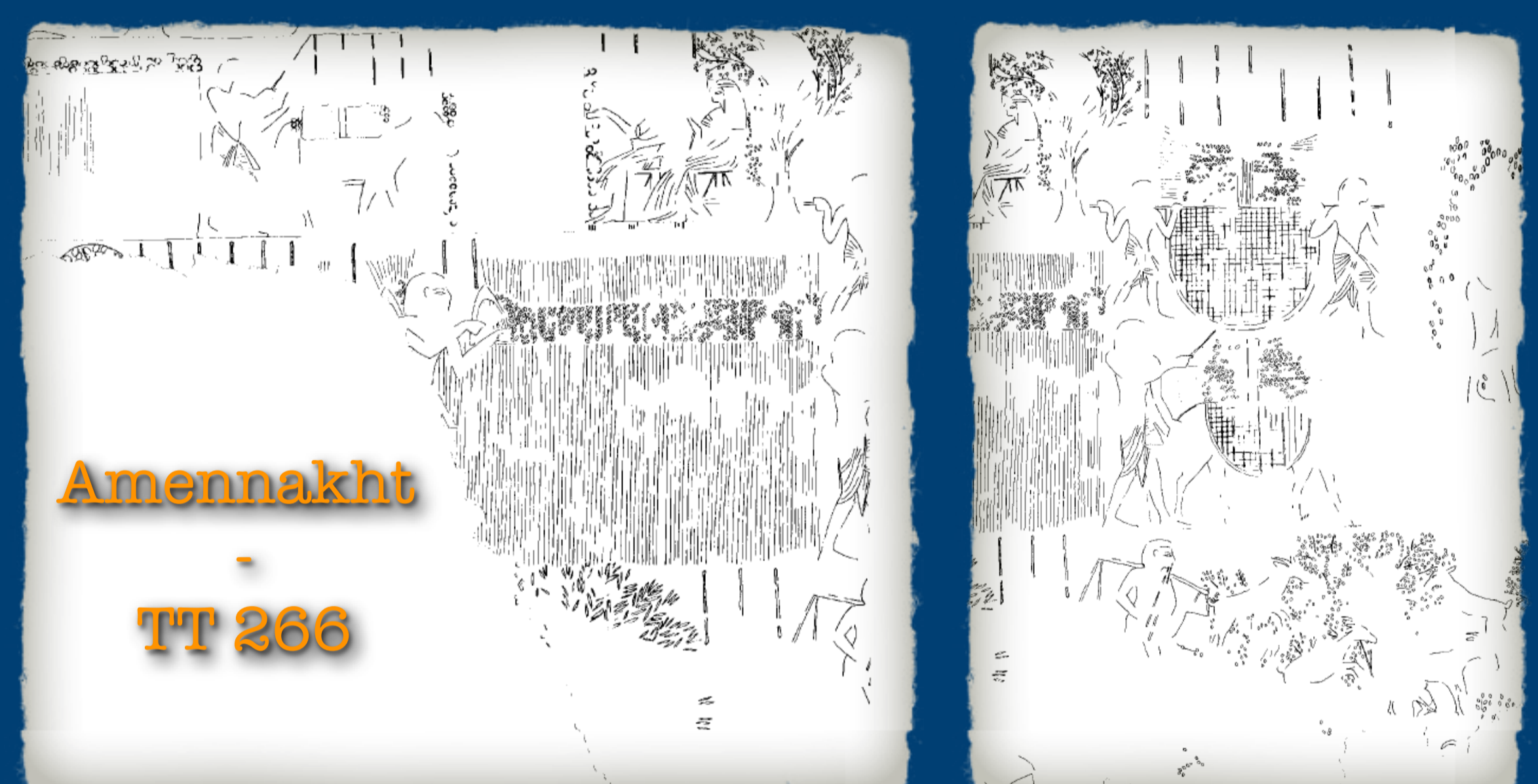


Fig. 4 - Farming scenes in TT 266 (BIFA0 84, pl. XV-XVI)

3. Conclusion

Despite their incomplete state, these tombs are not less important. After the elite, the craftsmen took an originally kingly pattern for their own decorative program, thereby marking another notch in the “demotisation” phenomenon. It is not a unique case in the New Kingdom : a relief fragment belonging to the craftsman Meriptah (XVIIIth Dyn.) found at Saqqarah also has such speeches in farming scenes [3]. However, these speeches appeared in Deir el-Medina tombs after falling into disuse in the elite tombs.

The ploughman's speech found in TT 212 is also quite an important clue for our understanding of the linguistic state used in the New Kingdom workers' speeches. It contains Late Egyptian features unlike other speeches using “Égyptien de tradition” (for example TT 39). By establishing the state(s) of language used in these speeches, one will be allowed to define which language level(s) has been employed in this genre, vernacular or artificial?

Bibliographie

- [1] J.-P. CORTEGGIANI (1984), La tombe d'Amennakht [No 266] à Deir el-Medina [avec 7 planches], (BIFA0 84), p. 69, note 1.
- [2] J. WINAND (1992), Études de néo-égyptien, 1 La morphologie verbale (*Ægyptiaca Leodiensia* 2), §783-784, 799-800.
- [3] A. WIEDEMANN & B. PÖRTNER [éds.] (1906), Ägyptische Grabreliefs aus der Großherzoglichen Ältertümer-Sammlung zu Karlsruhe, pl. VII, p.32.