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A Case Study on Intertextuality and Textual Transmission from the Mid-Eighteenth Dynasty Theban Necropolis

A *prt m t3* Text in TT 95A and Its Later Echo in TT 76

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Summary: With the help of a case study from the textual program of two mid-Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs—TT 95 and TT 76—this paper seeks to provide insights into the nature and strength of the intertextual relations between the funerary monuments of the early and mid-Eighteenth Dynasty Theban elite. The study offers a transliteration, translation, and commentary of the *prt m t3* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A and its pendant on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76, compares the two texts, and evaluates the strength of their connection by taking their spatial-material and socio-cultural contexts into account.

Keywords: Eighteenth Dynasty Theban Tomb Inscriptions – Intertextuality – Mery – Textual Transmission – Tjenuna/Thenuna – TT 76 – TT 95 – *prt m t3* Texts

1 Introduction

Through the example of a *prt m t3* text transmitted from one tomb to another within the Theban necropolis[1], this paper seeks to demonstrate how the early and mid-Eighteenth Dynasty elite sought inspiration in the monuments of their peers when devising the textual program of their own tomb chapel. By doing so, it offers a case study on intertextuality and textual transmission from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty Theban necropolis.

The intertextuality[2] of Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tomb inscriptions has not yet been sufficiently investigated[3], even though we already find scattered references to the fact that the inscriptions of these tombs mutually influenced each other in the works of Kurt Sethe and Hans Wolfgang Helck[4]. The character of the social landscape—densely populated with the tombs of high-ranking officials from the king's inner circle[5]—strongly suggests that integrating this perspective into the analysis of these texts would lead to a more nuanced understanding of their composition. All the more so because the study of the figurative decoration of the very same monuments from a similar viewpoint, from the perspective of intericonicity, is already under way[6]. Dimitri Laboury has recently argued, furthermore, that the artists responsible for the figurative and inscriptional decoration of Theban tombs were in most cases the same individuals[7], which is yet another argument for including intertextuality into the scope of the analysis.

1 The similarity between a *prt m t3* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A and another on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76 was first mentioned in 2021 (Paksi and Bickel 2021, 88–89).

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2 The idea that texts come into being in a compositional context, in a network of texts that influences their creation, meaning, and reception is the fundamental principle of intertextuality (Allen 2011). It is one of the central ideas of contemporary literary theory and was first articulated by Julia Kristeva (1969). In Egyptology, although several scholars had referred to it before (Assmann 1984, 192–193 and 207–208; Derchain 1994, 69 and 71–72; and Vernus 1995, 107), the use of the term seems to have been established only after Antonio Loprieno (1996a, 51–52 and 1996b, 222–225) promoted it.

3 Note, however, Maruschka Gathy's (2013, 88–98) observations on the intertextual relations among officials' titles and epithets within the Theban necropolis.

4 See, for instance, their notes to *Urk*. IV 495, 12–13; *Urk*. IV 1079, 1, 10, and 15; or *Urk*. IV 1210, 12 and 15. Further examples were cited by Laboury 2017, 241, n. 25.

5 Roehrig 1990, 18–19; Gathy 2013, 2–5; and Loprieno-Gnirs 2018, 108–118.

6 See, for instance, Laboury 2015, 335–336; Den Doncker 2017, 336–339; Laboury 2017, 247–254; Pieke 2017, 259 and 263; and Devillers 2018, 34–44.

7 See Laboury 2013, 33–34; Laboury 2020, 87–91; Laboury 2022, 38–43; Laboury and Devillers 2023, 173–174; and Stupko–Lubczynska 2023, 217–235.

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2 *Prt m t3* texts in the Theban necropolis

Prt m t3 texts are a group of texts that were frequently used in Theban tombs during the entire New Kingdom[8]. They express the deceased's wish to come forth from the earth (*prỉ m t3*) and return to the realm of the living in order to be able to see the sunlight, receive offerings, and communicate with the living. The expression itself (*prt m t3*) translates into "coming forth from the earth." The deceased's wish often includes visiting his house of the living[9], enjoying the pleasures of his garden[10], or participating in various religious festivals[11]. The motif, while sporadically present in the Middle Kingdom[12], was only one of many aspects of free movement in the afterlife at that time[13]. The concept of "going forth by day" (*prt m hrw*) assumed its paramount status in the Egyptian mortuary belief only from the New Kingdom onwards[14].

3 The *prt m t3* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A

TT 95 was built under the reign of Amenhotep II and belonged to Mery, high priest of Amun, and his mother, Hunay, a great royal nurse[15]. The tomb is located in the western part of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and consists of two substructures, TT 95B and TT 95C, and an above-ground ceremonial chapel, TT 95A[16]. Neither the construction nor the decoration of TT 95 was completed: the works had to be prematurely abandoned because of a building accident that led to the collapse of part of the tomb chapel's ceiling[17]. Following this event, Mery declared the nearby tomb of Iamunedjeh (TT 84) as his own and had its original textual program adjusted to his own needs[18].

Before 2014, TT 95 was under the responsibility of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in Cairo. On their behalf, excavations and epigraphic recordings were conducted in the 1990s under the direction of Andrea Loprieno-Gnirs[19]. Today, TT 95 belongs to the archaeological concession of the Swiss Mission at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. The foundations of the present study were established between 2015 and 2019 within the framework of the project *Life Histories of Theban Tombs* (*LHTT*) of the University of Basel directed by Susanne Bickel and coordinated by Andrea Loprieno-Gnirs when the systematic study and philological recording of the inscriptions of the tomb began[20]. The first mention of the *prt m t3* text on the north side of Pillar A is found in the overview of the pillar inscriptions of TT 95A published by Loprieno-Gnirs in 1995[21]. Even though the inscription itself was not included in this study, Jan Assmann regularly referred to it in his work in later years[22].

The deceased's wish of coming forth from the earth is also voiced elsewhere in the tomb and is equally present on the ceiling: in the east or outer band of the northern part of the east aisle, in a horizontally arranged text running from right to left above the east wall. Furthermore, the inscription on the west side of Pillar A conveys the deceased's wish to see Amun during the Beautiful Festival of the Valley, wherefore Loprieno-Gnirs regarded it as another *prt m t3* text[23]. Although the key word (*prỉ* "to come forth") is omitted from the latter inscription, the deceased's wish to participate in various religious festivals is one of the central motifs of this type of texts (cf. § 2).

8 See Assmann 1979, 71; Assmann 1986, 669–670; and Assmann 1995, 284–293 cited by Gnirs 1995, 246, n. 93 as well as Assmann 2001, 285–318 and Assmann 2005, 209–234.

9 Assmann 2001, 299–301 and Assmann 2005, 218–221.

10 Assmann 1995, 287–290; Assmann 2001, 302–307; Assmann 2005, 221–225; and Assmann 2011.

11 Assmann 1995, 290–293; Assmann 2001, 307–318; and Assmann 2005, 225–234.

12 Cf. CT Spells 340 (CT IV 339e–342f); 405 (CT V 209o–210e); and 697 (CT VI 331k–q) cited by Assmann 2001, 290–292 and Assmann 2005, 213 and 215.

13 Assmann 2001, 289–290 and Assmann 2005, 210.

14 See Assmann 2001, 285–318 and Assmann 2005, 209–234.

15 Porter and Moss 1960, 195–197 and Gnirs et al. 1997, 61–70.

16 Loprieno-Gnirs 2021, 4 and 6 with fig. 4.

17 See Gnirs et al. 1997, 60–61 and 69–70; Loprieno-Gnirs 2018, 118–124; Loprieno-Gnirs 2021, 2; and Loprieno-Gnirs and Ziegler forthcoming. For an overview of earlier, alternative hypotheses on Mery's takeover of TT 84, see Gnirs et al. 1997, 58–61 and Paksi 2024, 342–344.

18 For a recent study on the alterations in the inscriptions of TT 84 on behalf of the secondary tomb owner, Mery, see Paksi 2024.

19 Cf. Loprieno-Gnirs 2021, 8–9 and 149, n. 31 and Paksi and Bickel 2021, 85 and 160, n. 13.

20 Paksi and Bickel 2021, 85–89.

21 Gnirs 1995, 246. Although the texts of the pillars were not included in her publication (Gnirs 1995), works on Egyptian mortuary liturgies often refer to this study (see, e.g., Assmann et al. 2005, 87, 89, 111, 119, 412, 420, and 467, n. 36 and Tacke 2013, 263 and 329), which, until the publication of this paper, was the only one available on the textual program of TT 95A. The inscriptions of TT 95A remain largely unpublished except for a short excerpt of text copied by Karl Richard Lepsius in the nineteenth century (Lepsius et al. 1897–1913, 278, no. 12), a small caption in Rosellini's (1834, pl. 48) drawing of the banquet scene, and the present study. The analysis of the ceiling inscriptions of Mery's tomb and a study on the main caption of its so-called workshop scene are currently in preparation by the present author.

22 See Assmann 2001, 467, n. 36; Assmann 2005, 452–453, n. 58; and Assmann et al. 2005, 49, n. 137.

23 Cf. Gnirs 1995, 246. For a translation of the text on the west side of Pillar A, see Schott 1953, 797 and 872, text no. 69.

Figure 1: The *prt m t*ꜣ text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A. Photo by Matjaž Kačičnik, *LHTT*, University of Basel, 2023. Transcription and reconstruction of the text by the author, 2024.

The *prt m t*ꜣ text on the north side of Pillar A contains the most elaborate version of the theme within TT 95A. It is a polychrome, left-to-right monumental hieroglyphic inscription arranged into seven vertical lines facing towards the east (cf. Figure 1). As Pillar A is one of the pillars found closest to the entrance within Mery's tomb chapel[24], the inscription itself is as well oriented towards the entrance of the tomb. The text on the pillar was arranged in a way that it partially envelops the accompanying scene: Mery's figural representation striding towards the tomb entrance. The framing effect results from the fact that the first column of the text is significantly longer than the rest. The original length of the inscription's first column corresponded to the height of the deceased's figure, whereas the rest of the text was inscribed in much shorter columns above Mery's head.

The decoration of Pillar A is poorly preserved (cf. Figure 1). This is due to the fact that this part of the tomb suffered substantial damage from the fire and lamps used

24 It is the first pillar on the right when entering the tomb (cf. Figure 4, left; Gnirs 1995, 239, fig. 2; or Paksi and Bickel 2021, 87, fig. 75).

by its modern occupants and was heavily soiled with soot[25]. Nevertheless, the inscription on the north side of Pillar A is still sufficiently visible today[26], and parts of the text that were previously considered lost could be reconstructed with the help of the inscription's parallel found in TT 76 (cf. § 3.1; Figure 1, right; Figure 5; and Figure 6). The text expresses the deceased's wish to come forth from the earth (*prt m tꜣ*) to see the sun disk (*r mꜣꜣ ỉṯn*) and to go back to his house of the living (*r sỉpt pr=f n ʿnḫw*) to enjoy the pleasures of his garden (*r sḫmḫ ỉb=f m š=f*).

3.1 Translation and commentary of Mery's *prt m tꜣ* text[27]

[1]|[*prt*] *m tꜣ*[a]
r mꜣꜣ ỉṯn[b] *m ḫrt-ḥrw nt rʿ nb*
šmt ḥr tꜣ mỉ tpw-tꜣ mỉ s{r}ḫ<r>[c] [*n wnn tp-tꜣ*]
[*r sỉpt pr=f n ʿnḫw*]
[*r sḫmḫ*[d] *ỉb=f m*] [2]|*š=f*
r sqbb ḫr nḥwt=f
r sḏꜣït m mnw=f[3]|*n ḏt=f*
r fd{q}[e] *yḥ sšnw*
r wḥ(ꜣ)[f] [4]|*ḥnï nḫbwt bnrwt d(ꜣ)bw ỉrwt nh*[5]|*wt=f*
wnwn=sn n ḥr=f
ḥnk=sn n=f t [6]|*ỉmỉ=sn*
bʿḥ m ḫt nbt nt ỉtw=f ỉmỉw ḫrt-nṯr
[7]|*ỉn ḫtmw bỉtỉ*
ḥm nṯr tpỉ [*n ỉmn*]
mry mꜣʿ ḫrw

[1]|[Coming forth][g] from the earth
to see the sun disc daily;
walking on the earth like those on the earth (i.e., the living), just as [when on earth],
[so that he would visit his house of the living]
[in order to distract his heart in] [2]|his garden,
to refresh himself under his sycamores,
to amuse himself[h] among his trees [3]|of his own (i.e., his own trees),
to pull up swamp plant(s)[i] and lotus blossoms,
to pluck [4]|sedge(s), lotus buds, dates, figs, and the grapes (i.e., fruits)[j] of his sycamo[5]|res,
while they (i.e., the trees) sway back and forth to (and from) his face
and offer him nourishment (lit., bread) [6]|from themselves:
full of (lit., abounding in) all the things of his (i.e., the deceased's) (fore)fathers[k] who are in the necropolis—
[7]|by the sealer of Lower Egypt,
the high priest [of Amun],
Mery, true of voice.

[a] As opposed to the other occurrences of the sign preserved within the same column, the logogram for *tꜣ* seems to have been written as a simple horizontal stroke without the three dots (___ vs. ⁘; cf. Figure 5).

[b] The spelling of the word *ỉtn* "sun disc" ( ) is typical for the Eighteenth Dynasty (cf. *DZA* 21.427.070–080). On the graphical hypercorrection of dentals at Mery's lifetime, see Stauder 2013, 114 with n. 289.

[c] The second and third consonants of the word *sḫr* "custom" were swapped in the expression *mỉ sḫr n* "like, in the way of" (*Wb*. IV 259.14) in Mery's inscription. The phrase regularly appears in the formulation *mỉ sḫr n wnn tp-tꜣ* "just as when on earth" in the texts of the early and mid-Eighteenth Dynasty elite. See, for instance, on the block statue of Sitepihu (*Urk*. IV 520, 1), now in the University Museum in Philadelphia (E9217); in TT 24, the tomb of Nebamun (*Urk*. IV 148, 16); in TT 52, the tomb of Nakht (Davies 1917, pl. 8); and in Tjenuna's version of the same inscription below (§ 4.1).

[d] The verb *sḫmḫ* was reconstructed here ( ) as it appears in Tjenuna's version of the text (cf. Figure 2): with both signs spelled out. It is possible though that Mery's text originally featured a defective spelling of the word, similar to the one in the inscription above the seated figures of Mery and his mother on the south side of the east wall of his tomb, where it is written as .

[e] The context suggests that *fdỉ* "to pull up, to pluck" (*Wb*. I 582.1–4) was meant instead of *fdq* "to sever, to divide" (*Wb*. I 583.6–15).

25 This carbonaceous substance was partially removed from the walls, pillars, and ceiling of the first pillared hall of TT 95A during a restoration process in the 1990s.

26 Its first epigraphic study, a facsimile drawing of the text, was done by Loprieno-Gnirs in 1993. This is one of over a hundred pencil drawings that were prepared to document the internal decoration of the tomb between February 1992 and March 1995 (cf. n. 19 above). These drawings are unpublished at present but were digitized (scanned) by the *LHTT* project in 2016. The hard copies are kept at the Department of Ancient Civilizations of the University of Basel, while the digital scans are being prepared for online publication at the *Swiss National Data and Service Center for the Humanities* (*DaSCH*).

27 Hieroglyphic transcriptions from the inscription on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A are the author's illustrations based on the digital facsimile drawing and reconstruction of the text (cf. Figure 1, right; Figure 5; and Figure 6). All other hieroglyphic passages were transcribed with the help of *JSesh* in this study.

[f] The verb *wḥ;* "to hew, to pluck" is written here in an abbreviated form, as *wḥ*: .

[g] The reconstruction of the text follows the wording of Tjenuna's *prt m t;* text on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76 unless otherwise specified. For the comparison of the two inscriptions, see § 5 below.

[h] *Sḏ;i̯-ḥr* is a set expression for amusement and recreation. *Sḏ;i̯* alone—with the omission of *ḥr*—is, however, attested only rarely with this semantic nuance (cf. *Wb. Belegst.* IV 379.7). The corresponding passage in TT 76 brings the phrase similarly without *ḥr* (cf. § 4.1, n. d), while further two examples are known from a royal context: from the inscriptions of Amenhotep II (*Urk*. IV 1322, 8) and Amenhotep III (*Urk*. IV 1651, 9).

[i] The translation follows *Wb*. I 39.1. For further contemporary examples of the word, see *Urk*. IV 772, 1; KIU 1968, 3 and 6; and KIU 7208, 35 from the royal context as well as *Urk*. IV 63, 1 besides Tjenuna's example cited below (§ 4.1) from the private one.

[j] Cf. *Wb*. I 32.12–14 and § 4.1, n. m below.

[k] Note the playful writing of the plural form of the word *i̯t* "father" with the three horned vipers: . Marking the plural by triplication is generally associated with higher written registers and is characteristic of the monumental sphere (cf. Stauder 2013, 97, n. 149 and 114, n. 291). For further examples of the same spelling in the inscriptions of Thutmose III and Ramesses II, see *Urk*. IV 864, 2; 869, 11; and K*RI* II 515, 6 respectively.

4 The *prt m t;* text on the east[28] side of Pillar D in TT 76

TT 76 is located in the upper enclosure of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, a few hundred meters from Mery's tomb, higher up on the hill[29]. It was built for Tjenuna, chief steward and fan-bearer of the king, under the reign of Thutmose IV[30]. The decoration of the tomb was never finished[31], and Tjenuna's name and figure seem to have been intentionally destroyed by contemporary hands[32]. The tomb is perhaps best known for a scene on the west wall of its first hall, in which Tjenuna presents the so-called New Year's gifts to Thutmose IV and the goddess Hathor[33].

Unlike Mery's *prt m t;* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A, which sees its first publication in the present study, the corresponding inscription on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76 has been known since the second half of the nineteenth century. It was Heinrich Brugsch who first published a short excerpt of the first two columns[34]. The first hieroglyphic transcription of the entire inscription was issued about two and a half decades later, in 1889, by Urbain Bouriant[35]. Although Kurt Sethe studied the text *in situ* at the beginning of the twentieth century according to the *Digitized Slip Archive* of the *Wörterbuch*[36], the inscription does not appear in the *Urkunden*[37]. Until recently, Bouriant's text edition served as the basis for all subsequent translations, the majority of which were done by Assmann[38]. In 2012, Cristina Pino Fernández published an updated hieroglyphic transcription, a transliteration, and a Spanish translation of Tjenuna's inscription[39]. Nonetheless, as Pino Fernández's work lacks a detailed commentary and can be improved at various points, the re-edition of the text below (§ 4.1), which is based on the author's visit in the tomb in March 2022, seems justified and is necessary for assessing the strength of the connection between Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m t;* texts (§ 5).

Tjenuna's inscription—like Mery's—is a polychrome, left-to-right monumental text inscribed vertically onto the upper part of a pillar in the deceased's tomb chapel (Figure 2). As opposed to Mery's version (cf. § 3), it was

28 The cardinal directions mentioned in this paper follow the ideal orientation of Theban tombs, according to which the east–west axis of these structures is defined by their entrance and their central chapel or shrine. While in the case of TT 95A, the ideal east–west axis corresponds to the geographical one, the entrance of TT 76 is located in the south. The so-called east side of Pillar D—the second pillar on the right when entering the tomb—is thus in the geographical south (cf. Figure 4, right; Porter and Moss 1960, 148; and Kampp 1996, 313, fig. 199).

29 Cf. Kampp 1996, Plan III, Sh. 'Abd el–Qurna II.

30 Porter and Moss 1960, 149–150.

31 Except for the north wing of the transverse hall, the rest of the tomb was left largely undecorated (cf. Porter and Moss 1960, 148–150).

32 On the systematic damage done to the decoration of TT 76, see Pino Fernández 2015, 116–117 and Deane 2015, 48–57.

33 Cf. Wilkinson 1835, 148–149; Champollion 1844, 480–481 cited by *Urk*. IV 1581, 16–20; *Urk*. IV 1577, 8–20; and Säve-Söderbergh 1957, 50–51 and pl. 72.

34 Brugsch 1862–1863, pl. 66, 2b.

35 Bouriant 1889, 158, e.

36 Cf., e.g., *DZA* 20.169.250; 22.380.580; 22.887.430; 23.587.010; 24.699.980; 25.193.750; 26.922.370; 29.880.810; and 31.476.840.

37 Cf. *Urk*. IV 1577, 6 – 1581, 20.

38 Cf. Assmann 2001, 564, n. 66; Assmann 2005, 453, n. 58; Assmann et al. 2005, 266 with n. 142, 354 with n. 44, 467, n. 36; and Assmann 2011, 106 with n. 10. In one of his works, Assmann also included a transliteration of the text (Assmann et al. 2005, 354).

39 Pino Fernández 2012, 952–953.

Figure 2: The *prt m t3* text on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76. Photo by the author, 2022.

arranged into eight vertical lines of equal size. As the signs face south on the east side of the pillar, the inscription is oriented towards the entrance of the tomb also within TT 76[40]. The text is relatively well-preserved, only its last two columns were affected by the damage the decoration suffered from in Tjenuna's lifetime[41]. The figures of the deceased and his spouse that occupied most part of the surface of the east side of Pillar D were, on the other hand, completely erased (Figure 3, right). Merely their silhouettes remain below the text.

The inscription on the east side of Pillar D in TT 76 expresses the same wishes of the deceased as the *prt m t3* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A: Tjenuna would like to come forth from the earth (*prt m t3*) to see the sun disk (*r m33 ỉtn*) and to go back to his house of the living (*r sḫpt pr=f n ʿnḫw*) to enjoy the pleasures of his garden (*r sḫmḫ ỉb=f m š=f*). In terms of wording and content, Mery's and Tjenuna's texts only differ in their ending: in the name and titles of the deceased, as expected, and in the closing part of the text, which is slightly altered in Tjenuna's case and—as opposed to Mery's—elaborates further on the refreshment motif (cf. § 5).

4.1 Translation and commentary of Tjenuna's *prt m t3* text

1|*prt m*[a] *t3*
r m33 ỉtn[b] *m ḫrt-hrw nt rᶜ nb*
šmt ḥr 2|*t3 mỉ tpw-t3 mỉ sḫr n wnn tp-t3*
r sḫpt pr=f n ʿnḫw
3|*r sḫmḫ ỉb=f m š=f*
r sqbb[c] *ḫr nhwt=f*
r 4|*sḏ3i*[d] *m mnw=f*[e] *n ḏt=f*
r fd ỉḥ[f] *sšnw*
5|*r wḥ(3)*[g] *ḫnïw nḥbwt bnrwt*[h] *d(3)bw ỉrrwt*[i] 6|*nhwt=f*

40 It is the east side of the second pillar on the right when entering the tomb that carries the *prt m t3* text in TT 76. Unlike Pillar A in TT 95A (n. 24 above), Pillar D in TT 76 is not in the immediate vicinity of the entrance (cf. Figure 4, right; Porter and Moss 1960, 148; and Kampp 1996, 313, fig. 199). As the signs face south in Tjenuna's text, a similar effect is achieved as in TT 95A: the inscription as well as the figures below (Figure 3, right) look or stride towards the entrance of the tomb.
41 See n. 32 above.

wnwn=sn n[k] *ḥr=f*
ḥnk[l]*=sn n=f t* [7]| *ỉmỉ=sn*
[ʔ*ʿb*(*ꜣ*)ʔ] *n=f šˁ=f nwy*
ḥtp ỉb=f m qbḥw
[8]| *n kꜣ n ỉrỉ-pˁt ḥꜣtỉ-*ˁ
[... *5 groups missing* ...] *mꜣˁ ḥrw*

[1]| Coming forth from the earth
to see the sun disc daily;
walking on [2]| the earth like those on the earth (i.e., the living), just as when on earth,
so that he would visit his house of the living
[3]| in order to distract his heart in his garden,
to refresh himself under his sycamores,
to [4]| amuse himself among his own trees,
to pull up[m] swamp plant(s) and lotus blossoms,
[5]| to pluck sedges,[n] lotus buds, dates, figs, and the grapes (i.e., fruits) of [6]| his sycamores,
while they sway back and forth to (and from) his face
and offer him nourishment (lit., bread) [7]| from themselves,[o]
and while his pond [ʔprovidesʔ][p] him with water,
and his heart is pleased about the refreshment (lit., fresh/cold water)—
[8]| for the *ka* of the hereditary noble, local prince,
[... 5 groups missing ...],[q] true of voice.

[a] The preposition *m* is written here with sign Aa15 ( ) as opposed to Mery's less space-conscious solution ( ).

[b] Tjenuna's spelling of the word *ỉtn* "sun disc" differs from Mery's (§ 3.1, n. b): vs. .

[c] In Tjenuna's inscription, the verb *sqbb* "to make cool, to refresh oneself" is complemented with a classifier, sign W15 ( ). The latter is missing from Mery's version of the text ( ).

[d] Similarly to Mery's inscription (§ 3.1, n. h), we also find *sḏꜣỉ-ḥr*, a set expression for amusement and recreation, written with the omission of *ḥr* in TT 76. Nonetheless, while the infinitive of *sḏꜣỉ* receives a final *-t* in TT 95A ( ), this sign is missing from Tjenuna's version ( ).

[e] In TT 76, the spelling of the phrase *mnw=f* "his trees" originally followed Mery's example ( ) but was complemented with a classifier and three plural strokes during the inscription process ( ). The outlines of an erased viper immediately following the group are still visible below the signs that were added secondarily (). The relative position of the subsequent signs suggests that the modification happened while the columns were filled with text and not as a later correction (cf. Figure 2).

[f] The word *yḥ* "swamp plant" (cf. § 3.1, n. i) is written here with a single yod only, as *ỉḥ*. The second reed leaf was removed from the beginning of the word: (TT 76) vs. (TT 95A). An artist or scribe in Tjenuna's crew who was not sufficiently acquainted with the spelling of the word might be responsible for this change.

[g] The verb *wḥꜣ* "to hew, to pluck" features a defective spelling in both versions of the text (cf. § 3.1, n. f). Tjenuna's is cited as a unique example by *DZA* 22.563.850.

[h] According to *DZA* 22.887.390, the word *bnrwt* "dates" has an idiosyncratic spelling in TT 76. While the group may indeed be unparalleled, since sign M30 with the phonetic value *bnr* received a slightly altered rendering in TT 76, having been written with a grapheme that is closer to sign M32 than to M30, the spelling was likely inspired by Mery's .

[i] The spelling of the word *ỉꜣrrwt* "grapes"—written as *ỉrwt* () in TT 95A—was complemented with an *r* in TT 76 (). This additional sign appears to be misplaced on Tjenuna's pillar: it would have been expected to follow sign D4 as a phonetic complement, but it precedes it.

[j] The position of the suffix pronoun *=f* was adjusted in the course of the inscription process (cf. Figure 2). It originally shared a quadrat with the plural strokes and the classifier M1 of the word *nhwt* "sycamores" (). The final solution () corresponds to Mery's arrangement of the signs ().

[k] The plural strokes of the third-person plural suffix pronoun belonging to the phrase *wnwn=sn* were turned into the preposition *n* during the inscription process (cf. Figure 2).

[l] The logogram of the verb *ḥnk* "to present, to offer" received a phonemographic interpretant in TT 76. In TT 95A, sign D39 was used alone: . In Tjenuna's inscription, the additional *k* was painted over three *nw* signs (), which shows that two different spellings were contemplated for the verb in TT 76 (and).

[m] As opposed to Mery's version of the text (; § 3.1, n. e), Tjenuna's employs the correct verb (*fdỉ* "to pull up, to pluck").

[n] In TT 76, the word *ḫnỉ* "sedge, rush" is used in its plural form ( ) rather than in singular, as attested in Mery's text ( ).

[o] In terms of content, Tjenuna's inscription starts to diverge from Mery's at this point.

[p] The group is entirely lost today. The reconstruction of the verb *ʿbꜣ* "to present, to provide" (contra Assmann et al. 2005, 354) is based on Bouriant's and Sethe's work. According to Bouriant's (1889, 158, e) text edition, sign W10 ( ) was still visible in the lacuna at the end of the nineteenth century, while Sethe seems to have seen parts of sign D36 () above the vessel when visiting the tomb at the beginning of the twentieth century (*DZA* 24.699.980). These traces would correspond to a spelling of *ʿbꜣ* (or) that is similarly attested in Hatshepsut's and Thutmosis III's inscriptions (*Urk*. IV 165, 1 and 325, 15). The verb is documented in association with another word for water (*mw*) also in *Pyr.* 124b (PT 207) as well as in two Middle Kingdom inscriptions (Cairo CG 20520 and 20531; cf. Lange and Schäfer 1908, 119 and 134).

[q] Tjenuna's name and figure were systematically erased from his tomb (cf. n. 32 above).

5 A unique connection between Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m tꜣ* texts

Mery's *prt m tꜣ* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A (§ 3.1) finds a conspicuously close parallel one generation later on the east side of Pillar D in Tjenuna's tomb, TT 76 (§ 4.1). The first six columns of Tjenuna's *prt m tꜣ* text are nearly identical to the corresponding part in TT 95A (cf. § 4.1 and § 3.1). As mentioned above (§ 4), the two texts only differ in their ending with regard to their wording and content: in the name and titles of the deceased and in the closing part of the text, which was slightly modified in Tjenuna's case (cf. § 4.1, n. o). As opposed to Mery's inscription, which ends on a note of abundance the garden provides (*bʿḥ m ḫt nbt nt ỉtw=f ỉmỉw ḫrt-nṯr*… "full of all the things of his fathers [§ 3.1, n. k] who are in the necropolis…"), Tjenuna's version elaborates further on the refreshment motif of the text: [ʔ*ʿb(ꜣ)*ʔ] *n=f š=f nwy ḥtp ỉb=f m qbḥw*… "his pond [ʔprovidesʔ] (§ 4.1, n. p) him with water, and his heart is pleased about the refreshment (lit., fresh/cold water)…" This departure from the original wording in the second to last column of the inscription in TT 76 constitutes one of the main differences between the two compositions.

The similarities between the two versions of the text go far beyond content and wording. The *prt m tꜣ* text in Tjenuna's tomb contains the same idiosyncrasies as the inscription in TT 95, which strongly indicates a direct connection between the two texts. Both versions feature, for instance, *sḏꜣỉ* instead of *sḏꜣỉ-ḥr* for the set expression for recreation and amusement (§ 4.1, n. d). Only four attestations have been documented so far of this defective writing of the phrase: two of them come from Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m tꜣ* texts (and respectively), while the other two were found in royal contexts, in the inscriptions of Amenhotep II and Amenhotep III (§ 3.1, n. h). In addition, similarly to Mery's inscription (§ 3.1, n. f), Tjenuna's version of the text has a shortened, unusual spelling of the verb *wḥꜣ* "to hew, to pluck," omitting the phonogram *ḥꜣ* at the end of the word (§ 4.1, n. g). The latter occurrence was noted as a singular instance of the spelling () by the *Digitized Slip Archive* of the *Wörterbuch*[42]. Had our German colleagues had access to the inscriptions of TT 95 when compiling their notes for the *Wörterbuch*, they would have surely noticed the existence of another, slightly older occurrence of the same spelling in Mery's tomb (). Likewise, Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m tꜣ* texts seem to be linked by another rare orthography, that of the word *bnrwt* "dates" (§ 4.1, n. h). Although the spelling in TT 76 () cited by the *Digitized Slip Archive* as idiosyncratic[43] may indeed be unique, it likely originated in TT 95A ().

The strength and nature of the connection shared by Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m tꜣ* texts seem unparalleled. Even though there are many other *prt m tꜣ* texts in Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs, no other composition resembles Mery's inscription as closely as Tjenuna's. There is another pillar inscription in the necropolis though that bears similarities to the texts in TT 95A and TT 76: the *prt m tꜣ* text on the north side of Pillar C in the tomb of Amenemhab called Mahu, TT 85[44]. Amenemhab was lieutenant of the army and commander of troops under the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II. His tomb is therefore slightly older than Mery's. Certain words and motifs of Amenemhab's inscription also occur in Mery's and Tjenuna's texts. For instance, the theme of finding refreshment under the sycamores

42 *DZA* 22.563.850.

43 *DZA* 22.887.390.

44 For a photograph of Amenemhab's *prt m tꜣ* text, see Heye 2023, pl. 59d. For the latest facsimile drawing, transliteration, and translation of the inscription, see Heye 2023, 116 with fig. 87. For an earlier edition of the text, see *Urk.* IV 918, 3–13; and for earlier translations, see Freier 1984, 328; Assmann 2001, 302; Assmann 2005, 221; Assmann et al. 2005, 354; and Assmann 2011, 104.

(*sqbb ỉb ḫr* [*nh*]*w*[*t*]*=f*… "refreshing his heart under his [sycamore]s[45], …" [cols. 3–4]) or the words *š* "garden" (col. 3), *sšnw* "lotus blossoms" (col. 5), *nḥbwt* "lotus buds" (col. 5), and *fdỉ* "to pull up, to pluck" (col. 5) are equally attested in TT 95A and TT 76[46], but the wording and content of Amenemhab's *prt m t*ꜣ text strongly differs from Mery's and Tjenuna's composition otherwise[47]. Nonetheless, Amenemhab's inscription is found in a similar position in TT 85 as Mery's is located within TT 95A: both texts were inscribed on the north side of the first pillar on the right-hand side when entering the tomb[48]. Due to the shared phraseology of the two inscriptions and their comparable placement within the tombs, one might contemplate that Amenemhab's *prt m t*ꜣ text had perhaps even served as a source of inspiration for Mery's inscription. It is, by all means, worth noting that *prt m t*ꜣ texts have not been documented on pillars more than three times in total in the entire necropolis, and the examples are precisely the ones in TT 85, TT 95A, and TT 76[49].

Apart from Amenemhab's inscription on the north side of Pillar C in TT 85, there are no other inscriptions in the necropolis that bear much resemblance to Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts. Some motifs of the two texts discussed here occur, however, in a few other Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs as well. For instance, the ceiling inscriptions of the central chapel of TT 82[50], the tomb of Amenemhat—steward of the vizier Useramun under the reign of Thutmose III—contain the deceased's wish to return to his house of the living[51], evoke the garden theme[52], and include the motif of attaining refreshment under the sycamores[53]. Similarly, the central inscription band on the ceiling of the corridor of TT 99, the tomb of Senneferi—overseer of the treasury under the reign of Thutmose III—and its close parallel in the same position in the corridor of TT 96A, the tomb chapel of Sennefer—mayor of Thebes under Amenhotep II—both contain *prt m t*ꜣ texts that mention the living *ba* taking the shade of sycamores[54]. Furthermore, some of the vocabulary of Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts is equally found on the north wall of the first hall of TT 92, the tomb of Suemniwet, a royal butler under the reign of Amenhotep II. A caption to a scene about presenting the produce of the marshlands to the king and Hathor includes the words *nḥbwt* "lotus buds" and *sšnw* "lotus blossoms,"[55] but this shared vocabulary suggests at most a tenuous connection to the inscriptions in TT 95A and TT 76—if any.

45 The passage is partially damaged. Of the word *nhwt* "sycamores," only the classifiers are still preserved today. Heike Heye (2023, 116) and Assmann (2001, 302; 2005, 221; and 2011, 104) read the segment as [*mn*]*w=f* "his [tree]s," which is a possible interpretation epigraphically, but it is contextually less likely than the reconstruction proposed above (cf. col. 2 of Mery's and col. 3 of Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts under § 3.1 and § 4.1 as well as nn. 53–54 below). Kurt Sethe similarly preferred reconstructing the word *nhwt* "sycamores" in the lacuna (cf. *Urk.* IV 918, 8), while Assmann et al. (2005, 354, n. 41) considered both options (*mnw* "trees" and *nhwt* "sycamores"). On the etymological connection between the verb *nh* "to protect, to shelter"—and, by analogy, its derivative noun *nht* "protection, shelter"—and the word *nht* "sycamore," see, for instance, Fischer 1978, 131–132. I thank my anonymous reviewer for calling my attention to the latter reference.

46 The theme of finding refreshment under the sycamores is found in col. 2 of Mery's and col. 3 of Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts (cf. § 3.1 and § 4.1). The word *š* "garden" is at the very top of col. 2 in the text in TT 95A, whereas it is in col. 3 in TT 76. The verb *fdỉ* "to pull up, to pluck" was misspelled in col. 3 of Mery's text (§ 3.1, n. e), but it appears correctly in col. 4 of Tjenuna's version (§ 4.1, n. m). The words *sšnw* "lotus blossoms" and *nḥbwt* "lotus buds" are used in cols. 3 and 4 of the inscription in TT 95A and in cols. 4 and 5 in TT 76 (cf. § 3.1 and § 4.1).

47 Compare the transliteration and translation of the text in TT 85 (Heye 2023, 116) with Mery's and Tjenuna's versions (cf. § 3.1 and § 4.1).

48 See the position of scene Cd in TT 85 on fig. 173d in Heye 2023, 196 or in Porter and Moss 1960, 160. For the location of Pillar A within TT 95A, see n. 24 above.

49 The three inscriptions were often cited together by Assmann. See, for instance, Assmann 1995, 288, n. 37; Assmann 2001, 564, n. 66; Assmann 2005, 452–453, n. 58; and Assmann et al. 2005, 49, n. 137 and 467, n. 36.

50 For a recent study on these inscriptions, see Takács in preparation.

51 In the northernmost band, we read the following words: *wbꜣ=k ḏww nw ḫrt-nṯr mꜣn=k pr=k n ʿnḫw*… "you shall open the mountains of the necropolis, so that you shall see your house of the living…" (cf. Davies and Gardiner 1915, pl. 27, text no. 5). Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ text—and likely also Mery's—has *r sḏpt pr=f n ʿnḫw*… "so that he would visit his house of the living…" (§ 3.1 and § 4.1). In TT 82, the deceased's wish to see his earthly home (*pr=f n ʿnḫw*) is found also in the passage between the transverse hall and the second corridor, on the north thickness of the doorway (cf. Davies and Gardiner 1915, pl. 31).

52 The second band from the north contains the following passage: *s*<*w*>*twt=k r mrr=k ḫr mꜣʿnfr n š=k*… "you shall walk about as you like on the beautiful bank of your garden-pond…" (cf. Davies and Gardiner 1915, pl. 27, text no. 4). Cf. n. 46 above.

53 The formulation *sqbb=k ḫr*{*t*} *nhwt=k*… "you shall refresh yourself under your sycamores…" likewise forms part of the second band from the north (cf. Davies and Gardiner 1915, pl. 27, text no. 4). Cf. n. 46 above. On the possible origin of the mistake in the spelling of the preposition *ḫr* in TT 82, see Davies and Gardiner 1915, 102, n. 1.

54 In TT 99, this section reads as follows: *šsp=f šwt nt nhwt=f*… "it (i.e., the living *ba*) shall take the shade of his sycamores…" (cf. Strudwick 2016, 157, fig. 123, ceiling text no. 9). Its parallel in TT 96A seems to contain a small mistake, as the suffix pronoun appears to be missing after the verb *šsp* "to receive, to take" according to Sethe's notes (cf. *DZA* 29.985.650). The same phrase also occurs in line 7 of the South Stela in TT 110, the tomb of Djehuty, royal butler and royal herald under the reign of Thutmose III (cf. Davies 1932, pl. 40), as well as in line 6 of the North Stela in TT 164, the tomb of Intef, scribe of recruits under Thutmose III (cf. *DSA*, Schott photo no. 6614 or Hermann 1940, 38*). The passage in TT 99 was cited by Assmann 2001, 303 and 563, n. 52 and Assmann 2005, 221, 451, n. 46, and 452, n. 58.

55 *Urk.* IV 1451, 11.

Figure 3: The north side of Pillar A in TT 95A (left) and the east side of Pillar D in TT 76 (right). Photos by M. Kačičnik, *LHTT*, University of Basel, 2023 (left) and by the author, 2022 (right).

Although there is a close intertextual relation between Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m ṯ3* texts, we have already established the fact that the two inscriptions are not completely identical: the one in TT 76 starts to diverge from its earlier parallel at the end of the text (cf. § 4.1, n. o). Tjenuna's different ending is, nevertheless, not the only dissimilarity between the two inscriptions. Once the beholder zooms out of the text and notices its material context and its immediate surroundings, as, for instance, the rest of the decoration of the pillar face, it becomes immediately apparent that the two inscriptions form part of two slightly different compositions also visually (Figure 3).

First of all, while both texts were painted on a pillar side together with the figure of the deceased facing the entrance of the tomb and striding towards the sunlight, in TT 76, Tjenuna's image was accompanied by his spouse's (Figure 3, right)[56], whereas in TT 95A, Mery was depicted alone (Figure 3, left)[57]. Likewise, in the lowest register of the decoration of the east side of Pillar D in TT 76, three offering bringers were added below the figures of the deceased and his wife (Figure 3, right)[58], while this motif was probably not part of the composition in TT 95A (Figure 3, left)[59]. The difference in the choice of the color palette is also evident: in TT 95, the decoration of the pillar has a white background (Figure 3, left), whereas in TT 76, it is the yellow that dominates (Figure 3, right), which is in line with an emerging contemporary practice[60]. Lastly, while the inscription was arranged in seven vertical lines in TT 95A, with the first one being considerably longer than the remaining six (§ 3; Figure 3, left), the same amount of text was fitted into eight, somewhat shorter columns of equal length in TT 76 (§ 4; Figure 4, right). As a consequence, Tjenuna's *prt m ṯ3* text has a more compact visual appearance than Mery's[61]. The artists responsible for Tjenuna's inscription had to make a conscious effort to fit the same amount of text into a space that was significantly smaller than what the inscription was originally designed for. This resulted in various space-saving measures. One of the strategies employed was to substitute larger signs with their smaller equivalents (e.g., § 4.1, n. a), while considerable amount of space could be gained also by regrouping signs and arranging them more tightly than in Mery's version[62] or by changing the spelling altogether—for instance, at the level of the plural marking[63].

Although Tjenuna's version of the text inherited some of the idiosyncrasies of Mery's inscription—some of which were presumably mistakes—there seems to have been a clear intention on behalf of the actors working for Tjenuna to update and improve the source text. This must have been the ambition behind altering the wording of the end of the text, but the same intention is equally manifest at some deeper levels as well. For instance, the challenging task of trying to fit a lengthy inscription into a relatively small space available did not seem to discourage the new editors of the text from adding a few signs where they thought it was necessary. This is what happened in the case of the verb *sqbb* "to make cool, to refresh oneself," which received a previously missing classifier (§ 4.1, n. c), as well as in the case of the verb *ḥnk* "to present, to offer," the spelling of which was augmented by a phonetic complement at its end (§ 4.1, n. l). More importantly, a mistake still present in Mery's version of the text was corrected in Tjenuna's. In the inscription in TT 95A, we find the verb *fdq* "to sever, to divide" ( ) in a context where the use of the verb *fdỉ* "to pull up, to pluck" would have been more appropriate (§ 3.1, n. e) since the passage is about the deceased collecting flowers and fruits. The superfluous *q* was removed accordingly from Tjenuna's variant: (cf. Figure 2). The spelling of the words *yḥ* "swamp plant" and *i3rrwt* "grapes" was probably altered with the same underlying corrective intention as was Mery's *fdq*. In the latter two cases, the outcome is somewhat more questionable though (§ 4.1, nn. f and i). Opting for an alter-

56 Both figures were already erased in antiquity (cf. § 4); of Nebettawy, Tjenuna's wife, only her contours remain.

57 On the pillars of TT 95A, traces of a female figure were detected only on the east and west sides of Pillar A and on the east side of Pillar G. Pillar G is the first pillar on the left when entering the tomb (cf. Figure 4, left; Gnirs 1995, 239, fig. 2; or Paksi and Bickel 2021, 87, fig. 75). On the identity of these female figures, see Paksi and Bickel 2021, 88.

58 For an older image of these offering bringers, see *DSA*, Schott photo no. 5260.

59 Even though we cannot be entirely certain of the absence of a third register on the north side of Pillar A, as the lowest part of the decoration is not preserved, the layout of the decoration and the relative proportions of text and image, which differ in TT 76, suggest that only two registers (one for the inscription and another for the striding figure of the deceased) were planned in Mery's case. In TT 76, a third register with three offering bearers was likewise added to the north side of Pillar B and the south side of Pillar C (cf. Porter and Moss 1960, 148 and 150).

60 For the background of texts and scenes, yellow is used more and more often from the reign of Thutmose IV onwards in the decoration of Theban tombs. Melinda Hartwig (2004, 55, n. 11 and 116) mentions this development with regard to the background color of the kiosk icon.

61 In TT 76, also the inscription itself is kept smaller than in TT 95A. On Tjenuna's pillar, the columns are no more than 9 cm wide on average, whereas on Mery's, they are ca. 12 cm wide. In Mery's text, the average height of a vertical sign is 9 cm, while in Tjenuna's, it is merely 6 cm. The column widths and the height of the signs were measured by the author *in situ* in March 2022.

62 See, for instance, (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76); and (TT 95A) vs. (TT 76).

63 For the latter, compare (TT 95A) with (TT 76).

nate spelling, however, did not necessarily have to coincide with any space-saving or corrective intention, it was also done without any apparent reason—except perhaps for the sake of sheer variance. This might explain why Mery's (§ 3.1, n. b) for the word *ỉtn* "sun disc" became in Tjenuna's version of the text (§ 4.1, n. b)[64].

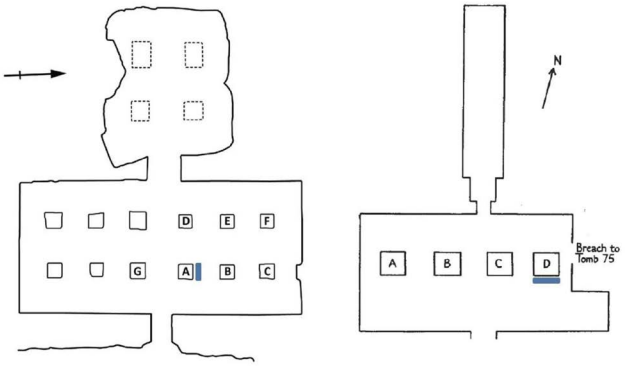

Figure 4: The position of the *prt m t*ꜣ texts on the pillars of TT 95A (left) and TT 76 (right). Plans after Gnirs 1995, 239, fig. 2; Paksi and Bickel 2021, 87, fig. 75; and Porter and Moss 1960, 148.

6 Further correspondences in the decoration program of TT 95A and TT 76

The close intertextual relation between Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts is not the only textual link between the two tombs. Another strong connection between the textual programs of TT 95A and TT 76 involves the epithets of Re-Harakhte. A few epithets of this deity seldom mentioned together but present in a *ḥtp-dỉ-nsw* offering formula on the ceiling of TT 95A seems to find a parallel in one of Tjenuna's pillar texts. In TT 95A, these epithets are found in the central band of the ceiling of the northern part of the east aisle, in a horizontally arranged, monochrome text running from left to right (south to north): *wbn m pt ḫsr k*[*k*]*w* [*bꜥḥ*] *t*ꜣ[*wỉ*] *m ḏꜥm*… "who rises in the sky and drives away the dar[k]ness, who [floods] the [two] land[s] with electrum, …" The same expressions appear together once more in the record: on the south side of Pillar C in TT 76[65], in a vertically arranged, nine-column long, polychrome inscription running from right to left (east to west) that contains praise to the sun god followed by a long list of epithets, the titles, and the name of the deceased[66]. The second and third columns of Tjenuna's text include the same set of epithets as the ceiling inscription in the middle of the northern part of the east aisle in Mery's tomb but in reverse order: *bꜥḥ t*ꜣ*wỉ m ḏꜥm wbn m pt sḫr kkw*… "who floods the two lands with electrum, who rises in the sky and overthrows the darkness, …[67]" It is not only the sequence of the two sets of epithets that was reversed in this passage but also two consonants were swapped in one of the key words, *ḫsr* "to dispel, to drive away" ( ), which thus became *sḫr* "to overthrow, to throw down" ( ) in TT 76, and the respective phrase thereby acquired a slightly different meaning in Tjenuna's case (*sḫr kkw* "who overthrows the darkness" vs. *ḫsr k*[*k*]*w* "who drives away the dar[k]ness")[68]. These are examples of an inversion at the macro and micro levels[69] within a text that was likely transmitted from one tomb to another. Inversion as a strategy used by artists to introduce variation in a copy has already been widely recognized by art historians analyzing the visual connections in the decoration of Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs[70]. The present example demonstrates that the same strategy was applied not only to the iconographic material but also to the inscriptions of these monuments.

64 Unless the graphical hypercorrection of the dental consonant in the middle of the word (§ 3.1, n. b) was recognized as etymologically incorrect, in which case, this alteration would also fall under the category of correction or improvement.

65 Pillar C is the first column on the right when entering the tomb (cf. Figure 4, right; Porter and Moss 1960, 148; and Kampp 1996, 313, fig. 199).

66 While the last column of the text was destroyed, Tjenuna's chief steward title (*ỉmỉ-rꜣ pr wr*) is still legible in the second to last column of the text (*Urk*. IV 1580, 9).

67 Earlier in Piehl 1886, pl. 108; Bouriant 1889, 158, g; Assmann 1983, 139, text no. 100; and Pino Fernández 2012, 951. In Tjenuna's passage, Assmann (1983, 139, text no. 100) transliterated *ḫsr* instead of *sḫr*, which seems to be a Freudian slip in light of Mery's variant, which he could not have been aware of (cf. n. 21 above). The word *kkw* "darkness" is regularly attested in association with the verb *ḫsr* "to dispel, to drive away" (cf. *Wb. Belegst.* III 338.9–10) but only rarely with *sḫr* "to overthrow, to throw down" (cf. *DZA* 29.542.970–980 but also pVatican 38600/1–2, rto 203 in Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 134317).

68 The formulation *sḫr kkw* "to overthrow the darkness" is attested at least once more in the record (cf. n. 67 above), in a nearly contemporary source, in Spell 182 of the *Book of the Dead* papyrus of Amenemopet, overseer of the draftsmen (*ỉmỉ-rꜣ sš-qdwt*), which is dated to the time of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II (pVatican 38600/1–2, rto 203). On the latter source, see Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 134317.

69 Where the inversion of the sequence of the two sets of epithets would account for the macro level, while the change from *ḫsr* to *sḫr* would represent the micro level.

70 See Den Doncker 2012, 30–31; Den Doncker 2017, 350–351; Laboury 2017, 237–238 and 248; and Den Doncker 2022, 45–48 and 57–65.

The two tombs share further similarities in their decoration, even beyond the textual parallel concerning the epithets of Re-Harakhte discussed above. In TT 76, the north side of Pillar B, the first column on the left when entering the tomb[71], contains a text mentioning the Beautiful Feast of the Valley as well as the figures of the deceased and his spouse, Nebettawy[72]. A similar motif is present on the west side of Pillar A in TT 95A: Mery is depicted here with his wife, My[73], and the accompanying inscription mentions their participation in the Beautiful Feast of the Valley[74]. Although the wording of the two inscriptions is not particularly close, the presence of a shared theme, namely, the deceased's wish to participate in the Beautiful Festival of the Valley, is significant in itself. The formulation in TT 76 is more concise than the one in TT 95A, but both texts probably contained the explicit wish to see Amun during his water procession of the first day of the year: [*mꜣꜣ ỉmn-rꜥ nsw*] *nṯrw m ẖnt=f n tpỉ-rnpt*… "[Seeing Amun-Re, king][75] of gods, at his water procession of the first day of the year, …"[76] (TT 76) vs. *mꜣꜣ* [*ỉmn*] *ḫꜥꜥ=f wbn=f m* [*ỉpt-swt*] *m ẖnt=f nt tpỉ-rnpt*… "Seeing [Amun], when he appears and rises in [Karnak] at his water procession of the first day of the year…" (TT 95A).

In TT 76, the east sides of Pillars B and C represent the first decorated surface a visitor beholds when entering the tomb[77]. Pillars B and C form a secondary portal to Tjenuna's funerary structure by flanking the main axis of the tomb. On the left side, on the east face of Pillar B, the deceased's figure is accompanied by his wife's[78], whereas on the right side, on the east face of Pillar C, Tjenuna appears alone[79]. On both pillar sides, the main inscriptions merely consist of the deceased's epithets, titles, and name[80]—much like in the case of the east sides of Pillars A and G in TT 95A. In Mery's tomb chapel, Pillars A and G are the ones closest to the entrance and the ones forming a second gateway to Mery's funerary structure due to their distinct spatial location within the tomb[81]. Although the decoration of the east sides of Pillars A and G in TT 95A is not as well-preserved as the decoration of the east sides of Pillars B and C in TT 76, it is clear that the inscriptions of the two pillar sides closest to the entrance only consisted of the deceased's titles and name also in TT 95A. Mery's figure was depicted together with a female companion on the east side of both Pillars A and G, but as the corresponding captions are lost, it is impossible to tell if this was the wife or the mother[82]. The similarity between the decorative compositions of the two pillar sides nearest to the entrance in TT 95A and TT 76 can, nevertheless, be established.

As Tjenuna's tomb chapel was left unfinished[83], only a few sides of its four pillars (labelled with A, B, C, and D) received decoration: the east side of Pillar D (*prt m tꜣ* text), the south side of Pillar C (praise to the sun god with the epithets of Re-Harakhte), the north side of Pillar B (deceased and spouse at the Beautiful Feast of the Valley), and the east sides of Pillars B and C (epithets, titles, and name of the deceased). It has been demonstrated above (§ 5 and § 6) that all of these pillar sides share a connection with the decoration program of Mery's tomb. Correspondences between the figurative and inscriptional decoration of TT 76 and TT 95A are, however, not limited to the pillars of Tjenuna's tomb but are also found on its side walls.

In the first hall of TT 95A, the northern part of the east wall contains a burnt offering scene, a cattle inspection scene, and a workshop scene with their corresponding captions[84]. The northern part of the east wall carries two of these three motifs in the first hall of Tjenuna's tomb as well. Although the decoration of the east wall was left unfinished and is not particularly well-preserved in TT 76, there is no doubt that the burnt offering scene—often found on the east wall of the first hall in contemporary tombs[85]—was

71 Cf. Figure 4, right; Porter and Moss 1960, 148; and Kampp 1996, 313, fig. 199.

72 *DSA*, Schott photo no. 8401.

73 Cf. n. 57 above.

74 On the inscription of the west side of Pillar A, see n. 23 under § 3. For an image of this pillar side, see the frontispiece of Loprieno 1995 or Paksi and Bickel 2021, 188, fig. 76D.

75 The author's reconstruction of the beginning of the inscription is tentative.

76 The transliteration and translation of this passage is based on *in situ* observations from March 2022. For earlier editions and translations of the text, see Bouriant 1889, 158, h; Schott 1953, 873, text no. 72; and Pino Fernández 2012, 950.

77 Cf. Figure 4, right; Porter and Moss 1960, 148; and Kampp 1996, 313, fig. 199.

78 Porter and Moss 1960, 150, B(a). Nebettawy's figure is significantly smaller here than Tjenuna's, unlike on the other three pillar sides (Pillar B, north; Pillar C, south; and Pillar D, east) where she is depicted next to her spouse within the tomb. This is an *in situ* observation from March 2022.

79 Porter and Moss 1960, 150, C(a).

80 For the inscription on the east side of Pillar B, see Bouriant 1889, 158, i; *Urk.* IV 1581, 1–10; and Pino Fernández 2012, 949–950. For the text on the east side of Pillar C, see Bouriant 1889, 158, f; *Urk.* IV 1580, 10–20; and Pino Fernández 2012, 950–951.

81 Cf. Paksi and Bickel 2021, 87–88.

82 Cf. Paksi and Bickel 2021, 88.

83 See n. 31 above.

84 Porter and Moss 1960, 176, 195(3–4), and 196(5).

85 Schott 1953, 776–795.

complemented by a cattle inspection scene on the northern half of the wall also in Tjenuna's case[86].

7 Conclusion

Mery's and Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ texts share an exceptionally strong intertextual connection with several correspondences in content, wording, and spelling between the two texts (§ 5). This suggests that Mery's inscription could have directly inspired Tjenuna's text and thus would have served as its model. It remains a possibility though that the people responsible for the textual program of TT 76 never even saw the walls of TT 95A but worked from the same so-called *Vorlage* that served as a model for Mery's *prt m t*ꜣ text. Further similarities between the decoration of TT 95A and TT 76 (§ 6) suggest, however, that this option is highly unlikely. They are too numerous to be accidental and therefore seem to preclude the possibility that Tjenuna's artists would have worked from shared models without actually wanting to emulate any specific elements of Mery's tomb decoration. In other words, while the two inscriptions' shared idiosyncrasies (§ 5) demonstrate that Tjenuna's text was directly influenced by Mery's, the correspondences between the rest of the decoration of the two tombs (§ 6) indicate that Tjenuna's *prt m t*ꜣ text likely originated in TT 95A and was presumably directly transmitted from Mery's tomb to a pillar side in TT 76. This case study thereby illustrates that the texts on the walls, pillars, or ceilings of Theban tombs probably more often served as direct models for their later parallels than we tend to assume.

Even though it was left unfinished, TT 95 was undoubtedly one of the most prominent and most beautifully decorated funerary monuments of the generation directly preceding Tjenuna's and therefore must have been well-known and widely admired during Tjenuna's lifetime. The strong influence of Mery's decoration program on Tjenuna's tomb chapel is, however, possibly primarily due to the fact that the two individuals seem to have been linked professionally. They were both overseers of the cattle and the young cattle of Amun (*ỉmỉ-rꜣ ỉḫw n ỉmn* "overseer of the cattle of Amun" and *ỉmỉ-rꜣ nfrwt n ỉmn* "overseer of the young cattle of Amun")[87]. Their shared titles suggest that Mery and Tjenuna likely worked together in the domain of Amun and thus may have known each other personally. If they did, Mery, as high priest of Amun, must have been Tjenuna's superior in the temple administration.

Many of the texts and motifs that find a later echo in Tjenuna's tomb come from the eastern half of the first hall of TT 95A and are located close to the entrance. One can almost picture Tjenuna and his artists visiting Mery's tomb, being inspired by some of its decoration elements, and handpicking those that should be emulated higher up on the hill, in Tjenuna's own funerary monument. For a knowledgeable contemporary or future audience, some of Mery's professional prestige must have been expected to pass on to Tjenuna through these borrowings[88]. Nonetheless, as we have seen, none of the texts or motifs borrowed from TT 95A were copied slavishly, all of them were rethought, recreated, and reinterpreted during the transmission process[89], thereby offering us valuable insights into the ancient Egyptian understanding of creativity with regard to text production and tomb decoration in the Eighteenth Dynasty Theban necropolis.

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86 Porter and Moss 1960, 148 and 149(1–2). In TT 76, the caption is missing from the cattle inspection scene. The space reserved for the inscription was left blank. In the burnt offering scene, Mery is depicted together with his mother, Hunay, whereas Tjenuna performs the ritual alone.

87 In TT 76, Tjenuna is called *ỉmỉ-rꜣ ỉḫw n ỉmn* "overseer of the cattle of Amun" in line 7 of the inscription on the east side of Pillar B (*Urk*. IV 1581, 9), while his *ỉmỉ-rꜣ nfrwt n ỉmn* "overseer of the young cattle of Amun" title is documented on the northern half of the east wall of this tomb, in line 8 of the caption to the burnt offering scene (*Urk*. IV 1579, 16). In his tomb, Mery is called *ỉmỉ-rꜣ nfrwt n ỉmn* "overseer of the young cattle of Amun" in the second to last column of the inscription on the east side of Pillar G and in the final column of the inscription to his cattle inspection scene (cf. *Urk*. IV 1570, 14). His *ỉmỉ-rꜣ ỉḫw n ỉmn* "overseer of the cattle of Amun" title is attested on his funerary cones (*Urk*. IV 1414, 16 and 1415, 3). On Mery's two types of cones (DM nos. 390 and 400), see Loprieno-Gnirs et al. 2021, 24 and 151, n. 12; Davies 1957, nos. 390 and 400; and the corresponding entries in the online catalogue of *The world of funerary cones and stamped bricks*.

88 For similar strategies of self-fashioning with the help of images copied from well-respected predecessors or peers within the Theban necropolis, see the concept "identifying-copies" developed by Alexis Den Doncker (2017, 337–339 and 2022, 60–65).

89 Compare the notions "productive copies" and "creative borrowings" used by Laboury (2017, 238) for iconographic correspondences between the decoration of Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tombs. See, furthermore, Laboury 2012, 203 and Den Doncker 2022, 56–57 and 66.

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Figure 5: Digital reconstruction of the upper part of the *prt m ṯ3* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A. Photo by M. Kačičnik, *LHTT*, University of Basel, 2023. Illustration by the author, 2024.

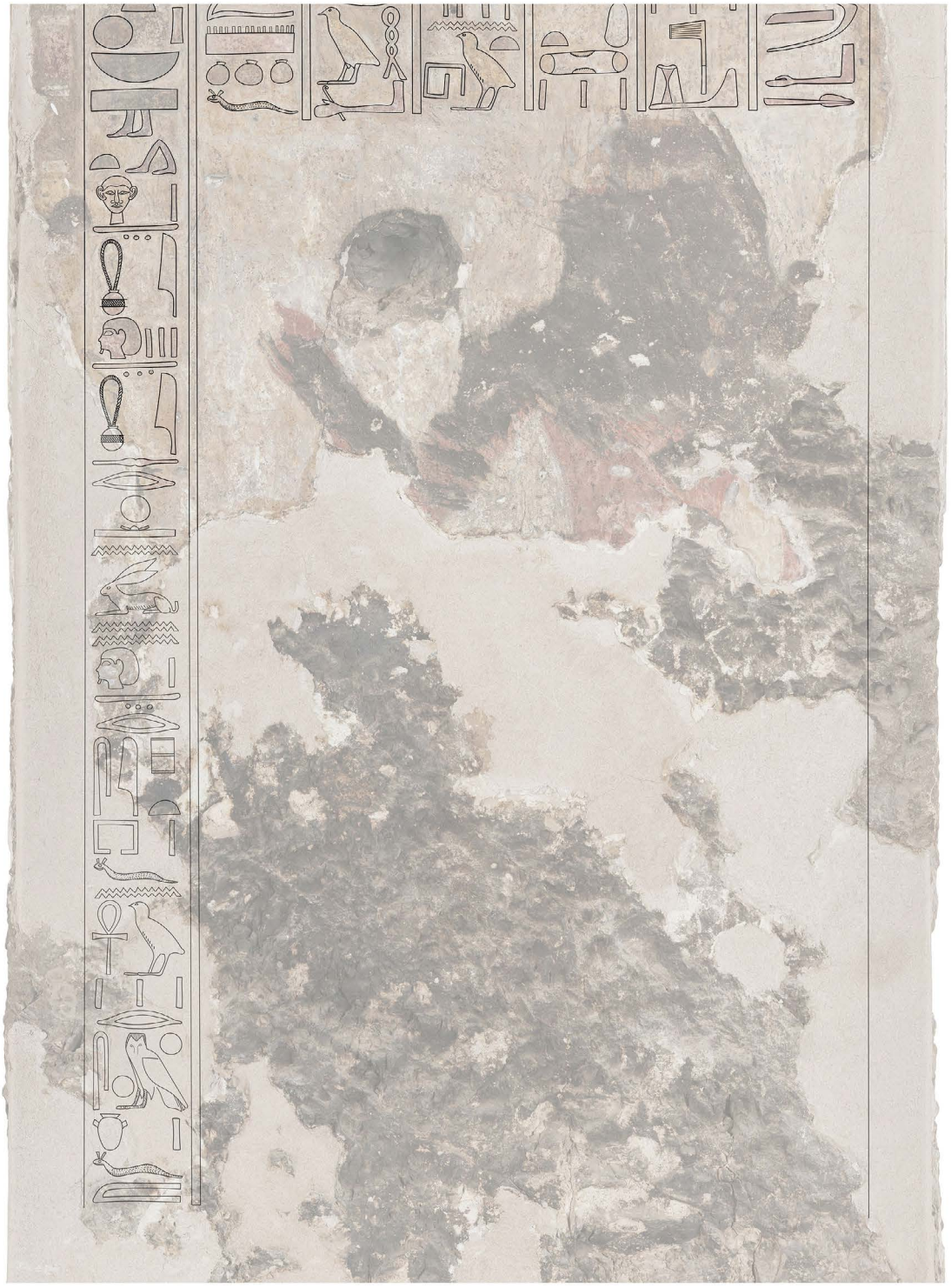

Figure 6: Digital reconstruction of the lower part of the *prt m ḫ₃* text on the north side of Pillar A in TT 95A. Photo by M. Kačičnik, *LHTT*, University of Basel, 2023. Illustration by the author, 2024.