

# Graphic Variations in the Valley of the Kings

## Annexe of Ramesses IV (KV2)

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Ramesses IV reigned for a little less than eight years, from 1154 to 1148 BC. (the dates fluctuate by a few years according to historians). It is known that the construction of his tomb began more than a year after his accession to the throne, in particular because of the disturbances linked to the plot against him and his father Ramses III<sup>1</sup>, and that, perhaps to compensate for this delay and the life expectancy of the new king, who was already in his forties, the number of workers increased from 40 to 120<sup>2</sup>.

This tomb has three corridors, an antechamber and a burial chamber, extended by an annex. The particularity of this annex is that it is entirely (and only) painted, unlike the rest of the tomb, which is engraved and then painted. The main space of the annex has hardly any scenes, but only text from the Book of Caves written in polychrome hieroglyphic columns.

The text of the main space is taken from the first cave of the Book of Caverns. The two right and left walls begin at the very beginning of the first register of the first cavern. On the right wall, the text stops at the third register of the first cavern, while the text on the left wall stops at the second register of the same cavern<sup>3</sup>. This is explained by the fact that on the right wall, the columns seem to be interrupted by the appendix and the niche: the text at the beginning of each column does not correspond to the immediate continuation of the previous column. The latter seems to be repeated as if the columns ended at ground level, and this is easily verified by comparing the text on the left, which is continuous. The text is therefore more extensive on the right wall than on the left wall, but almost half of it is missing. This suggests that the cavities were not foreseen when the text on the right was written.

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<sup>1</sup> Hornung 1990, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Valbelle 1985, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Werning 2011, II, p. 2-26.

The objective of this present study is to list the many palaeographic variants to derive a systemic analysis, with comparisons within each wall, and between the two walls. The advantage of this piece is that in most cases, the scribe's preparatory work is always visible, which makes it possible to distinguish the latter's work from the painter's work.

Let's start with the right wall.

There is a first scribe from column 1 to 18:

- who paints A1 in the classic way. [PHOTO 4]
- he also paints the A14A in a classic way: crouched (two legs visible), feet in tension, but with an adze instead of an axe. [PHOTO 5]

A second scribe intervenes from column 19 to column 53<sup>4</sup>:

- he systematically paints variants of A1B instead of A1, but in the opposite direction of the other signs. [PHOTO 6]
- the A14A signs are always painted with an adze instead of the axe. [PHOTO 7]

About painters, I counted two.

The first covers the entire part of the first scribe, columns 1 to 18, then columns 37 to 43. The second covers columns 19 to 36, and 44 to 53.

Indeed, in the first part are, for example, the signs representing birds and snakes, most often with a red and/or black outline and black details on the body [PHOTO 8]. However, from column 19 to column 26, these same signs have only a very slight or even non-existent outline, nor any detail [PHOTO 9]. From column 27, these details and contours are again clearly present up to column 43 [PHOTO 10]. From column 44 to 53 (the last one), these same features fade or disappear again for birds and the N14 sign, as between columns 19 and 26 [PHOTO 11].

We can also note the sign D2 which is painted several times with a yellow background and red details, and once simply with a red background in the first part [PHOTO 12]. It is found in the third part with a yellow background and black details, with sometimes a first detail

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<sup>4</sup> Columns 52 and 53 are painted on the back (east) wall, on the south side, following the columns on the right (south) wall.

in red under the black paint [PHOTO 13]. It is also present once it is painted entirely red. In the second part, on the other hand, this sign is painted entirely in yellow without detail on two occasions (absent from the fourth part) [PHOTO 14].

The N35 signs are also clearly characterized. In the first and third parts, the black ink is clearly visible [PHOTO 15]. The sign is painted with a frank and straight initial attack followed by tight oblique dots connected to each other by a fluid movement of the brush slightly raised from the wall. In the second part, the N35 are drawn irregularly: either in spaced dots, or so erased that the sign can only be seen by its preliminary line [PHOTO 16]. In the fourth part, they are as visible as those in the third part, but the points are narrower and have no curved movement [PHOTO 17].

The sign A1B is painted in a rather similar way on the entire wall, in the manner of the sign U39K [PHOTO 18]. It can also be pointed out that the A1B signs of the fourth part have all been painted yellow in their center, unlike the others which are just painted on the contours, in light to dark blue. Only the examples of columns 42 and 43 are painted black, without the feather on the "arm", the end of which is nevertheless curved.

As far as the left wall is concerned, the different areas are less easily distinguishable.

As for the scribes, it seems *a priori* that a first wrote the provisional text of columns 1 to 18, then a second would then have written the rest of the text (still provisional). The most visible difference is the use of a variant of the A1B sign from column 19 onwards, as on the right wall. However, from columns 26 to 29, the scribe noted "classical" A1Bs, without feather, more reminiscent of the hieratic shape of the A1 [PHOTO 19].

The main characteristics that distinguish the two scribes are:

- As mentioned above, the use of the classic A1 sign from column 1 to 18, while the A1B and its variant "U39K" is used from column 19 to 54<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Columns 53 and 54 are located on the back wall (east wall), north side, following the columns on the left (north) wall.

- The first scribe painted the N3B sign as a classifier of the word *kkw*, while the second painted a variant of it three times without the second small jamb [PHOTO 20].
- As a classifier of the word *shd* (to illuminate), the first scribe uses the sign of the radiant solar disk N8, while the second uses the sign N5 (simple solar disk) [PHOTO 21].
- The A14A sign is drawn in such a way by the first scribe that the axe is above and near the head of the figure, whose two legs are visible. On the other hand, the second scribe has traced the figure with his head in front of or far from the axe, in a crouching position (three times out of four), while the painter has painted the enemy in the same position as in the first columns, so that the provisional outline is very clearly visible [PHOTO 22].

As for the painters, their exact number is uncertain, but I like to identify four areas. The first painted area runs from column 1 to column 18, the second from column 19 to 30, a third area includes columns 31 to 41, while the fourth occupies columns 42 to 54.

Several elements of comparison allowed me to define these different areas, starting with the signs of the birds:

In the first area, most of these signs were formed with a black line for their back outline before a thin layer of yellow paint was applied covering these same contours. It is often the case that the provisional route is seen in transparency. A red line was then applied to form their front outline, red details lined with black were sometimes added. In some cases, the painter has drawn the entire outline in red before adding a black line for the back outline. Some signs, especially in the lower part, seem to have had black details of which only sometimes minute traces remain. Overall, this painter used very little black paint in favor of a light blue sometimes enhanced with dark blue, which characterizes this area. [PHOTO 23]

In the second area, yellow paint was applied first, followed by a red front outline and beak (although in some cases the front outline was omitted), and then black back outline and plumage. As far as these signs are concerned, the black paint is very faded over the entire area and can sometimes only be seen very closely. [PHOTO 24]

In the third zone, the preparatory layout was first covered in yellow paint before receiving a black rear outline and a red front contour and legs. The wings and feathers

were exclusively painted black, the beaks were most often painted red when they protrude from the silhouette, or systematically black for the G17 owls. The contours are also characterized by the sharpness of their colors. [PHOTO 25]

As for the fourth zone, the signs have few outlines. Yellow paint was applied first, then the very light black details were traced. The details differ from other areas (such as the G17 which has flat eyebrows and eyes), and in several cases the G43's wings protrude from the yellow silhouette (which does not happen in the previous areas). When the yellow paint was applied a little too coarsely, the painter added a red line to better define/refine the front outline (which then protrudes from the yellow paint). These signs are therefore noticeable by their almost absence of outline and the faded black details. [PHOTO 26]

The A14A sign also has strong differences about its painting:

In the first area, the examples of this sign were painted following the model of the scribe, with the head at the lower left corner of the axe (without touching it). The loincloth, back knot and axe are painted light blue. The hair is painted black over the reddish-brown head. [PHOTO 22a]

In the second area, this sign is painted with the differences that the loincloth was first painted red (in the continuity of the torso) and then blue. Also, the hair is painted black around the head and not directly on the red paint, and its volume is accentuated to come into contact with the axe. This is true for the three cases in this area. [PHOTO 22b]

In the third zone, this sign is also painted with the red and then blue loincloth, but the hair is like that of the specimens in the first zone. On the other hand, the face is missing. [PHOTO 27]

There is no occurrence of this sign in the fourth area.

Comparing the profile of Maat and her feather, we see that the royal cartouches of the second zone were painted by the same person, and those of zone 1 by another. [PHOTO 30]

Given the different elements of comparison mentioned above, it is quite likely that zones 2 and 3 were painted by the same person(s). This suggests a team work in more or less this order: preliminary drawing of the scribe → application of the yellow paint → contours drawing, then black and red details → application of blue if necessary.

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