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The Reception of Images in Ancient Egypt

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Ancient History

The University of Auckland

2018
ABSTRACT

Reception theory emerged in the 1960s as an alternative method for interpreting literature which championed shifting the focus of study from the author to the reader. Since then it has been applied in numerous subjects including anthropology and art history. The primary purpose of this thesis is to use reception theory to investigate how ancient Egyptians interacted with and understood art and images. Art in the field of Egyptology is frequently seen as a less crucial aspect to understanding their culture when compared to linguistic or archaeological studies. This thesis presents art as an essential element in understanding what the Egyptians valued, understood, and intended when they created their masterpieces. To provide a broad understanding of the issue this thesis is separated into three chapters. The first is a literature review which provides a comprehensive scholarly background to reception theory and its use in studying ancient Egyptian art history. Though studies have been done in the area of research the lack of focus on larger sites hinders our understanding. The second chapter focuses on private tomb chapels which have been the primary setting for earlier studies. The use of ‘Appeals to the Living,’ tomb scenes, and visitor graffiti are discussed as they reflect the Egyptians reception of the images around them. The third chapter takes the findings of the smaller tomb chapel contexts and seeks to find similar responses to art in the larger public temples. Little has been written on reception of the Egyptians in these large complexes and it proves a useful method for approaching art in a new way. The evidence reveals that reception theory is a viable methodology and should be used throughout Egyptian art history, if not the whole of Egyptology. It appears that the ancient Egyptians did view art as living entities and by studying them through reception theory we can investigate how they interacted and understood the images around them. This thesis refutes the idea that art in ancient Egypt was not understood by all Egyptians nor that its worth is somehow lesser than studies in archaeology or linguistics.
DEDICATION

For Thomas

For giving me hope, in the darkest times.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to express my profound thanks to my supervisor Dr. Jennifer Hellum. Without whom I would have never journeyed down the path of Egyptology. Thank you for your years of teaching, supporting, inspiring, and editing. It has been a privilege to learn from you.

Thank you to my family for always supporting and encouraging me. In particular, I would like to acknowledge my mother for her years of reading essays during my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Thank you for your unwavering support and for teaching me the joys of writing in all its forms.

Thank you also to my colleagues and friends who kept me sane throughout this thesis process. Your support, humour, and kindness are immeasurable. You know who you are.

Finally, and most importantly, there is no way to adequately express my thanks to my partner, Thomas. Your support and encouragement have meant the world to me, you always push me to be my best possible self and for that I am very grateful. Thank you for making me laugh and always keeping me caffeinated; I am so thankful for all that you do. Thank you again for giving me hope, in the darkest times.
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INTRODUCTION

“The meaning of a work of art as well is extracted only during the progressive process of its reception; it is not a mystic whole that can reveal itself totally on its first showing. The art of the past, just like history, does not interest merely because it was, but because “in a certain sense it still is” and invites one to new adaptations.”1

How were images in ancient Egypt understood? Did the viewer’s engage with art as we do today? What value was placed on art in ancient Egypt? Answers to questions such as these are never easy to find or discuss. They are often answered in assumptions, compared to neighbouring societies, or ignored. These questions, while tricky, are fundamental to figuring out how and why Egyptians used art and images. This thesis uses reception theory to investigate how images in ancient Egypt were understood by their contemporary audiences. Reception theory is a lesser known method—used predominately by art history, anthropology, and literature studies—which investigates how the audience, rather than the creators, received and understood the images, objects, or literature that they encountered. Unfortunately, in ancient Egyptian art history reception theory is little used, but it should be used more; it is a valuable tool for grasping how individuals interacted with, and understood, the art surrounding them.

Reception theory’s application in Egyptology only began being investigated within the last twenty years and there is a deficiency of research in this area. What has been published has focused on private tomb chapels but with very little discussed about public monuments such as temples. This thesis is intended to add to the conversation surrounding the usefulness of reception theory in ancient Egyptian art, by looking at both private tomb chapels as well as public state funded temples to investigate the larger context of reception in ancient Egypt. Almost all aspects of tomb chapel decoration, design, and reception responses which we have recorded can be found in their larger counterparts of state temple complexes. By first looking at the microcosm of private tomb chapels, then engaging with the larger state temples we can see reflections and instances which are the same. It is hoped that in including state temple complexes they will yield positive results of reception but more importantly it will show how reception theory can be applied to other areas and other art whether royal, graffiti, or private in nature.

My initial investigation for this thesis began when I stumbled upon a comment written by Dorothea Arnold; she wrote that, “[i]mages, according to Egyptian belief, were entities with lives of their own.” Until this point I had never considered the images in ancient Egypt as being understood as able to participate, communicate, or ‘live’. Of course there are rituals such as the Opening of the Mouth ceremonies, and a wealth of iconographic symbolism imbued in the art of ancient Egypt to do with awakening and serving the gods and king, but, that they were in fact viewed as their own beings was quite an interesting concept. What intrigued me most of all in Arnold’s statement was the generalised confidence in which it was stated, and the stream of questions it generated in light of said confidence: how do we know that the ancient Egyptians perceived the art around them in this way? Did they truly believe in this or is it a modern association which we have inflicted upon them? Was this the case for all representations, or was this belief more akin to certain types of artistic production? From this quote it took some time to figure out what area of study I was trying to investigate. Numerous scholars mention ideas of reception theory or, like Arnold above, write general statements about how art was perceived but with little evidence. In other words they do not engage directly with the art and reception theory instead they base their assertions in other areas such as archaeological material or linguistics to avoid discussing art as art. A huge issue which has undoubtedly held reception theory and numerous other approaches back from being studied is the prejudice many early, and some modern, scholars have against viewing art in Egyptology as a distinct area of study. Many scholars will state (several times) that Egyptians did not have a word for art in their vocabulary neither did they produce any recognizable treatise on art; thus, there must therefore be no art history. Hopefully, the reader will agree with me that this is simply unfounded and needs to be addressed. Edna Russmann beautifully argued,


the ultimate purpose of studying Egyptian art, just as with archaeology and philology, is to increase our understanding of the culture that produced it. Egyptian art history has a great deal to offer in this area, but this is also the area in which it is least developed, and, in many ways, least valued.\(^6\)

While focusing this thesis on reception of art in tombs and temples in ancient Egypt, there are sections which acknowledge this marginalization of art, simply due to the volume in which it was encountered.

So, what is reception theory and how can it help us to better understand and engage with ancient Egyptian art? Reception theory began in literature studies and was particularly popular during the 1960’s where it was championed in Germany by the University of Constance\(^7\) under such theorists as Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser.\(^8\) Constance University was established as “an alternative to the rigid, restrictive system of higher education.”\(^9\) It sought to reassess traditional ways of studying literature to reconsider how the value of a work was measured.\(^10\) Reception theory in its most basic form shifts the focus away from—in terms of literary studies—the author to the reader.\(^11\) This idea was picked up by art historians relatively quickly for as David Areford explains this “foregrounding of the audience—as opposed to the author, the text, and the text’s performance—comes closest to art history’s interest in reception as a fruitful area of investigation.”\(^12\) Art history, classics and anthropology have, and continue to, used reception theory while it remains still largely ignored in Egyptology. In shifting the investigation away from the act of creating—either defined by the artist or the commissioner—to the viewer we can gain a different perspective on how art functioned in ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians saw art on and inside temples, they visited tomb chapels during festal days, and encountered deities in procession on festival days such as the Opet festival. Though illiteracy was almost certainly the norm it is possible, and indeed most likely, that through interactions like I have described above there was an inherited visual literacy which enabled everyone to some extent to understand the basic message of the images. Reception theory is a valuable method of research as it allows us

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\(^10\) Ibid.
\(^12\) Areford, “Reception,” 73.
to encounter art from the perspective of a viewer and ask questions which may not have occurred to us when studying from traditional points of view.

While reception theory’s origins are quite removed from Egyptology, its use in evaluating art and images in ancient Egyptian society is proving fruitful in understanding the people who lived in this time. I do agree with Kathleen Lynch that in using a method begun in, and practiced by, literary studies and art history, we will have to adjust it to our discipline. However, this should not prevent us from attempting to use different types of theories and approaches to Egyptology as a whole. Reception theory in an ancient context is useful in challenging generalisations and seeking out how art was understood. We may never have absolutes in ancient history but reception theory does offer us a unique vantage point into the lives of the ancients who inhabited these times.

In order to investigate the topic of reception theory and its application to ancient Egyptian art history this thesis includes private tomb chapels and public temples to provide the most holistic discussion possible. The thesis is laid out in the following way: the first chapter is a literature review to introduce the reader to the research that has paved the way for understanding and applying reception theory in ancient Egyptian art studies. The main scholars who are discussed include Heinrich Schäfer, Dorothea Arnold, John Baines, Gay Robins, Melinda Hartwig, Valérie Angenot, and Alexis Den Doncker. The scholars in this chapter are separated into two camps; first, the scholars who published the foundation texts and, secondly, the new interpretations which recognize art history as an important part of Egyptology and use reception theory to comprehend how the ancients actually interacted and understood their art. As will be apparent in this chapter, there is a definite lack of scholarship present on reception theory and subsequently on its use in studying ancient Egyptian art. This chapter also confronts the marginalization of art in Egyptology, and offers the reader a solid grounding in the ongoing debate.

The second chapter focuses on private tomb chapels of the New Kingdom in particular. Being the site for many festival and ritual celebrations—as well as one of the key places where art was commissioned—these examples provide us with a dense instruction in how we may interpret the images as works of art, and how they were received and understood by their ancient audiences. Tomb chapels hold a wealth of information regarding

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reception theory; in particular their decoration, graffiti, and the inclusion of ‘Appeals to the Living’. The most information we have for private reception to images comes from these chapels and several examples from the New Kingdom have been chosen for discussion. The tombs offer the chance for us to study responses to art and provide an introduction to applying reception theory in Egyptian art history. Smaller, easier to comprehend, and with clear articulated reception, this chapter provides a great example of how the deceased conveyed their intentions through art and how the ancient viewers responded when they encountered them.

Chapter three, the final chapter, investigates reception theory against the monumental temple complexes, in particular the complexes of Karnak and Luxor. This chapter reconfigures the spaces which are often assumed that the public were restricted access and uses evidence such as public chapels, votive offering statues, and graffiti to argue for a freer level of access than perhaps we generally associate with public temples. Graffiti, in particular, from temple personnel offer us insight into how they perceived their roles, what they valued, and what visually moved them. The denigrated nature of temples means that in many instances we have much less evidence than I believe there once would have been. However, the similarities between the reception we see in private tomb chapels and temples suggest that there existed a shared inherited visual literacy which no doubt spawned from influence from the temple, royal tomb chapels, processions, and individual tomb chapels as well. In investigating both private tomb chapels and public temples it is hoped it will provide a comprehensive understanding of how images were received and interpreted by the ancient Egyptians; both in private and public settings.

Finally, this thesis finishes with some concluding remarks about the value of reception theory in ancient Egyptian art history, and where the study should go next. It is dearly hoped that this thesis will join alongside other scholars who are calling for both Egyptian art history to be recognized as a worthwhile discipline, and the use of more theories and methods from other disciplines to try and answer some of these engaging and exceptionally frustrating questions and concepts.
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Egyptology has long developed a very peculiar vision of Ancient Egyptian art, a vision that tends to ‘dematerialize’ the image, to deprive the latter of its materiality and (re)present it as some sort of hieroglyphic composition.”14

The topic of reception in ancient Egyptian art has only really started to be investigated and accepted as a research area in the past two decades. The reason, two-fold: first, many Egyptologists didn’t see the art produced in ancient Egypt as worth its own field of study preferring to lump images in with linguistic and archaeological surveys; second, the interest in how images were received and the social, human, aspect of them was deemed lesser than other pursuits. Thankfully, the tide has turned, allowing ancient Egyptian art history to develop as its own distinct discipline. Alongside this, the notion of reception in the ancient world has begun to produce interesting results. Reception of images is a topic which numerous scholars have mentioned or hinted at but which very few have dedicated a substantial amount of research towards. Thus, the literature under review here represents the main works which have influenced this particular area of study but they do not represent every opinion or idea on the subject. The first section of scholarship represents earlier publications and texts, termed foundation texts, which helped develop the idea of reception in ancient Egyptian art. The second group is formed from new scholarship and represents the new interpretations in this area and developments furthering the study of reception in ancient Egyptian art history.

To begin, we cannot proceed without first discussing one of the founding fathers of ancient Egyptian art history, Heinrich Schäfer. While we find some discussions in Schäfer’s work about the ancient perception to images, his keen awareness of the dangers which awaited the scholars who believed that they could unequivocally understand the ancient mind-set and exact responses to images prevented him from pursuing the subject. Nevertheless, Schäfer is one of the only early scholars who, while acknowledging the dangers lurking in the study of image reception, acknowledged some benefit from it. He saw that, in studying this area there is much to be gained from bringing our individual perspectives to ancient Egyptian works of art, as the disagreements can only spur on more understanding. Inevitably, it allows us to “draw an ever richer, more living, and more

accurate picture of the whole.”¹⁵ Schäfer, without realising it, laid the preliminary groundwork for this area of study because he discussed the art in terms of the audience who may have viewed them. He also began the conversation—which continues today—about the problems with modern scholarship and placing our contemporary world-views on ancient art.

Schäfer insisted that the art which the ancient Egyptians produced was to them, living. He insisted upon this, evidencing his claims with discussing the power of art and why the images of gods and men were venerated or attacked.¹⁶ However, Schäfer made it very clear that while the art was seen as a living entity to the ancient Egyptians, nothing was ever made for art’s sake. He disagreed with the notion that art was available to be consumed for pleasure only; rather, the images were used as a vehicle for religious or magical means and were functional in their creation.¹⁷ This point will be challenged by other scholars in this chapter who argue that for all of its function, art is innately aesthetic. As such the ancient Egyptians who viewed, commissioned, and created these works of art did have an aesthetic taste and appreciation for art.

Though an older source, Schäfer’s work is still one of the best in terms of the breadth of its coverage and the important ideas which germinated in it. It is also useful to consult his work in terms of mapping the progress of ideas and research in the field of reception. There has been a struggle in the work of recent scholars to push the field of art history in Egyptology to a point where it is recognized as an area in its own right. Schäfer’s work is also important because it showcases the common fear of numerous scholars in entering into the study of image reception. This is that we attribute too much to what has for so long been believed to be primarily a functional medium rather than an aesthetic one.

Another seminal scholar Dorothea Arnold has written extensively on the art of ancient Egypt and she is a firm believer that images in ancient Egypt were perceived by ancient audiences as living entities with their own unique lives.¹⁸ While Arnold has written extensively on art, she has only ever briefly discussed how images may have been understood by ancient Egyptians. Generally, discussion on the subject is found in her introduction to different subjects, or individual pieces, on which she is concentrating. Her

¹⁷ Ibid., 38.
lack of direct discussion around the topic itself can be understood either that the topic
doesn’t bear discussion or that it is an indisputable element of ancient Egyptian art, which
needs little discussion. Either way we interpret her silence it is important that we
acknowledge it as a foundation for engaging with reception theory; as scholars have been
tothing with the idea of reception theory if not explicitly naming it for years. However, as
much of the material published is for museum collections or exhibitions it is also
plausible that her intent was focused on the modern viewer and their understanding of the
art. So there may be little room for discussing such ideas as the reception of the ancient
viewers as well.

As it is Arnold has written three sources which are particularly useful for the discussion
of perception and reception in ancient Egyptian art. The first is An Ancient Egyptian
Bestiary written for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1995. The text is focused on the
depiction of animals and how the rendering of them in great detail, as close to nature as
possible, was incredibly important to the ethos of the ancient Egyptian painter and patron.
We are introduced to Arnold’s understanding that ancient Egyptian images are “entities
with lives of their own” in her introduction. She briefly touches on their function when
she states that the “understanding of images is closely related to magic.” The same idea
is seen again in another Metropolitan Museum publication, for an exhibition on Old
Kingdom art. Arnold discusses how the positive views of life so often depicted in
tombs—that is the daily life scenes which adorn Old through to New Kingdom tombs—
were used in these contexts to “replicate and eternalize life, in a sense to build a duplicate
world of stone that was able to last forever.” This magic seemingly allowed works of art
to become alive in order that they might share in the offerings of the visitors to the tomb
chapels. It also seemed to allow for interaction between the deceased and the living
visitors. The power of the magic is important to building any credible understanding of
how ancient Egyptians viewed art and its use in their society.

20 Ibid.
21 Dorothea Arnold, When the Pyramids Were Built: Egyptian Art of the Old Kingdom (New York: The
22 John Baines disagrees with Arnold on this point. Instead he sees the ancient Egyptians as using images as
a tool for certain purposes (i.e. the art is functional so the viewer responds to it but doesn’t necessarily see it
as alive). This utilitarian point of view seems rather contradictory, for in claiming art was only for ritualistic
purposes and had no life-force excludes the tomb and temple art which were magically imbued to receive
offerings and bridge the communication between the living and the dead. Perhaps, there were some ancient
Egyptians who did not explicitly believe in the power of images having their own life force; however, the
wealth of artistic production, the use of strategically placed tomb graffiti from the New Kingdom period,
In her essay “Ancient Egyptian Art: Image and Response,” Arnold fully discusses both the pre-existing ideas surrounding images and their reception in ancient Egypt. This essay is fundamental to understanding her point of view as well as her belief that images were viewed as living entities. Arnold states that images were the way in which the Egyptians expressed their world view, as the Egyptian artist “approached ‘reality’ on a piece-by-piece basis.” Arnold emphasises in her essay the importance of setting, especially in tombs, where the images were part of the existential reality which came into existence in the tomb setting in both three- and two-dimensional art. It is due to this setting, Arnold stresses, that the art being produced for these areas is much more focused on cementing the conventional and conceptual aspects of the art first. It intends to ensure that the deceased is cared for should early death occur, thus the aesthetic is seen to be second to the formation of the necessary forms. This concept leans into the idea that the value of the image is in the basic depiction of the necessary forms. These were believed to be enough to grant their use by the *Ka* of the deceased, to enable the deceased to receive offerings from the living. Here we can also see parallels in the use of ivory wands (or ivory birthing tusks) which are often decorated with carved or incised motifs of protective deities. They were found in the grave goods, and are often thought to have been used to gesture or draw protective circles, or emblems, around the person(s) seeking protection. Thus, it is not unusual for a drawn outline or basic forms to be used successfully and, in the reception of the ancient Egyptian, to function. Arnold does not delve into any ideas of the reception of these images. Instead she offers more a possibility of their purpose. Arnold speaks from more of a visual point of view than a purely social or historical one. While this work presents some ideas on how we might assume the ancient Egyptian viewer interacted and understood art, her discussion is definitely lacking any conviction in terms of hard evidence aside from a visual analysis of works in tomb settings. There is undoubted value in this approach; however it lacks the evidence of other scholars simply because Arnold

and even the creation of items like ivory birthing tusks (ivory wands) for domestic use show that while we cannot definitively say that the ancients believed the images were alive, they did believe in their talisman effects. Hence, it seems unwise to explicitly state they were not alive, for that in itself is a tricky concept to pin down. See John Baines, “On the Status and Purposes of Ancient Egyptian Art,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4: 1 (1994): 76.

assumes there is no need to discuss or further justify the idea of how images were received.

Another foundation scholar who is hugely influential in the study of ancient Egyptian art history is John Baines. Having written extensively on ancient Egyptian art, it is his article published in 1994, “On the Status and Purpose of Ancient Egyptian Art,” which is most valuable to our study of reception in ancient Egyptian art. The text focuses on the social significance of art and its display and Baines passionately defends art history as its own discipline within Egyptology, like Schäfer did. He also stresses the importance of not projecting modern ideals onto ancient images.

In line with this research, Baines brings up an interesting, and contentious, point. He discusses whether or not the ancient Egyptians believed that the images and statues which they viewed were “real,” or, if they rather acted as signifiers of the need to complete some type of ritual at the site the art is found. Baines adheres to the idea that the relationship between art and society, which is near impossible to differentiate in ancient Egypt, reflects not a lack of understanding of art in the ancient culture but rather the importance of art and the multifaceted role which it played in ancient Egypt. The sheer number of monuments which are used for artistic display throughout ancient Egyptian history clearly rebuke any assumption of art’s insignificance to the ancient Egyptians. So, while he acknowledges the importance of art to ancient Egyptians and their society, Baines questions the idea of their being perceived as entities which are alive rather than images of reverence and signifiers of places of ritual.

In *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, Baines discusses in great depth the work of Schäfer and the strengths and weaknesses of his approach to Egyptian art. One of the main factors which Baines feels is lacking from Schäfer’s book is the use of social factors which are undoubtedly important in our attempts to understand ancient Egyptian art and the social responses to the works. In his chapter on “Communication and Display” Baines discusses the close relationship between writing and images and the issues surrounding them both, such as, the lack of access and limited audience who could understand and engage with the works of art which were nearly always joined together

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with hieroglyphs. Baines disagrees with the newer scholarship possibly because of the
time he was publishing these works originally (i.e. this chapter was an article published in
1989) but he is convinced that there was no way for any but the very elite to access or
understand these works. Baines while critical of some aspects of Schäfer’s approach to
art, is of a similar mind-set when it comes to discussing reception of ancient art and on
the ways art was utilised. However, newer scholarship does challengesome of Baines
beliefs and assumptions of how art was consumed in ancient Egypt.

Another key figure—and the last of the foundation group of literature—Gay Robins, has
also investigated the idea of how the ancient audience viewed and understood their art.
Similarly to Arnold, Robins sees an important part of art being the ability to create images
which were functional for both the gods and the dead in order to provide for them places
to embody, and endure, for eternity. Robins also defends ancient Egyptian art against
comparisons to other cultures and dismissive attitudes towards it as its own discipline. As
she asserts, “these supposed shortcomings had nothing to do with a lack of skill or
imagination on the part of the Egyptian artists, and everything to do with the purposes for
which they were producing their art.” She mentions this idea of the original social fabric
and the importance of ensuring that the art can be understood from the society which it
was created.

Resembling Schäfer and Baines, Robins emphasises the importance of monitoring
modern bias when interpreting ancient Egyptian art. She pushes for a greater
understanding of the society in which images were created, emphasizing the intentions of
the artists and patrons and the potential reception of the images by the viewer, in light of
these forces. In discussing the viewer(s) of such images, Robins, like Baines, believes that
the understanding, indeed even viewing, or access, of art was heavily restricted. Whether
in temples or tombs, the art was made for specific reasons and audiences as is evidenced
in wealth and literacy rates; thus, it would fit that most visitors to these images would
have come from the elite spheres. Interestingly, this well-established view is now being
challenged in many scholarly works, as will be seen at the end of the chapter.

30 Robins, The Art of Ancient Egypt, 19.
32 Robins, “Art,” 357.
Similarly to Arnold, Robins doesn’t get too heavily involved in the discussion about the reception of images either. She limits herself to a few paragraphs regarding the nature of art and its possible intentions. Again, this could be due to the audience which her books are targeted towards or, like Arnold, Robins may also implicitly accept that images were perceived as living entities and therefore sees no need to investigate or question that assertion.

Moving from foundation literature to newer interpretations, one of the main scholars who discusses the idea of reception of images in ancient Egypt is Melinda Hartwig. Hartwig has written extensively on these ideas and has a wealth of field research which assists in our understanding of, and approach to, this topic. One of the best resources is her book *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes 1419-1327 BCE*. Her book examines the role of iconography in a ritual context and the existential reality (as we have already encountered with Arnold) which developed in the tomb to allow the deceased to negotiate his or her regeneration and presentation. In looking at the images from the tombs Hartwig also seeks to show how it mirrors society as a whole. She discusses how the approach she has taken could (and probably should) be implemented as we re-evaluate art and its value to the ancient Egyptians.

From her detailed work in Theban tombs, Hartwig came to the opinion that the use of iconography in religious/ritual contexts “created an existential reality within the tomb chapel that negotiated the deceased’s self-presentation and regeneration across space and time, and in so doing, encoded larger ideological and religious movements that permeated the society.”

Hartwig’s investigation is important especially as she records details regarding the inscriptions in the material evidence left by ancient visitors in the form of graffiti. Based on these visitor graffiti, Hartwig argues that, “perceived by a wide range of chapel viewers, this imagery had the power to impact the visitor who left testimonies about their appreciation of the imagery and prayers for the benefit of those interred in the tomb’s subterranean chambers.” Hartwig emphasises the importance of the *Ka* and magic being activated in these images as well, which is revealed through the tomb graffiti. Graffiti is vital to our understanding of how the ancient audience interpreted and

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34 Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity*, 3.
accessed these images and it has become an essential source for reception studies and many scholars now use the graffiti to justify and bolster their inferences.

Hartwig’s book also touches on the debates around reception theory and its application to ancient Egyptian art. Hartwig acknowledges the integral work of Maya Müller whose work on a collection of tomb graffiti have shown that “the ancient Egyptians had an aesthetic sense and associated their art works with quality and beauty.”35 This is a significant point, for as already encountered above with Baines and Schäfer, an appreciation of aesthetic is viewed as improbable and secondary to the functional role art, in their opinion, held in ancient Egypt. Similarly, Hartwig’s discussion of the so-called ‘language of images’ and the changing understanding of who the ancient audience could have been, or was, and their level of visual literacy is another point which has been contested in earlier writing on the subject. Many scholars are now changing the idea of reception to be broader than simply illiteracy or understanding and instead opting to view the social fabric as much more dynamic and open to different levels of understanding in both literacy and visual comprehension.

Another important resource is *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art*. Within this collection of essays on ancient Egyptian art, there are several scholars who grapple with the concept of reception in art. Valérie Angenot discusses both the pre-existing approaches to interpreting ancient Egyptian art and the importance of challenging them in modern interpretations. Through a convincing discussion of the two prominent techniques of semiotics and hermeneutics, which are used to try and engage with audience reception, she dismisses the use of hermeneutics as any credible way to give agency to the original creators of the images or as an aid to better understanding the way their work was understood. Angenot argues that, sometimes in hermeneutic interpretations the original creator’s intention for the work is not considered necessarily important. Thus “in this case, no matter what Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote Hamlet, what would count is how the play speaks and appeals to us today.”36 Clearly, this is no longer an acceptable outcome. Very few English teachers would agree with that conclusion, and neither should ancient art historians. While reception theory is concerned with the viewer rather than the creator(s) it does not mitigate the importance of their intentions like hermeneutics.

35 Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity*, 44.
However, Angenot’s discussion about semiotics is convincing as a useful way to interpret the ancient images. Like the ‘language of images’ discussed above, the use of semiotics allows the modern viewer to interpret much more closely to what the ancient Egyptian viewer may have felt or comprehended.

In the same collection, another excellent resource is “Reception and Perception” by Alexandra Verbovsek. In her chapter Verbovsek discusses how images were received and perceived by ancient audiences through looking at the elements which make up the images. This includes space, composition, colours, perspective, aesthetics and aesthetics of perception, neuroaesthetics and conditions. By approaching the ideas of perception and reception in a scientific and systematic way it helps to mitigate the scholar from projecting their personal and world-views. Verbovsek’s work is very scientific with a clear focus of trying to “determine which parameters influence its reception and perception.” While dense and more scientifically minded, Verbovsek’s work is helpful in terms of both approach and findings. By working through an image from the setting to the background and into the foreground her approach offers a holistic interpretation. Like semiotics, Verbovsek’s work offers the chance to interpret the layers of the images and their potential meanings and interpretations. This approach also allows the modern scholar to engage with the art in a way more akin to the ancients. We interpret the works in pieces and place each part in its context as it would have encountered the ancient audience which we are trying to understand.

One of the newest, and consequently most helpful, resources to appear in 2010 is the book Art and Society: Ancient and Modern Contexts of Egyptian Art from the international conference held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. The volume has important works from speakers at the conference who are key scholars in art and society of ancient Egypt. Maya Müller wrote an intriguing paper on the reception of art in ancient Egypt and how it differs from modern preconceptions. Müller classified the reception in terms of psychological and then technical classifications, first in modern times and then using the same or slightly changed elements in the ancient responses. Under the broad psychological class she uses both an aesthetical and emotional response towards art, divided into these two time periods. For modern viewers Müller uses an intellectual-

analytical approach; whereas for ancient viewers she adds in two different classifications of intellectual-magical and intellectual-ideological. 38

Under her technical classification Müller has only two categories for modern viewers, bellettistic writings and scientific writings, while she has found five types of technical classification by the ancient Egyptians. They are creating a secondary work in the form of a poetical text, creating a depiction of a picture, writing a ritualistic prescription for the making of a picture, re-using important halls of old tombs with important paintings, re-use of old royal statues in new archaeological contexts, and finally what Müller has referred to as ‘personal art experiences’ in texts such as the visitor graffiti of the New Kingdom. 39 These classifications prove useful when trying to engage with the art and grapple with our attempts to understand how the ancient Egyptians understood and received the art around them.

In her concluding remarks Müller reminds the reader that though we can try to understand the intellectual mind-set, “there is a gap between ancient and modern times due to the fact that ancient dealings with art were active, while the modern ones are re-active.” 40 Müller’s work is incredibly important for several reasons. Firstly, that once again she argues that in order to understand ancient Egyptian images we cannot expect to see and experience the works in the same manner as our ancient counterparts. Secondly, that though they aren’t necessarily labelled as such, discourses on art did exist, just not as we have come to expect them; the re-use of images, texts about visual appearances of works and especially the tomb graffiti all assist in our understanding of how individuals valued, appreciated and received the images they saw. This point is important in the face of scholars who claim that there is no artistic treatise from ancient Egypt.

Another important paper from the conference is by Alexis Den Doncker on reception of images by the ancient Egyptians through the study of New Kingdom Theban tomb graffiti. Through examining examples of tomb graffiti Doncker’s paper disagrees with the notion (once again) that the access to images was limited, instead arguing that there were many viewers but all with different levels of understanding. Doncker aligns himself with Hartwig in attempting to re-establish the agency of the everyday Egyptian who may have visited the tombs (or the female relatives who would visit). These visitors may not have

40 Ibid., 20.
been literate enough to understand what was depicted in depth; but, most likely, would have collective experience and an inherited visual literacy so they knew the basics of what was depicted. Doncker sees this idea of selective audience as a purely scholarly creation for as he states, “[i]n a way, this ‘whole meaning’ comes from the interpretation that modern scholars have built up with their own words and abilities of conceptualisation. Hence, it is irrelevant to attribute our hyper-intellectual vision of Theban tombs symbolic systems to all the people who visited the tomb-chapels.”

Doncker also stresses how important the format of the tombs was both in terms of their layout, and intent towards the living in order to lure them in to take part in the funerary cult. This consideration is important for gaining an understanding of the potential visitors to these sites and who would have interacted with these tombs and their art.

Doncker in his discussion of the graffiti mentions a very important point that the graffiti itself was strategically placed in order to, it seems, benefit from the images’ magical properties and, importantly, to avoid ruining the image. As he found, the authors who signed the images,

indirectly responded to chosen scenes, mainly located on the front walls of the tomb-chapels. By writing their names on particular images at significant places, they intended to reuse the magical benefits of the representations, which means they knew about and took into account their symbolic value.

Graffiti in tombs is increasingly important as a way in which to account for the reception of images by the ancient Egyptians in these spaces. Like almost every scholar discussed in this chapter, Doncker too stresses the importance of avoiding personal projections, urging the focus to remain on how the ancient Egyptian would have experienced their art rather than modern viewpoints.

Doncker explores this issue of projection and image reception in another essay he wrote. As he states,

En pénétrant dans une chapelle de la nécropole thébaine, l’égyptologue moderne se trouve désormais armé jusqu’aux dents : de la paroi au motif, chaque élément du décor a, d’un point de vue théorique, sa signification symbolique. Bien entendu, la syntaxe utilisée par les concepteurs des tombes dans leurs

42 Doncker, “Theban Tomb Graffiti during the New Kingdom,” 23.
43 Ibid., 25.
compositions n’en est pas moins complexe. Mais elle reste inévitablement le fruit de notre propre langage et de notre capacité de conceptualisation. Elle présume en outre une conception hyper-intellectuelle de l’image égyptienne, que l’on ne saurait attribuer qu’à une maigre frange de la société pharaonique, étant donné que l’on a pu estimer le nombre de lettrés à environ 1 % de la population à cette époque. De telles avancées nous conduisent donc immanquablement à la question suivante : comment les Égyptiens comprenaient-ils ces images? Ou, plus précisément, pour revenir à l’Appel aux vivants de Iamounedjeh : comment les visiteurs du Nouvel Empire réagissaient-ils face aux décors des tombes de leurs contemporains? Partant de cette interrogation, confronter notre compréhension à celle des Anciens apparaît aujourd’hui comme une nécessité épistémologique.44

Indeed, how do we interpret these elements so clearly designed to engage with the living, who are perceived by scholars to have little ability to understand them? While these and other questions will be tackled in the forthcoming chapters, it is important to start questioning the assumed understandings and knowledge of the ancient Egyptian viewer as told to us by scholars. Doncker’s work, alongside Hartwig and Müller, allow us to re-evaluate the ancient perspective on art and its impact on the ancient Egyptian viewer.

In his discussion of the inscriptions of the scribe Amenemhat left in the tomb of Antefoqer, Doncker deals with the useful and hindering aspects of using visitor graffiti to study the reception of images in ancient Egypt. While acknowledging the flaws such a study has, such as replication and stock phrases, Doncker pushes the idea of graffiti as the main means of studying the reception of images as he ends his chapter confidently stating,

Les formes de réactions de visiteurs connaissent, d’autant plus, un large éventail de variantes. Dans l’état actuel des recherches, des graffiti —écrits ou figurés — aux copies, on observe également, à l’égard des images, des phénomènes de destructions, modifications, réutilisations et restaurations. Ces réactions diverses, à condition d’être traquées et interprétées selon les méthodes combinées de la philologie, de l’histoire de l’art et de l’archéologie, conservent en effet en puissance les clés qui permettront finalement de pénétrer l’esprit des hommes qui arpentaient ce monde de signes.45

Thus, in conclusion apart from Baines and Schäfer we can clearly see the majority of scholars all agree that reception of images is an important topic and, in more recent

45 Doncker, “Prélude à une étude de la réception de l’image égyptienne par les anciens Égyptiens,” 86.
scholarship, more people had access to these works of art than previously allowed for or considered. The idea of the images being alive or being perceived as such does appear to have some solid scholarly backing and again reinforces the mind-set of the Egyptians and what they experienced. We can never know for sure what the ancient Egyptians felt when they saw these works of art, whether or not they would’ve understood them, appreciated them, or actively engaged with them.

The only common thread that stretched from foundation literature through to new scholarship is that of the innate fear of projection. When discussions about how the ancient Egyptians received images begin, every scholar is quick to remind the reader of the problems which occur when we try to reveal personal response to art. While this is an issue, it seems rather careless to avoid the discussion altogether. Understanding how ancient audiences used and appreciated their art allows for a comprehensive understanding of the ancient Egyptians as a people and a society which in turn provides modern scholarship more authenticity in asserting claims upon them.

While every scholar discussed here has developed the study of image reception in ancient Egypt, there is still a long way until it can be viewed as a distinct area of study under the precarious umbrella of ancient Egyptian art history. Studies on Theban tombs and their meanings abound. This thesis, however, seeks to look at art on two fronts by using what we have learnt from tomb studies to apply similar research and thinking to temples, so that we may address the two main ways in which ancient Egyptians viewed art and the differences in reception from private tombs to large scale public works. It is hoped that in dedicating a substantial and focused research work it will assist in furthering image reception as a necessary topic in ancient Egyptian art history, and increase awareness of the people who created, worshiped, and lived with these images in a much more personal way.
CHAPTER TWO: RECEPTION IN TOMB CHAPELS

“How much of the meaning of any piece of ancient Egyptian art is read will depend on the knowledge of the viewer.”

The tombs of the ancient Egyptians are universally acknowledged as artistic masterpieces filled with statues, ornate wall paintings and sarcophagi. Yet, what is lacking from our discussions of the tombs is how these spaces were used and, more importantly, how the ancient audience—the family, friends, and later visitors—understood the art surrounding them and their interaction with it. This chapter is focused on answering these questions to gain a better understanding of the impact art had in ancient Egyptian society as a whole through a study of its reception by ancient viewers. The examples used for this section are from the Theban tombs of: Antefoker and Senet (TT60) the earliest tomb from Dynasty 12, Nakht the Astronomer of Amun (TT52), and Nakht the bearer of floral offerings to Amun (TT161), the latter two being from Dynasty 18. These tombs are examples of ancient viewer reception. They house direct responses to the art through graffiti, depict quintessential Theban elements in tomb construction, and house texts—such as ‘Appeals to the Living’ and tomb stelae—which exhibit the beliefs, wishes, and intent of the deceased.

The art found adorning the walls of the tombs and tomb chapels had, like all ancient Egyptian art, a primary function for the deceased resting within the tomb structure. Images provided for, and safeguarded the transition of the deceased to the afterlife. They also offered insurance for the deceased’s ka enabling it to survive should the tomb cult collapse. As Kent Weeks puts it, “whatever was carved on their walls, all were intended for the same two purposes: to provide a safe haven for the body of the deceased and his soul, and to supply for him the necessities of this life during the next.” Yet, a third purpose also existed. The third purpose of the tomb’s function, in which art played a huge part, was creating a space that encouraged and allowed the deceased to converse with the living. While Weeks perhaps classifies this under the supply of necessities, it is a function which needs to be discussed on its own because of its effect not only on the dead

47 References (TT) relate to the numbers given to them as part of the Theban Tomb Necropolis Numbering Project unless stated otherwise.
but also on the living. Through ‘Appeals to the Living’ and tomb inscriptions, the tomb chapels were designed to continue the deceased’s social ties and draw in the living to verbally bring about the deceased’s protection, sustenance and rebirth. In the tomb chapel, the deceased was provided for and enabled to continue conversing with the living world. To do this, the text and art worked together to ensure the continuation of the deceased’s cult for eternity but, most importantly, it also encouraged communication between the living and the dead.  

The tomb functioned as a socially active bridging space. It connected the dead with the living and was where family and visitors could leave offerings, commemorate the deceased’s life, and enjoy festivals. All the while the deceased mingled with them, enjoying the attentions of their guests through the art. Tomb chapels were, like most monuments in ancient Egypt, decorated with customary scenes. The scene types can be seen constantly repeated in Theban tomb chapels as it is believed that visits to these tombs often led artists to copy scenes they admired. The typical tomb layout in the Theban necropolis is a T-shape, with a court leading into the transverse main hall where secular scenes were depicted on the walls and also where gatherings on festal days took place. Leading off the main hall would be a long, narrow passageway ending in the shrine of the deceased above the burial shaft and chamber. Generally, the tomb scenes were laid out so that the funerary scenes were found closer to the burial chamber, towards the back of the chapel, whereas those near the entrance depicted more worldly, secular scenes. The scenes moved both ritually and cyclically around the room from “east to west, north to south, and heaven to underworld.” This layout created a space which merged both the worlds of the dead and the living, and also reflected the ka’s journey within the tomb. The ka journeys from death to life as it leaves and vice versa as it re-enters its tomb. Visitors played an important role in the maintaining of this cosmic cycle by participating in the deceased’s funerary cult which, for the living, reinforced the daily life cycle and was part of the incentive for them to partake. 

52 de Garis Davies, The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes, 30-31.
53 Ibid., 21.
55 Ibid.
The purpose for the images in the tomb chapel is two-fold. Firstly, the secular scenes were where the *ka* was sustained, as it embodied the images and accepted offerings left by visitors. Secondly, the images acted as insurance for the deceased that in the event their funerary cult dissolved—through the end of a family lineage or their tomb falling into ruin—the *ka* could still sustain itself by inhabiting the eternal images on the walls and in the consecrated words on the images and on the tomb stela. They worked in conjunction with the inscribed texts to reinforce the potency of each other and both were vital to the sustainment of the tomb owner.

The important element which necessitated not only the art and custom of the tomb, but indeed the tomb itself, was the *ka*. The *ka* was from birth part of the living being which was freed only upon death. Though death freed it, the *ka* was still considered by the ancient Egyptians as part of the deceased as a sort of double. Hence, because of this close relationship with the person, the *ka* was still a vital part of the deceased’s being and it required the sustenance of offerings to survive. Images and statues within the tomb chapel were used as receptacles which the *ka* could visit in order to commune with the living. As Emily Stewart notes these artworks functioned to, “[encourage] the *Ka* to recognise the person and take up residence in these statues, becoming through them, the deceased’s eyes and ears when visits were paid to the tomb.” A scene which is often depicted, such as the north wall scene from Nakht (TT52) (Figure 1), is the visiting of priests to the deceased in order to perform the magical rite of the ‘Opening of the Mouth’ ceremony. Taken from temple practice this occurrence is often seen in the Theban tomb decorative schema to ensure the images which the *ka* embodied were able to facilitate them, “to restore the deceased’s faculties, so that [their] *ka* could see, hear, smell, breathe and eat.” This, in conjunction with other stock scenes—such as fishing and fowling scenes, offering scenes, and the so-called ‘daily life’ scenes—provide ample depictions of the secular works which were necessary to ensure the deceased was able to continue ‘living’ and kept them close to the living. These ‘stock’ scenes which developed from Dynasty Four served numerous purposes and have several layers of meaning. These

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layers of meaning, according to Valérie Angenot, can be separated into two different functions; the literal (trophic) and the symbolic (apotropaic). For instance, harvesting and fishing and fowling scenes both provide sustenance for the deceased on a literal level. However, they also function symbolically as representations of the containment of unruly forces and the capture and destruction of enemies, an example being in Nakht’s tomb (TT52) (Figure 2&3). Every image within the tomb chapel had a literal and symbolic function. While the literal meanings ensured the deceased was cared for and sustained through harvests, hunts, banquets, and workshops, symbolically the same scenes served as eternal assurances of power, and order over chaos (Figure 4&5).

However, would the visitors to these Theban tombs have been able to understand the literal messages these images were conveying, let alone the complex symbolic ones? What sort of impact could these images have had on their ancient viewers? In order to try and answer these pressing questions we must discuss reception theory and seek answers in analysing evidence from the tombs themselves. Though it has long been understood that literacy in ancient Egypt was very limited, it is important to acknowledge that the ancient Egyptians who commissioned these tombs created them with visitors in mind. Visitors presented ideal opportunities to gain a captive audience to engage with. Thus, they designed the spaces to entice and cater for visitors and provide banquet space for their family during festivals. But what about the issue of literacy? It is possible that most visitors to the tombs were élites who were, by virtue of their class, able to read and participate in the tomb cult. However, undoubtedly there would have been non-élites and non-literate visitors as well, such as children and women, especially on feast days. This large cross-section of potential visitors must have held some impact over the tomb owner who surely wished to engage with as many people as possible. This concern is evident in the ‘Appeals to the Living.’ Most seek anyone who could answer their calls or at least provide some sort of ceremony for the deceased. Thus, it seems pertinent to dispense with the entrenched belief that only the élite could understand such images and texts or were the only audience. I believe that there are two types of literacy which exist in any

64 Baines estimates no more than one per cent. Refer to: John Baines, “Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society,” Man, New Series 18, 3 (1983): 584.
65 Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge in Egyptian Tomb Painting,” 22.
culture/civilization: the written and the visual. In ancient Egypt it is likely that though many viewers could not read the text which accompanied the images, they would have been able to understand the both the basic literal meanings as well as the symbolic undertones within the tomb scenes.

We cannot know the extent to which the average Egyptian understood, from social interaction or oral storytelling, about the scenes depicted in these tombs. But, there must have been a general knowledge, an inherited visual literacy, from which visitors to the tomb chapels could pull from. For instance similar ideas can be found in the practice of magic and medicine, where symbols were often drawn on the ground, amulets, or on papyrus. Therefore, unless the average Egyptian existed without using any of their natural faculties, they would undoubtedly have gained some contextual and social understanding of such scenes or, at the very least, some elements in them. I am joined in this belief by Melinda Hartwig who argues that,

> the language of images was available to all, even to the illiterate, particularly within the context of the tomb chapel. While we can assume many of these chapel visitors were literate members of the ruling élite, we can also speculate that many visitors were also semi-or non-literate, particularly female members of the tomb owner’s family or children.\(^{66}\)

The illiterate then, just like their literate counterparts, would have had to draw on their personal collective knowledge formed from other encounters with art. Thus some sort of inherited or socially attained visual literacy must have existed; however, different sections of society, having had different encounters or more instruction, would have received different layers of understanding from art.\(^{67}\) As art and images worked in tandem in ancient Egypt, though the number of literate people was undoubtedly very slim it does not mean that illiterate visitors or passers-by could not understand visually at least what was depicted on the walls of the tombs or what was expected of them. Betsy Bryan argues this further stating that, “even the illiterate, then, if they resided near cult centers, must have known some royal and divine iconography, and must also have been familiar with a number of hieroglyphic signifiers (...).”\(^{68}\) It is this familiarity which enabled the Egyptians to understand and respond to images within tomb chapels.

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\(^{66}\) Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes*, 47.

\(^{67}\) Ibid.

Reception theory, a relatively new theoretical model to be used in Egyptology, is an effective tool for engaging with these difficult questions around audience and interpretation. Its value lies in its ability to tell us how art was understood by ancient Egyptians. Reception theory is generally defined as an investigation of the reaction or response to a work of art or literature, often showing an interest in the effect of a work and the history of the effect.\(^6\) In studying tomb images through the lens of reception theory, we gain a much more cohesive understanding of the works than if we simply look at them on a piece-by-piece basis. In situ these works of art were fundamentally alive and were ceremonially treated as such by the visiting ancient Egyptians. We can study how these images were intended to be received by their ancient audiences through texts such as: tomb stelae, texts inscribed on tomb scenes, and ‘Appeals to the Living.’ All of these texts depict the deceased’s intent and desire to communicate directly with the living as they seek assistance in continuing their necessary funeral needs and ensuring their wellbeing. It is also the examples of tomb graffiti and copying which reveal how these images were received by the viewer, their responses to the art, and the deceased’s intentions and wishes. For example the Appeal to the Living of Imunedjeh (TT84):

Oh every living one […] who shall enter my tomb to see what I have done on earth for the great god, praise [Amon] […], forget death and remember life, love the king of your time, may you be rejuvenated by [life, when you say an offering] (...) for the ka of […] Iamunedjeh, justified (...).\(^7\)

This example reveals how vital visitor attention was for the tomb owner, though given what we know of literacy rates it is unlikely it was understood by everyone passing by.\(^8\) This appeal shows that Imunedjeh needs visitors, living people to ensure his afterlife would not be compromised otherwise he, and others like him, would be forced to rely solely on images and texts to sustain themselves in the next life. In a typical funerary style, Imunedjeh offers something to the visitor who looks at his tomb and presents an offering for him. This proposed inducement reflects the reciprocal benefits which these interactions provided for both the deceased and the living alike.\(^9\)

\(^6\) Hartwig, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes*, 43.
\(^8\) den Doncker, “Theban Tomb Graffiti During the New Kingdom,” 23.
What makes ‘Appeals to the Living’ so interesting to our study of reception theory is that the tomb chapel facilitated communication between the living and the dead. As such active spaces we can engage more directly with the reception occurring through the medium of art which, like the texts accompanying it, enabled these interactions to take place. It is likely there existed in these spaces strong social conventions which regardless of one’s ability to read or dissect art would have been followed. We can never know for certain but it appears likely that when one ventured to these tombs, either by design or accident, that they understood the basic needs of the deceased and could make out enough of what the interior images requested of the visitor to partake in their tomb cult. Perhaps, by merely engaging with the scenes through looking, as Imunedjeh appealed, this was enough to magically sustain the deceased. We should assume that ‘Appeals to the Living’ did not necessarily need a literate participant to be functional. According to Martin Bommas ‘Appeals to the Living’ were more performative in nature than instructional and, as with art, we cannot view them as single indicators of reception when they are entirely contextual and should be viewed alongside images and other tomb texts. His suggestion indicates that these texts were effective with or without being read.

Bommas presents an important point for us in understanding how images were received by the ancient Egyptians. For both written and artistic elements were designed specifically with the intent to draw in visitors and continuously provide for the deceased when none were to be had. The very real concern of the deceased, it appears, was in securing the living’s piety and the dependence on their good will which they could find themselves. Hence why there is such emphasis on securing guarantees, such as images and texts which do not necessarily require the living, to protect against being unable to sustain oneself in the afterlife. Therefore, it is possible that they may not have been as concerned as we are now about illiteracy; otherwise they surely would have sought different modes of representation and display to ensure their own survival and provisioning in the afterlife, had it entirely depended on the living.

In terms of the images in the tomb chapels, Hartwig agrees with this sentiment, acknowledging that some of the visitors to tomb chapels were likely illiterate - or partially

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 de Garis Davies, The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes, 11.
literate - but that this would not necessarily prevent them from understanding the intent expressed in the images.\textsuperscript{77} She writes that,

\begin{quote}
We can presume that within the context of the tomb chapel, the process of viewing for the illiterate may have been a collective experience, organised around the various necropolis festivals or family visiting situations. The connection between text and image suggests that literate visitors apprehended the full meaning of the composition directly. On the other hand, semi-or non-literate viewers may have understood the composition, provided the text adjacent to the scene was read aloud to him or her.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

We still today find such similarities in our own world, such as in satirical comics; while the politically-minded see a cartoon of a politician and have both the context and information around the text and image to fully understand the point the artist is making, there are others who are able to read but don’t necessarily know the full context. The tomb chapels functioned in order to provide the best possible care for their deceased owner, and likewise so too did the art within it. Images were layered and, according to Bryan, their hieroglyphic nature enabled viewers to receive a range of meanings at the same time; the interpretation of the scene depended solely on the knowledge of the viewer.\textsuperscript{79} Though the deceased ultimately would have sought to attract the élite to their tombs, they also wished to attract any persons who were able to provide offerings and sustain them.\textsuperscript{80} Thus the old idiom ‘beggars cannot be choosers’ rings true.

Thus, it feels particularly erroneous to continue to use illiteracy as a means to argue away the notion of reception theory and its uses in the context of ancient Egyptian art history; particularly as the tombs were designed for the dead to communicate with the living and if they could not do so, if they were so ineffective, surely there would have been a change in their methods. This discussion can be taken even further, and has been by Hartwig, by using the principals of semiology and visual interpretation to approach these scenes. Art is made up of elements and signs determined by the cultural and historical pressures exerted upon it—such as conventions, dress, and society at large, as understood by the artist and patron—which are then interpreted by the viewer.\textsuperscript{81} Furthermore, the images which we see embody key elements of a culture and follows similar signs and patterns as the society which it was created in; thus, often we can engage with the context of a

\textsuperscript{77} Hartwig, \textit{Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes}, 47.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge in Egyptian Tomb Painting,” 19.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{81} Hartwig, \textit{Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes}, 48.
society directly through art. Tomb chapel art reflects the social climate as much as it does the deceased’s intentions. In interpreting the images the viewer’s role often becomes performative in assembling the symbols and markers of their culture as a cohesive piece. The interactions that occur in the tomb chapel spaces was excellently described by Bryan, when she stated that,

[t]rust and risk are implied by this interaction, as we are invited to look into [the tomb owner’s] presentation of his life and to respond, as “the living,” to support his memory through the recitation of an offering text on his behalf. As we interpret the memory coding of these scenes, we enact the role of participants ensuring the effectiveness of the “memory.” A faith in the collective memory of society—that is, the body of knowledge comprising traditional funerary literature—sustained tomb [owners.]83

Until we can travel back and question the ancient Egyptians about how they understood the art before them we cannot say unequivocally how these images were understood. But we can infer with relative confidence that hieroglyphic literacy need not have impeded upon visual literacy, and that the function of tomb art was to draw in the living to sustain the deceased. Perhaps those who could not read used interpreters in the form of priests engaged for the cult of the deceased, or perhaps they, through the collective knowledge they were exposed to, were able to engage with the works and understand the basic, literal and symbolic meanings as well as appreciate the aesthetic value of the works all on their own.

As stated already one of the best resources available to us in studying the reception of images in ancient Egypt is the graffiti left behind by visitors to the tomb chapels. Dated primarily to the New Kingdom the visitor graffiti in particular can be found throughout the necropoli of Thebes and Memphis, and “are interwoven with the history of important archaeological sites.”84 One of the most important aspects of the graffiti is that they show both choice and intent; choosing where to place such graffiti was never carelessly done and often was placed to best utilise the image, to enhance the words or emphasise what the scene was showing. Intention, similarly, is that the ancients responded to the work and that they felt compelled to leave their mark on the particular scene.

82 Hartwig, Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 48.
83 Bryan, “Memory and Knowledge in Egyptian Tomb Painting,” 29.
84 Hana Navrátilová, The Visitors’ Graffiti of Dynasties XVIII and XIX in Abusir and Northern Saqqara (Prague: Set Out, 2007), 16.
However, there are issues with using tomb graffiti as evidence for the reception of images in ancient Egypt. Firstly, the generic nature of their sentiments. Alexis den Doncker prompts us to remember that many of these visitor graffiti have parallels or are identical in their forms and sentiments across different contexts in Egypt. This understandably calls into question the legitimacy of attributing any mention of aesthetic response to their authors. den Doncker argues that, “[d]e Saqqara à la nécropole thébaine, les parallèles sont nombreux et ne connaissent pourtant que peu de variantes, si bien que la part personnelle du scribe, sa véritable impression en tant que récepteur du décor de la chapelle est pratiquement absente au profit de la forme.” The formulaic style of these graffiti point to them being a scribal exercise, which is evidenced by an ostracon from the tomb of Senenmout (TT71) which follows the \textit{iwt pw ir.n=N r mAA} formula. While it is likely these tomb chapels were frequented by scribal pupils and are formulaic in their composition, it should not prevent us from discussing the active engagement which occurred. Graffiti show us more than what is written. Rather, it is the very act of manifesting, in literary form, their intentions. In visiting the tomb chapel, responding to the images, and actively engaging in the deceased’s funerary cult, the authors of the graffiti clearly state their interaction, intention, and response to the tomb chapel and the deceased. In particular where they placed their graffiti often reveals an aesthetic sensibility as well as thoughtfulness with regard to receiving benefit from placing their words near some depictions.

den Doncker distinguishes the difference between the private signatures and visitor inscriptions (\textit{Besucherinschriften}), the latter displaying more historical and aesthetical reception than signatures which pertain more to individuals seeking magical benefits from inscribing their names on the tomb chapel walls. In regards to private signatures, they are found primarily on scenes related to Osiris and the divine cult, due to this they often make sure to avoid damaging the images on the walls. This practice also indicates the desire to take part of the scene by attaching their identity to the image to magically receive benefits and also express a religious commitment to future visitors as well.

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85 den Doncker, “Prélude à une étude de la réception de l’image égyptienne par les anciens Égyptiens,” 83.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 83-84.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 24.
91 Ibid., 30.
92 Ibid., 24.
While perhaps not as potent a resource as visitor inscriptions, these graffiti still strengthen the argument for such an occurrence. Though not directed at anyone (or any tomb owner) the signatures do reveal a response to particular scenes predominately those on the front walls of the chapel. The act of writing their names on certain images, choosing important places within the composition, shows an intention for gaining some magical benefit for themselves as well as the deceased. Thus, the viewers had to have understood the symbolic value of the images before them. This returns to the idea of the graffiti as evidence of active participation for the benefit of the writer and the deceased.

While there were numerous stock phrases used in these graffiti, the expression of nfr (beautiful/good) in these phrases further demonstrates that the viewers appreciated the aesthetic of the tomb chapel’s decoration. We can never know for sure what the ancients were thinking when they left their names or phrases on the walls of these tomb chapels; however, it is important to constantly remind ourselves of the direct, active participation with the images it reflects. Hana Navrátilová extends upon this idea writing that,

neither ancient nor modern graffiti have been left purposelessly on the walls, especially if we take into consideration the fact, that for ancient Egypt writing was not such a widespread and automatic activity as we are prone to consider it now. While leaving an inscription behind, one must have felt a reason to do so. Any written material appeared under given circumstances, and no “scribbling” was nor is purely accidental.

With this in mind, it is important to look at further examples of tomb graffiti and how we can use it to try to understand how the ancient Egyptian viewers received and interacted with the tomb art. There are two Theban tombs with graffiti which reflect the importance of choice, intent, and image reception: Antefoker and Senet (TT60) from Dynasty 12, and Nakht (TT161) from the mid-to-late Dynasty 18.

To start with the older of the two tomb chapels Antefoker and Senet (TT60), which, according to Gardiner, naturally drew visitors to it. Gardiner wrote that the,
tomb of so prominent and ancient a worthy as the vizier Antefoker could scarcely fail to elicit the admiration and stimulate the zeal of the young scribes of a later period, and the thirty-six graffiti counted upon its walls by Mr. Davies prove that it was a favourite resort for tourists at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty.  

As Gardiner points out this tomb is particularly interesting due to such large numbers of graffiti being found in this tomb. Like the other graffiti examples discussed, all but one were found in the long hall inscribed around the scenes on the walls. This reinforces the sanctity of images closer to the actual burial place of the deceased and the conventional placing of such graffiti that they may assist Antefoker and his wife Senet. An important example, graffito 33, is written by an admirer of the tomb who even went so far as to extensively copy scenes which first occurred in Antefoker’s. The admirer is the scribe Amenemhat whose own tomb chapel (TT82) clearly reflects the style and scenes present in Antefoker; in particular the rare dance scene related to Hathor where Amenemhat left his graffiti. In one tomb thus we have evidence of how the aesthetic pleasure the copier received influenced him enough to create not only a tomb schema based off his neighbour but also to leave his graffiti to relay to the deceased—and any other visitor—his enjoyment of the site. Amenemhat’s graffiti reveals several indications of the reception of the tomb images which has occurred for him. The graffiti is incredibly valuable to the study of reception theory in an aesthetic sense as well as their functional properties and uses. Gardiner translates the graffiti of Amenemhat as follows:

The scribe Amenemḥēt, son of the elder of the forecourt Dḥtmōsē, born of [An]tef, came to see [this] tomb of the vizier Antefoker. It was pleasant in [his] heart….profitable for eternity. His name shall exist…..offerings in it, say ‘an-offering-that-the-king-gives’ to Osiris in front of [the westerners]….Rē, and the gods lords of the necropolis; prt-ḥrw offerings of bread and beer, and geese, linen and cloth, incense and oil, all things good and pure which heaven gives and earth creates and Nile brings as his offering to the ka of Antefoker, justified.(Figure 6)

This graffiti presents all the essential components of offering texts inscribed in private tomb chapels. It clearly lays out the pleasure which Amenemhat received in viewing the tomb chapel, an assertion that Antefoker’s name will exist for eternity, and details the numerous offerings gifted to the ka of the deceased by the gods as per the offering formula. However, the true value of this graffiti is in the mention of Amenemhat’s

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100 de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I and of his Wife, Senet (No. 60)*, 27.
101 Ibid.
103 de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I and of his Wife, Senet (No. 60)*, 29.
aesthetic response to the chapel. This example reflects how the ancient Egyptian interacted with the tomb scenes and the effect which they had on the viewers. This resulted in leaving texts which sustained the dead, answering their appeals in the art and text. Though it is a staple structure of such texts, as den Doncker noted earlier, the writers of the graffiti felt compelled to leave their mark in response to the scenes and to actively insert themselves in the tomb cult of the deceased for both their own and the tomb owner’s benefit.

Our second example comes from the late 18th Dynasty, the tomb chapel of Nakht the gardener (TT161). There are numerous visitor graffiti within the tomb and it is an excellent example of how visitors used the images upon the walls to reinforce magical benefits for themselves as well as the deceased. There are a group of hieratic graffiti by different hands, which date to the end of the 18th Dynasty when the tomb was restored under Horemheb. Among them are tomb visits during the Valley Festivals which surround figures in the scenes on the walls (Figure 7-12). For instance, while difficult to read, graffito 5 (Figure 7)—which has been separated into three parts according to Quirke’s analysis—the central section of text, which covers the body of the ox, dates the text to being created during the Valley Festival. The text is written by the scribe Amenmose and this particular example shows the very active and purposeful choice of the visitor to use a motif within the decoration to support and reinforce his message to Nakht. As den Doncker states,

on the one hand, this performative process of *mise en abyme*, that surly amused Amenmose, perfectly fits the explicit and direct response to the deceased’s will to involve the visitors in his funerary cult. On the other hand, it attests to a notable understanding of the symbolical meaning of the representation. It is because of this that the location of these visitor inscriptions is very often significant.

Most examples of tomb graffiti, like that of Amenmose to Nakht, can be found on the western back walls of the transverse halls of T-shaped tombs, or on the northern walls in single corridor tombs such as Nakht’s (TT161). It is the influence of the so-called

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107 Ibid., 87.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
Blickpunktsbilder or focal-point representations which display the deceased’s professional life or connection with the king\textsuperscript{111} that seem to attract such graffiti which den Doncker suggests should be viewed as a “direct answer to the tomb owner’s message,”\textsuperscript{112} and taking an active part in the tomb cult. Both graffito 3 (Figure 9) and graffito 4 (Figure 10) show the care taken by the writers of the texts to avoid spoiling the tomb decoration and sensibly place their texts around or next to figures, particularly in graffito 4, that are depicted in the process of offering thus re-enforcing the aims of the graffiti and providing for the deceased through the participation of their funerary cult.

Graffito 6 (Figure 11) from Nakht’s tomb is another example which, like the graffiti from Antefoker’s tomb, exhibits an aesthetical reception of the images. The last three lines of graffito 6 are where we find such declaration of receiving an aesthetic pleasure from the images before the viewer, “[8] He found [9] it was more beautiful [10] than any temple(?) of any town.”\textsuperscript{113} Written by a scribe of divine offerings of Amun whose name is lost,\textsuperscript{114} we can quite clearly see that, like Antefoker, the idea of enjoying the art, an aesthetic sense was perceived by the ancient Egyptian viewer and could be commented upon in their graffiti. Though the structure of graffiti did largely follow a pattern and the \textit{iwt pw} formula was often associated with prayer formulae,\textsuperscript{115} the addition of how the chapel scenes made the viewer feel is incredibly valuable to understanding the Egyptians aesthetical responses. Again, as we discovered with Antefoker’s tomb chapel it is these patterns which have led to the general belief to be that instead of revealing an aesthetic sense, or an appreciation of the art for its beauty, they rather represent religious notions and stock phraseology. However, Stephen Quirke has challenged this notion by wondering if “it is anachronistic to demand too rigorous a separation of the religious from the secular, since the texts indicate that, for the Egyptians, piety was not incompatible with pleasure.”\textsuperscript{116} It is clear that the Theban tomb graffiti are not simply throwaway incidents. Rather, they reinforce the accessibility and the intent of the tomb owner through the living responding to the deceased, thus the actual intent of the visitor becomes much more important.\textsuperscript{117} Visitor intention is incredibly significant from choosing which chapels to visit or whether or not to take part in the funerary cult of the

\textsuperscript{111} den Doncker, “Theban Tomb Graffiti During the New Kingdom,” 23.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{113} Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161),” 88.
\textsuperscript{114} Peden, \textit{The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt}, 71.
\textsuperscript{115} Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161),” 88.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} den Doncker, “Theban Tomb Graffiti During the New Kingdom,” 30.
deceased. Their responses to images within these tombs as recorded in their graffiti provides us with valuable evidence for reception in ancient Egypt.

Another area where we can see similar behaviours is in the Egyptian magical beliefs surrounding the written hieroglyphs. In the Coffin and Pyramid texts there are numerous examples where the hieroglyphs which were in the form of living creatures were mutilated. According to Pinch it was,

necessary to read these texts aloud to enact the spells, but this might also animate the individual hieroglyphic images. Some of these images were thought to pose a threat to the dead. Others may have been mutilated to prevent them leaving the tomb and withdrawing their protective power. In the hieroglyphic script, the power of the image and the power of the word are almost inseparable.

Thus images in these particular funerary contexts were seen as alive and potentially harmful to the deceased. There were also different modes of transmitting the magical knowledge gained from reading such texts and perhaps that of understanding how the images may have been received as well. One particular story Pinch presents, involves Prince Naneferkaptah and his treatment of the spells of the Book of Thoth. As she writes,

he copied the spells onto fresh papyrus. He then soaked the copy in beer until it dissolved and swallowed it with a drink of water. Then, the story says, he knew everything that had been in the spells. This incident sounds like fantasy but it describes a standard magical practice in ancient Egypt. The magician hoped to absorb the heka of the spells into his body.

While this example pertains to protective and knowledge-gaining spells there is a clear parallel to the use of tomb images and how they would have been received by the ancient Egyptian viewers. In particular we can see the similar use in protecting the cult of the deceased, as in tombs the images provided sustenance for the deceased should their cult disband. Should the cult fail the images could magically provide for the deceased allowing the ka to utilise the images and tomb stela spells to continue to receive sustenance. Robert Ritner postulated that due to low literacy rates, stelae and statues for healing were likely activated by pouring water over them and then drinking the water

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118 Ibid.
120 Pinch, Magic in Ancient Egypt, 69.
121 Ibid., 69-70.
122 Ibid., 70.
123 Pinch, Magic in Ancient Egypt, 153.
which was believed to have collected the inherent power and knowledge within them.\textsuperscript{124} Though not specific to tomb chapels it is possible that similar uses of the tomb stela and tomb scenes could have been used like this to, in the visitor’s mind, activate and respond to the deceased’s wishes.

Tomb stela are another area where the intentions of the deceased are expressed and the joining of the two powerful elements, text and image, provided for the deceased’s ka. An excellent example is the tomb stela of Nakht (TT161), which seeks to encourage the good favour of the gods as well in the provisioning of the ka. Nakht calls upon the King, Amun, Re, Atum, Osiris, Anubis, and Hathor in particular so that they may,\textsuperscript{125}

give an invocation offering consisting of bread, beer, oxen, fowl, alabaster, linen, incense, unguent, all offerings and herbs, a libation of wine and milk and all good and pure things on which a god lives as a daily offering every day to the ka of the bearer of offerings to Amûn, Nakht, justified (and) his wife, mistress of the house, Taḥemt. Being a spirit in the sky, strong on earth, being justified in the necropolis, going out as a living ba at the sound of offerings being established, smelling the sweet breeze from the north, drinking water from the eddy(?) of the river as a daily offering every day to the ka of the gardener of the divine offerings of Amûn, Nakht, justified (and) his beloved favourite wife, mistress of the house, Taḥemt, justified. Coming and going in Rosetau in order to receive what is given on earth, the ba not being prevented in what it wants, a firm corpse which does not stumble, a ba which is happy in its place every day, (and) a good memory among people as a daily offering every day to the ka of the bearer of floral offerings of Amûn, Nakht, justified (and) his beloved favourite wife, mistress of the house, Taḥemt, justified. (Figure 13)

Nakht’s example shows the close and necessary relationship images, magic and hieroglyphics had especially in tomb settings. This stela reflects Nakht’s desire for provisioning and calls upon the king and the most powerful of the gods to maintain his chapel and offerings. But it also, rather touchingly, also displays a concern with maintaining a happy and content ba, a free and fulfilled ka, and possibly most importantly a place in the memory of the living. This last request while reflecting practical concerns for, of course, the living furnish the offerings, it also exhibits a desire for connection and concern that he be remembered kindly. While a piece of religious and socially determined writing the description of his wishes for him and his wife (by proxy of course) do reveal a


much more personal hope and belief which we can see really reflected in the images in
the tomb chapel. And thanks to numerous later graffiti it is more than likely that Nakht
received the attentions he had hoped for. Yet, though powerful in their own right, the
‘Appeals to the Living’ which seek visitors to read aloud their offering formula as we
have seen reflect that there was a deeper belief that for these images and texts to be truly
potent they needed such human interaction.126

Though lacking graffiti examples as the last two tombs, the tomb chapel of Nakht the
Astronomer of Amun (TT52) from mid-eighteenth Dynasty is an important tomb to study
reception of art in particular because of its art and the copies made of it by admirers.
According to Davies he believed that Nakht’s tomb was indeed an object of great esteem
as “many tomb-scenes in the necropolis appear to be inspired by it, and in some cases
groups have been taken from it or its prototype with but slight alteration.”127 Angenot
corroborates this when she noted that the tomb was “probably recognized as a
masterpiece by its creator or by the artist’s peers, as it was covered with a varnish in
antiquity.”128 So not only did its viewers see fit to try and save the work by varnishing it
they also copied it for other neighbouring tombs as well, hence its importance to this
study. An important occurrence which has popped up several times in this chapter is
copying by visitors to these tomb chapels in their own tombs. The re-use, or copying, of
images and motifs is rife in Egyptian tombs; and such behaviour displays an admiration
aesthetically for the art works as well as the desire of patrons to keep up with the
traditions, style, and aesthetic of their contemporaries or those long since gone. Such
examples of direct copying are rare as artists generally treated scenes from a collection of
subjects and scenes in their own way;129 hence, what we can understand about direct
copying is incredibly important to the discourse of reception theory in ancient Egyptian
art history. According to Müller this repurposing and copying was “a constructive
discourse that brought the past into the present.”130 These copying’s make up the corpus
of work which exists on art discourse from ancient Egypt which is unsurprisingly quite
different from ours today. Müller surmises that the copying and re-use resulted in artistic
discourse but was not the only aim, yielding to the important aesthetic and magical
desires of the patron. We can see this process in terms of reception quite clearly in

129 Ibid.
Nakht’s tomb (TT52) but also, and perhaps better exampled in the Tomb of Antefoker and Senet (TT60), with the scribe Amenemhat (TT82) who not only left his appreciation of the tomb images in the form of graffiti but also copied scenes and re-configured them to suit his own tomb. As den Doncker aptly puts it,

in this case, the mechanics of the reception of images are concretely documented step by step. Although the artist involved in these iconographical borrowings is unknown, it is for once possible to grasp the complete process of reception, taking into account the image as a model that apparently inspired in its receiver (Amenemhat), an explicit response (the graffito) and a further implicit reaction (the copy).  

Nakht’s tomb chapel displays several important scenes which assist us in our understanding of the intent of the deceased and how he wished his images to be received. The North wall (Figure 1) depicts the Opening of the Mouth ceremony a typical tomb chapel decoration we would expect to see in Theban tombs. To the left in both the top and bottom registers are Nakht and his wife receiving offerings from the processional sem-priests. They have been identified as priests due to their leopard-skin clothing and the shoulder strap which crosses over them and to the proper right shoulder. Two of the sem-priests in the top section of the lower register of the image hold in their hand the leg of an ox which is often used to symbolise the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. Thus, the food is consecrated and brought forth eternally by these priests enabling the ka of Nakht to embody this image and receive the offerings.

On the west wall of the tomb chapel (Figure 2) in the top register is a fishing and fowling scene and the lower register is of harvesting and bird capturing. The top scene sees Nakht attacking birds and fish in the lush marshland. On the left-hand-side he brandishes a throwstick intending to smite the bird in his hand while mirrored on the right he spears (spear now missing) fish. What is important here is the pose, these scenes originated from kingly iconography of smiting the enemies and retaining ma’at and thus reflect the same purpose in these scenes, to contain chaotic forces. However, this scene also has a purely functional and literal interpretation. That is the depiction of Nakht and his family hunting for their food which translates into the bounty of offerings before them as they are seated in state on the left hand side. This provides for Nakht’s ka for eternity “since the tomb chapel was inherently magical, the killing of birds and the spearing of fish would

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132 de Garis Davies, The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes, 54-55.
magically secure the provisioning for the deceased in the hereafter."133 Below this are the harvesting scenes which are very much within the same vein as the upper register. The workers provide sustenance for Nakht, collecting wine, capturing fowl and fish over two registers. The variety of offerings changes from scene to scene which perhaps indicated the wish for a diverse range of food, drink, and entertainment for the deceased especially in the unfortunate event of a collapse of the tomb cult. These scenes were not merely for entertainment or for beauty but rather served very real functions to provide for the \( ka \) of the deceased, should their connection to life be irrevocably lost to them.

On the east wall is a harvesting scene with Nakht and his wife offering to the gods on the left hand side (Figure 4). At the very bottom of the offering scene is a cow being sacrificed with the leg being particularly highlighted. This could be reflecting the consecrating of the food offerings which they offer to the gods. The rest of the scene is cyclical with the top portion focusing on reaping the bountiful harvest while the lower register shows workers ploughing and seeding the land, further reinforcing the ability of the deceased to provide for his \( ka \) for eternity. Many scholars see these scenes as daily life in which the aim is supposed to be the continuing of the life enjoyed by the deceased while alive. However, as has been shown, these were not mere displays of hopes for the afterlife, they functioned to provide in a very real way for the \( ka \) of the deceased. In the other tombs graffiti reflects how the images affected visitors and while Nakht’s tomb lacks any of these explicit responses from later visitors, we can learn a substantial amount about the intent behind these images and what the deceased received from them.

By investigating these three tomb chapels it becomes very clear that there was a visual literacy which permeated through these spaces and sought to encourage participation from visitors. From the evidence given it is very likely that these images were indeed viewed as living entities by visitors as the \( ka \) was believed to embody the images to commune with their visitors and receive offerings. Though literacy was of a very low rate in ancient Egypt there would undoubtedly been a wealth of images and stock scenes which all could understand and engage with. The civic monuments such as temples which depict some similar motifs, magical practices, and the use of priests assisting in some tomb cults are all examples of how non-literate or partially literate viewers of these tomb scenes could engage with the art and understand what was going on either at a basic or

more advanced level. Graffiti proves to be one of the most useful sources we have to examine how New Kingdom visitors felt towards tomb chapel design schemas. Wider studies of such works including find-spots should be undertaken to better understand the reactions to particular images which caused the visitors to leave their mark.

Copying, scene choice, and graffiti all exhibit how art was received by the ancient Egyptians on a smaller more private scale, as well as the intention of the deceased for preparing themselves to be looked after should the worst happen. In the next chapter we will see if the same modes are used to express reception by the ancient viewer in the public domain, temples. Tomb chapels were viewed and used as bridges to commune with the dead, and the images situated in these spaces fittingly provide the living and the deceased to do just that. Both benefit from images and the living received them in different ways as we all do with art today. It is in the re-creating of spaces which took visitors fancy, the visiting action itself, and of course the need for some to leave their mark somewhere particular to express their attendance, participation, and in some cases delight in viewing these images which reveal how images were received by the ancient Egyptian viewer. These spaces functioned on many levels and as such offer many levels of interpretation and response.
CHAPTER THREE: RECEPTION IN TEMPLES

In the previous chapter I discussed how due to an inherited sense of visual literacy most visitors to tomb chapels would be able to, at a basic level, ascertain the meanings of the scenes which they viewed. The reason for this, I believe, is that there were precedents in the state temples which depicted similar scenes and were accessible and important to the ‘average’ Egyptian. Unlike tombs, temples offer a more static view of scenes and artistry. Temples are believed to have been a part of the Egyptian landscape since early- if not pre-dynastic times, though only the later monumental constructions of the New Kingdom survive intact enough for us to study. In this chapter I am choosing the very public and significant monuments of Luxor and Karnak Temples rather than looking at royal funerary temples. I am focusing on public temples because royal funerary temples generally have the same context, style of art, and visitors as those of the private tombs already discussed in the previous chapter. It will be seen that a visual literacy existed within ancient Egyptian society which enabled the ancient Egyptians to view, receive, and understand the monuments and imagery around them. Public temples, like Luxor and Karnak, provide ample and necessary examples of these elements and enable a more holistic approach to the concept of applying reception theory throughout Egyptian art history.

This chapter will first focus on understanding the role and function of temples in ancient Egyptian society as well as the artistic scenes commonplace on both exterior and interior walls. Once this has been established then we can approach the complex structures of temples and investigate how ancient Egyptians interacted with these intensely ritualized spaces and, in particular, the reception of the art for different members of society. Such examples include: access, scrapings, temple walls and statues, as well as the copious amounts of graffiti found in these sites. Temples and tombs function in much the same way, in that both provide places for the gods and deceased to dwell and are protectors of the royal or non-royal ka. However, temples do allow for much more regular access, even if just from the exterior, and are important in the social fabric of ancient Egypt. Thus, it is unsurprising that in studying these monumental complexes we are able to grasp more how images permeated daily life for the ancient Egyptians and, hopefully, find some indicators of how the ancient Egyptians interacted with their visual language.
The temple in ancient Egypt was seen as a microcosm, a model of the world\textsuperscript{134} and, unsurprisingly, shares numerous characteristics with the tomb chapels previously discussed. Temples were spaces between the secular and the divine where ritual dramas took place, the gods were cared for, and order was maintained.\textsuperscript{135} The king and the priests worked to ritually serve the gods who in turn gave life, favour, and protection to Egypt.\textsuperscript{136} Thus, “the Egyptian temple was the source of power by which all Egyptian society ran.”\textsuperscript{137}

Temples, unsurprisingly, were viewed by ancient Egyptians as incredibly important areas of worship. Being as important as they were their architecture naturally communicated both strong protective ideals and a sense of splendour as well. For these were places where,

> obelisks pierced the heavens, and flag masts supported the canopy of the sky; pylons mimicked the horizon, and columns held starry ceilings aloft; sacred lakes teemed with life, like the abyss or primeval swamp, and wells tapped the regenerative power of creation’s waters.\textsuperscript{138}

The large state temples were well funded as the kings, especially in the New Kingdom, sought to provide stability for the country by pleasing the gods within the temples to ritually ensure the protection and maintenance of order over chaos. Temples were seen as ultimate protectors and symbols for maintaining \textit{ma’at}. As such the very walls of these complexes were- to the ancient Egyptians- borders between order and disorder and actively protected them from chaos.\textsuperscript{139}

In direct response to their fundamental importance, temples were often decorated from floor to ceiling with scenes that depicted gods and goddesses and the king’s ritual role. Most temples had similar scenes, of which there were two distinct styles, depicted on both their exterior and interior spaces. The interior spaces architecturally receded inward, the closer to the inner sanctum one got, and in response to these architectural changes -

\textsuperscript{136} Wilkinson, \textit{The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt}, 8.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
darker light, compacted spaces, sloping roof and floor - the scenes represented on the walls reflected the purpose of the room in which one was, as well as the ritualistic aspect undertaken in these spaces. On the exterior of temples, the focus is much more on projecting the notion of the king as divine in his office and protector of ma’at. The outside scenes protect the interior ritual scenes from maleficent forces. Most dynasties depict the traditional royal smiting scene at the entrance to the temple, a scene which had its origins in the very earliest stages of Egyptian history. These exterior wall scenes are intentionally and necessarily apotropaic. The scenes, which depict the king as a skilled hunter and victor in battle, were powerful talismans that protected the temple from any evil and chaotic forces. Indeed, even the very construction of the enclosure walls which surrounded the immense temple structures were symbolic as well as practical - providing protection from war or civil unrest and marking the god’s space as separate from the rest of the world - as they also represented the mythical primeval waters which surrounded the mound of creation. To reflect this symbolic purpose the walls were built with alternating concave and convex sections which give them a wave-like pattern. Thus, the images and the architecture worked together to identify the sacred nature of the temples, fortify the interior, and ensure the protection and maintenance of the temple in both symbolic and secular terms.

Once past the imposing scenes on the front entrance pylons and the formidable walls, temple complexes generally opened into a courtyard area. This was the most public area of the temple, there is an entrance to this area from the side at Luxor called the “People’s Gate” and was where, at least on special occasions, we know that the ‘average’ Egyptian could come and participate (to an extent) in the ceremonies. Much of the older literature on temples in ancient Egypt denies the ‘average’ Egyptian access beyond the exterior walls of the temple. But, as Wilkinson argues, the ‘average’ Egyptians were indeed permitted access to the outer court area, “at least in part or on special occasions, as can be seen from the Ptolemaic name for the outer court, ‘the court of the multitude’, and by the large rekhyet hieroglyphs representing the people of Egypt which were often inscribed on the walls or columns of the court.”

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140 Wilkinson, The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt, 45.
142 Ibid.
143 Wilkinson, The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt, 57.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid., 62.
from earlier periods it is very likely there would have been similar access to the space by
the ‘average’ Egyptian.

Also, it is in these courtyards where large numbers of sculptures both royal and private,
were installed from the Middle Kingdom onwards. Wilkinson explains that though the
royal sculptures functioned similarly to other commissions in the temple complex, these
private sculptures served different functions such as possible *ka* statues for the deceased -
which Wilkinson disputes - or as memorials for the deceased. These statues granted their
owners access to be forever within the temple precinct thus remaining close to the gods as
well as providing themselves likely supplicants from the living who might read aloud
their name and say the offering formula. These dedicatory statues function identically
to the tomb chapel art and ‘Appeals to the Living’ which we encountered in the tomb
chapels of the previous chapter. Therefore, though Wilkinson argues against seeing the
non-royal statuary as examples of *ka* statues, their function and intentions surely cannot
be limited to dedications alone. A statue dedicated to the interior of a temple is more
likely to be intended as a *ka* statue as it provides the deceased constant contact with the
living world, supplies potential supplicants, and offers protection by and access to the
gods. This hypothesis is strengthened further by the sheer volume of sculptures which
have been uncovered at the two main temples we are focusing on, Karnak and Luxor. In
1903 Georges Legrain discovered more than nine hundred statues from the late New
Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period, in the north court of the seventh pylon of the Great
Temple of Amun at Karnak. Then, in 1989 archaeologists from the Egyptian
Antiquities Organization discovered a similar pit at Luxor Temple with a sizeable amount
of statuary from mid-eighteenth Dynasty to the Ptolemaic period. The caches at both
reveal that this practice was certainly understood, by those who could afford to produce
them, as a worthwhile venture ensuring that they would be able to remain safe and near
the gods, forever a part of the temple complex. Though likely desacralized when placed
in the caches the sheer number of statuary which were buried, after the courtyard was full,
shows how valued this practice was to the ancient Egyptians. In dedicating a statue they
not only gained access to the temple and its numerous benefits but, they also claimed the
temple space as their own. These statues actively engaged with the temple architecture

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147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., 64.
149 Ibid.
and responded to the divine nature of the space. Just as the tomb chapel images and sculptures of the deceased could be persuaded to act on behalf of the living, and provided places for the dead to inhabit and hear supplications and offerings, I believe these statues functioned in exactly the same way. Though only located at the beginning of the temple complex these statues are important declarations by the ancient Egyptians about how they wanted to be remembered and where they wished to remain forever. Therefore, their intention is likely to have been as receptacles for the *ka* of the deceased which would keep them in continuous contact with the living and in the presence of the gods. Again we are limited by having only later examples available to us for study, but, as with the people’s entrance above, these statues are valuable examples as to how ‘average’ Egyptians interacted with temples.

After the presumably crowded first court, the spaces within the temple become infinitely more restricted by both rank and architecture. Another key feature of all temples in ancient Egypt is the hypostyle hall just before the inner sanctum. The hypostyle hall was a room crowded with columns and very little natural light except what the clerestory windows let in. The columns were both the pillars on which the sky rested and representations of marshland- as they were decorated as single stemmed papyrus plants which surrounded the mound of creation represented by the temple’s inner shrine.150 These areas were important procession ways that prepared the pharaoh to meet the god in the inner sanctum. The different rooms would have been decorated to reflect the actions, rituals or meanings of each individual space. For instance, the “Botanical Garden” of Karnak established by Thutmose III in the back of the main sanctuary of Amun (Figure 14). This secret area was once decorated with statues, evidenced by remaining niches and statue bases, and wall decorations which illustrate, according to Dimitri Laboury, daily divine ritual.151 Interestingly, there exists a similar room in the temple of Luxor built by Amenhotep III which also was primarily solar in its decoration and which further highlights the importance such motifs and scenes had in these areas.152 Images were used to reinforce the lore of ancient Egyptian kingship and of the gods. In such places as the

hypostyle hall, birthing rooms and the like, images reinforced the ritual actions taking place and likely would have felt as though one truly was in the realm of the gods.

In the discussion thus far emphasis has been placed on the response to, and access of, the ‘average’ Egyptian more than any other social strata that interacted with temples. It is important to quickly highlight the three primary social strata and their access within the temples to grasp who audiences were and how they received the images around them. The first social stratum is the general population, who, as we have seen, had limited access to the building and its decoration. The second social stratum is made up of the temple personnel who had near-unlimited access to the temple depending on their position. The third and final stratum was, of course, the king who had unlimited access to the temple. The second and third strata saw and interacted with the scenes of rituals and processional depictions, the gods in the barques and shrines, and interacted with the god in the inner shrine. In comparison the general population were contained to the outer areas of the temple and thus were unable to view the internal scenes. Perhaps these different areas should rather be discussed in terms of ‘divine’ for the internal sacred scenes and ‘secular’ for the outer walls and more public sections of the temples. While one continued to propagate the ideology of kingship, the gods, and protection to the public, the other functioned in a divine manner to ensure the king and the temple personnel were supported ideologically through the images and decorations which surrounded them.

There are two temples that are the focus of this study; Karnak and Luxor temple complexes in Thebes. Luxor Temple is smaller than the sprawling complex of Karnak, yet both of them share similar traits and are ideologically connected with their roles in the rebirth of the King’s ka and in maintaining social order. These temple complexes are the best examples for discussing the idea of reception in ancient Egyptian art for two reasons. Firstly, their close proximity and the integral roles they played in the reincarnation of life and divine kingship, and secondly, the wealth of surviving material and in particular the graffiti present on both temples. Temple graffiti, like tomb graffiti, is a vital element to studying reception as they offer details about temple life, and, in particular, they highlight the individual experiences that were had here when these ancient edifices were functioning.

Unlike the tomb chapels in the previous chapter both of these temples have been changed artistically, functionally, and architecturally since their inception and provide us valuable
details about belief and practices in New Kingdom Thebes. Aside from these reasons, they were also well known to the ancient Egyptians and both had many different strata of society who were able to pass by or enter into the sacred spaces. These temples were also the main precincts which protected the royal *ka* and focal points of the incredibly important Opet festival. The Opet festival was the annual festival during the flood season when the barques of Amun, Mut, Khonsu, and the king travelled either by land or water, from Karnak to Luxor. The festival being in the flood season played on the symbolism of the fertility of the Nile and was the annual reaffirmation of the “ruler’s earthly role as king and his cosmic role as son of Amen-Ra.” The decoration in the innermost parts of Luxor portrayed the series of events which happened there, such as the journey of the barques, the sacrifices of the king, and the re-birth and crowning of the king by Amun-Re (Figure 15-17).

The first temple under investigation is Luxor. Luxor temple, the smaller of the two temples, was dedicated to Amun of Luxor and was the southern destination of the Opet festival. Luxor temple was built in mid-Dynasty 18 and represented, the “mythological power base of the living divine king and the foremost national shrine for his cultus.” The majority of the present temple was completed by Amenhotep III but there are later reliefs on the colonnade walls with scenes of the Opet festival which were created by Tutankhamun and Ay but were ultimately usurped by Horemheb. Luxor temple, it is believed, is where the renewal of the king’s *ka* took place and thus played a crucial role in the religious ritual rebirth of the king every year at the Opet festival. This critical responsibility of Luxor Temple is clearly displayed throughout its decoration; from the colossal Ramesess II statues before the pylon and at the entry to the colonnade—which Lanny Bell has identified as royal *ka* statues (Figure 18)—to the interior decoration of the ‘Birth Rooms’ which were studied by W. Murnane which he described as revealing the path of the king to reach his re-birth through his interaction with Amun. The *ka*
statues of Ramesess II, and those within the niches of the Triple Shrine at Luxor, appear
to have functioned as areas of supplication. The directness of supplicating to a king was,
it appears, also an element of processions where the public could approach the king and
the gods as they journeyed from temple to temple.161 Thus, both in the temple and during
religious events the public were granted freer access to both the gods and their king than
perhaps is often assumed.

As Luxor is believed to be the place where the king’s ka rested, it is unsurprising to find
numerous depictions of the king being accompanied by representations of his ka. In fact
most Theban tombs, temples, and royal art depict the ka accompanying the king from
birth to death.162 The ka of the king was truly important and undermined the entirety of
Egyptian state and religion. It was believed to be the guarantor of the continuation of life
and thus was celebrated and depicted in the inner chambers of the temples where the re-
creation occurred. What is interesting for our study of reception is the level of
involvement ordinary Egyptians had with this intense re-birthing ritual during the Opet
festival. It has been found that the re-birth of the king and his ka required the active
participation and involvement of the ‘average’ Egyptian as well as the king and temple
staff. During the Opet festival, the king was identified with the royal ka and the king’s
divine kingship and right to rule were re-established.163 After the rites were completed
Amun-Re’s powers were transferred to the king who then appeared before the waiting
public in the temple.164 The public’s involvement in receiving the newly reborn king was
seen as an important step in the ritual process. Their participation would also be vital for
securing the king as an ideal, someone that the people would continue to follow, obey and
believe in his divine lineage and right to rule. Though we are still, and probably forever
will be, unsure of exactly who made up the public allowed to witness the king straight
after his rebirth, the scenes remaining, regarding the Opet festival in particular, indicate
there was some level of wider public engagement. Also, the procession from Karnak to
Luxor and back would have provided ‘average’ Egyptians with a visual understanding of
part of the ritual of the festival which would undoubtedly be reinforced inside the temple
through carved pillars and wall scenes. The inherited visual literacy which I have
discussed before would very likely have been gained through participating in these

163 Ibid., 157.
164 Ibid.
festivals and accessing public temples. Thus, the ‘average’ Egyptian was not only able to equip him/herself with knowledge regarding art and images from temples, but, they were also vital elements to securing the king’s position during important religious events.

The public could enter particular areas of temples generally indicated to them by the use of rekhyet birds on entryways, columns and wall scenes. Ramesses II, for instance, allowed entry into the peristyle court during the Opet festival at Luxor as indicated by rekhyet figures carved into columns next to his cartouches. The intention of these symbols should not be overlooked especially with regards to the discussion of reception theory in ancient Egyptian art. Though small, they provide evidence that in fact ordinary people were allowed inside the temple complex and therefore gained access to view the art carved and painted into pillars and walls, as well as the statues erected in the outer courtyards and entry pylons. Until recently, as Bell acknowledges, the decorative device of rekhyet’s was considered more of a “filler” in the decorative schema, but, in fact, they should be associated more with providing modern scholars a better understanding of how the court functioned as the rekhyet decoration provides us “a key for visualizing the court in use, alive with the excited activity of the Opet-festival.” For instance the public access areas which were indicated by these carved rekhyet birds were only found on the eastern half of the court at Luxor leaving the processional ways clear; but, the public could still access more of the court in several different places. First, they were able to approach and supplicate to the ka statues of Ramesses II placed before the colonnade of the temple which—for all intents and purposes—functioned exactly as his other statues in front of the pylons and at the western processional gateway opposite the people’s entrance. Secondly, there was a relief of Khonsu on the exterior eastern wall of his chapel which was eventually closed off and repurposed as a shrine for the people. And thirdly, the everyday persons were admitted into the Amun-Re chapel which was richly decorated with a double false door which served as a way for the everyday supplicant to access the god with two ka statues depicting Ramesses II inserted into niches on the left and right, with their backs to the double door. Bell describes this area as a place where,

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166 Ibid., 164-165.
167 Ibid., 164.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid., 167.
170 Ibid.
“common people, too, could forward prayers to god through the outer barque shrine, a kind of divinely appointed ‘telephone booth.’”

The adaptation and integration of the everyday people into the temple structures is important for it provides us further proof that the ancient Egyptians, whether ‘average’ or upper class, were able to gain access to the rich and densely packed imagery of the temples and, therefore, are likely to have had some basic understanding of what the intentions behind the art were as well as what they were trying to convey. Also, the ka statues like other areas of both Karnak and Luxor temples were used for people to get their supplications heard by the god and presumably also to leave offerings. The evidence we have strongly indicates that the ancient Egyptians believed that the images in these areas, whether ka statue or carved image, were functional, living embodiments which could hear their prayers and just as in the images and statues of the deceased in the tomb chapels, they could assist and intervene on their behalf.

The separation of the everyday people from the divine and royal often seems to be the basis of scholarship’s insistence that the ancient Egyptians, the ‘average’ Egyptians, were ignorant of any sense of art or its meaning. However, this belief is unfounded. While they did not have direct access to the inner sanctum or the ritual areas of the temples, the everyday Egyptians were in fact required, as we have seen, as part of the ritual of divine kingship to witness and engage with certain aspects of the ceremonial procession. The rituals of kingship required both public and private elements. If the rituals were completely divorced from the public it would have been difficult to maintain the ideology of kingship without the public’s support. These temples were accessible, to different extents, by Egyptians and were important to their daily life as the temples were simultaneously, “apart from the world and a part of it.”

Traveling from Luxor to Karnak Temple we can see similar responses to art and space as already encountered at Luxor. At Karnak, the entire building from the foundations to the decoration was intended to inspire awe in its viewers as well as a sense of power. In her book on Karnak, Elizabeth Blyth muses how “[t]he temple of Amun at Karnak began life as the shrine of an obscure local god, but was destined to become the largest and most

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172 Ibid., 135.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
celebrated temple in all Egypt at the height of the Empire.”176 The vast complex of Karnak has been added to over numerous centuries as kings sought to celebrate Amun, increase their favour with the gods, as well as outdo earlier kings additions by increasing the amount, size andremarkableness of their offerings.177 The decoration at Karnak from the beginning of its New Kingdom alterations by Amenhotep I through to its Ramesside influences shows the development of Egyptian art in terms of scale and scenes. Every king in the New Kingdom in some way altered the Karnak precinct even if just to reattribute an earlier reign’s gifts as theirs. In fact, the tendency for kings to claim and repurpose existing art for themselves was so common that in the Ramesside times the carving of scenes was done in deep sunken relief to try and ward off any future usurpers.

Amenhotep I began to redesign Karnak by creating a new and dominating southern entrance which was decorated in a typical Middle Kingdom style with depictions of the king smiting his enemies.178 He also had depictions of his heb-sed festival on both the interior and exterior walls of this entryway.179 The depictions Amenhotep added to his entrance and gateway reflect similar scenes we are familiar with from the early dynasties, in particular the Narmer Palette. These scenes are intended to exude a sense of power, order and awe for the king who is depicted acting out his divine duties. The scenes at Karnak in many ways do not seem to alter much from the beginnings with Amenhotep I and those of later kings, excepting in the scale, number and magnificence of monuments. It is only in the later Ramesside period when the emergence of war scenes overtakes typical kingly iconography as the kings boast (whether accurately or not) about their significant military prowess and depict pivotal battles.

Interestingly, Karnak is a temple which also boasts changes to its structure which enable the everyday Egyptian to converse, indirectly, with the enshrined god. At Luxor we encountered ka statues and shrines set up for public access. Karnak has an addition which further impresses upon us the access the public had in a daily sense to the gods and the temple precinct. Referred to as chapels of the ‘Hearing Ear’, these chapels were placed in the back of the temple’s inner shrine, outside the temple walls, and could be elaborately decorated or, as was more common, had only a statue of the temples main god - or even

176 Blyth, Karnak, 236.
177 Ibid., 1-2.
178 Ibid., 34.
179 Ibid., 36.
just carved ears of the gods - to which common people could pray and supplicate.\textsuperscript{180} Karnak had several of these chapels built behind the Great Temple of Amun.\textsuperscript{181} Though not decorative, perhaps in the sense we are used to with these monumental buildings, the very existence of these chapels once again highlights the significance of involving the everyday Egyptian as well as those of the upper class and the royal household. The ancients knew they could direct their messages to the enshrined statue or carved ears on the wall of the chapels and seemed to believe that these images were able to be inhabited by and transfer their prayers directly to the god. They believed that these images were real.

As in the last chapter we can also turn to graffiti as a source to better understand how ancient Egyptians received and responded to art and ritual experiences that they may have been a part of. Elizabeth Frood argues that graffiti is important in studying ancient monuments because “[m]onumental environments often appear to collapse time, and seem distant from human actors. Areas like this, however, make it possible to plot long, probably punctuated, processes of addition, formalizing, and re-formalizing of sacred areas.”\textsuperscript{182} Graffiti in Theban temples became popular from around the late New Kingdom onward but examples have been found of earlier graffiti,\textsuperscript{183} and, as appropriation and destruction was rife in these areas, there are likely numerous layers of earlier work now lost to us. However, unlike tomb graffiti which was predominately in direct response to works of art, answering the deceased’s appeals or recording a personal response to a scene, the graffiti in the temples has a different purpose. Firstly, the majority of the graffiti which survives comes from the temple personnel and is in response to processions or are attempts to create for themselves a place which they could ensure their continued existence in temple life. Secondly, they are also used to indicate movement around temples, to display where individuals passed and what they ought to be thinking about or doing as they did. Frood believes that interior graffiti were predominately used to ritualize the temple personnel’s movements particularly because they are often found close to side

\textsuperscript{180} Wilkinson, \textit{The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt}, 71.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
doors. Thus, graffiti may have acted as reminders for temple personnel that they were now serving and performing to the gods when they entered the temple.\textsuperscript{184}

In regards to more public graffiti, there are scratchings which remain on the outside of temples, however, there are fewer examples to draw from, perhaps indicating a reverence and respect for the temple complex, or it could also simply be an issue with remains and what we have left to us. Though valuable, Frood argues that temple graffiti should not be seen as evidence for a learned lower class or interpreted as she describes, “as evidence for “popular religion” and non-elite involvement in temples, particularly major ones.”\textsuperscript{185} Indeed, I cannot disagree with her assessment except for the idea that non-elites did not leave this graffiti. Almost all of the graffiti comes from the temple personnel who try to claim the space as their own as we can see in the Khonsu Temple roof evidence from Karnak. Numerous graffiti are from low-ranking temple personnel\textsuperscript{186} and I believe that this graffiti reflects how its authors visualised and understood their context. The temple graffiti does not directly respond to art in the same way as in tomb chapels; instead it reflects the response to the building and its religious significance as an active contribution. What remains on these spaces whether in direct sight or not is straight to the point either personally to maintain a presence in the temple precinct forever or professionally, responding to rooms and their decoration to enhance and create objects of veneration strictly for the temple personnel.

Graffiti in Karnak, and Luxor, “range from roughly scrawled names and titles to carefully carved relief scenes.”\textsuperscript{187} In Luxor according to Frood the graffiti is “quite distinctive, perhaps relating to specific aspects of the temple’s function…,”\textsuperscript{188} such as the renewal of the royal \textit{ka}. Alexander Peden suggests that there are two categories for the large amounts of graffiti found in the temples of Karnak and Luxor; the private ones such as on Khonsu temple roof and the public monumental inscriptions such as those of ‘King’ and High Priest of Amun Pinudjem I and his family on Luxor temple.\textsuperscript{189} Peden argues that graffiti was left as an act to ensure that the name of its author would exist for eternity,\textsuperscript{190}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{184} Frood, “Egyptian Temple Graffiti and the Gods: Appropriation and Ritualization in Karnak and Luxor,” 290.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 285.
\item \textsuperscript{186} Jacquet-Gordon, \textit{The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak}, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Peden, \textit{The Graffiti of Pharonic Egypt}, 290-291.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 293.
\end{enumerate}
especially in the case of temple employees as it saved them from the “expense of having a statue or stela erected.”

Karnak temple graffiti in particular has left us copious amounts of information. On the roof of the Khonsu temple we have three hundred and thirty-four graffiti from temple personnel though the graffiti have been overlaid, in many cases, over earlier inscriptions so the number of actual graffiti would have been much larger. Not only do the roof of the temple and some areas of the hypostyle hall have graffiti markings on them, but the walls of the stairs which provide access to the roof also bear numerous graffiti inscriptions. The Khonsu temple was originally built by Ramesses III but was completed and decorated by 20th and 21st Dynasty successors and is made with reused blocks. It is believed that there once existed some sort of kiosk or shrine on top of the roof due to its accessibility and the remaining stairs. Helen Jacquet-Gordon hypothesises that the lost shrine was perhaps the Bnbn due to its occurrence by name in several graffiti and is even represented in one graffito, no. 137. But, unfortunately, we can only guess if there was only one shrine and its function in the space.

The graffiti left on the roof are typically very brief consisting of a short text, normally the name and titles of the individual leaving the graffito, and an outline of a pair of feet. Similar graffiti have been found all over Egypt, and are another manifestation of the same type of graffiti which we have already encountered in tomb chapels in the previous chapter. The graffiti are from temple personnel which we can ascertain not only by the titles in the graffiti but also because only members of the temple personnel would have been allowed access to the temple roof as it is situated in the ambulatory behind the hypostyle hall. There are also drawings dispersed amongst the textual graffiti which too are attributed to the priests and temple personnel who could gain access to the roof space.

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193 Ibid.
194 Ibid., 3.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid., 5.
But why did these individuals, workers of the temple for the gods, journey to the roof and what compelled them to leave their mark? Jacquet-Gordon believes that the answer lies in the practice of dedicating *ka* statues which since the Middle Kingdom had occurred in the courts of temples.\(^{200}\) While these individuals had the means, and perhaps rights, to dedicate such things to the temple the authors of the Khonsu temple roof graffiti were of more humble means primarily *wab*-priests and divine fathers\(^{201}\) (Figure 19). Though they lacked means and rights, their positions did present them with an excellent opportunity to ensure their ability to be permanently connected and part of temple proceedings. Thus, the graffiti are in lieu of statues and the footprints which they outlined acted “as a kind of substitute for themselves so that they would remain forever, at least as long as the temple lasted, in the presence of their god and under his protection.”\(^{202}\) From the New Kingdom there is a significant increase in the number of graffiti found throughout Egypt due to an expansion of the social strata which were able to write their own names and titles.\(^{203}\) Jacquet-Gordon has pointed out how each of the graffiti is different indicating that perhaps the priests were the ones writing their own names and titles without any scribal assistance and if this is true then perhaps the numerous feet outlines which have no textual inscription accompanying them are the work of illiterate temple personnel.\(^{204}\) However, seeing how we are not entirely sure of the circumstances under which these graffiti were made perhaps they were illiterate or perhaps some of the cases were also impacted by time restrictions or other unknown factors.

While both Luxor and Karnak have examples of graffiti, the graffiti on the Khonsu Temple roof in Karnak is an impeccable example of how temple personnel—the only ones with access to such sacred spaces—left hundreds of graffiti depicting a personal response to their setting and a desire, like the *ka* statues of the Karnak and Luxor caches, to stay forever in the temple complex near the god. On this point Frood strongly disagrees claiming rather that graffiti should be seen to complement rather than stand in for personal statuary,\(^{205}\) as I have just stated. However, in contrast, Helen Jacquet-Gordon argues that the graffiti (in particular those on the Khonsu Temple roof) are examples of people who wished to leave a trace of their piety and themselves within the temple


\(^{201}\) Ibid.

\(^{202}\) Ibid.


complex but lacked the means to do so. The graffiti on the temple roof often consists of an inscription accompanied by the author’s footprints which seem to have acted, in lieu of *ka* statues, as a way of remaining forever within the temple precinct and in the presence and protection of the god.206

If we gravitate towards Jacquet-Gordon’s idea we can begin to see the graffiti as a medium which allows us a glimpse into how the users of the roof space acted to claim their own small bit of the temple and sought to be remembered. I believe that graffiti is both a performative, ritual act as Frood insists,207 but, that it is also, like the images and the structure around it, an act of permanence where the authors chose specific spots and left their feet to act as an eternal representation and place for their *ka*’s to inhabit. While she disagrees with the idea of the graffiti acting as *ka* statues, Frood does concede to this idea of graffiti as a powerful intentional act. Frood maintains that graffiti shows how the temple personnel selectively appropriated spaces to ritualize and actively respond to the setting in which they worked, as graffiti, “relate directly to their active involvement in the creation and re-creation of places, and inform their patterns of movement, pausing, gaze and action.”208

The concept of gaze is particularly important in the discussion of reception theory within ancient Egyptian art history. Too often we lose sight of this fundamental element when discussing the art that the temple personnel, the king and the general populace gazed upon. Graffiti is an instinctive response to claim a space, an image or to memorialize a feeling. With regards to reception theory it offers us a wealth of information to better understand the emotional responses and the levels of understandings which were present in the varied audiences viewing works of art in ancient Egypt. If we view temples as active living places then the graffiti on the Khonsu Temple roof is in response to this context. The authors clearly wished to remain in the temple and near the gods but also be part of the temple community. In adding their names to the hundreds of graffiti the temple personnel were engaging with their contemporaries, and their predecessors, creating a dynamic space whereby they could respond to and record in their own way, life in Karnak Temple.

208 Ibid., 299.
These densely packed graffiti are active responses to the temple, each other and claiming the space for the temple personnel. The graffiti also reflects how important the idea of being able to participate in temple ritual life, and life in general, after death was to the ancient Egyptians. Those who left their graffiti on the roof would have known that their names and titles would be seen and thus ritually protected from being forgotten. The number of inscriptions which overlapped or entirely destroyed earlier graffiti further indicates the extent of the additions made over the years and the importance of this particular place.

Another feature of the graffiti on the Khonsu Temple roof, is the use of execration formulae in the protection of many graffiti. According to Jacquet-Gordon the majority of graffiti with the formulae use it to protect against the destruction of the author’s feet. There is only one graffito where they have mentioned it in relation to the individual’s name. Graffito 145 (Figure 20) is the most complete of the execration formulae and reads as follows with the god saying,

as for him who erases the footprints of Djed-ioh, my servant, I will erase his name from the Benben, the great and splendid temple and I will not permit his son to be installed in the place of his father.

Thus, the author is clearly a member of the temple personnel who threatens, via the god, not only the erasure of the culprit but harshly also the prevention of his son from entering the temple service, which at this point in the New Kingdom became a hereditary office. It is extremely interesting to see how important and powerful the depiction of Djed-ioh’s feet are as a representation of him, of his very being. This inscription evidences our earlier hypothesis of the feet’s function as directly aligned with that of the ka statues in tombs and dedicatory statues of royal and non-royals in the court and processional ways of temple complexes.

The reigning hypothesis for why the temple priests would have been on the roof is to do largely with the Opet festival. Jacquet-Gordon believes that some temple personnel would have undoubtedly been stationed on the Khonsu roof to signal when the Khonsu barque needed to join the procession; at the same time the vantage point from the roof would have drawn any available personnel who wished to watch the procession above the

210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
teeming crowds. There are two large incised sketches, graffiti 157 (Figure 21) and 158 (Figure 22), of divine boats illustrated with their decoration and furnishings which add further evidence of why the temple staff were present on the roof. This seeming desire to capture the moment of these boats transporting the gods to participate in the divine rituals indicates that the ‘artist’ believed that this was something which needed to be captured and retained; it was a scene which moved them. These graffiti are helpful for providing modern scholars with a sense of the individual among the masses. You can quite easily imagine a temple worker crouching down and carving a quick sketch of the scene he’s just witnessed. Jacquet-Gordon also found that there were a great number of other sketches similar to the two barque sketches including the subjects of gods, people, animals, plants and other objects across the roof space. As a cohesive group these graffiti are important whether in the form of sketches, inscriptions of names and titles, or even just the outline of someone’s feet. These graffiti reveal both a religious and human compulsion for these individuals to leave their mark on the temple roof and create for themselves an eternal link to the temple of Khonsu and Karnak which could serve them as long as the temple functioned.

Reception in an ancient context is an incredibly challenging concept to prove. Not only because of the limited data available to us but also because the scholarship we have produced in modern times has been decidedly focused away from experience and investigating how the ancient Egyptians understood and valued their art. With regards to temples Bell argues that while interior temple decoration was intended for an audience of the gods, the art in the public spaces was intended to be seen by the people. While only 1-5% were literate, everyone was able to understand some aspects of the art. The graffiti on the Khonsu Temple roof make a powerful statement of reception for the temple personnel who left their mark believing that it would provide them eternal protection and proximity to the god.

Just as we have seen in the last chapter the ancient Egyptians believed in the power of images whether in statue, painting, relief, or graffiti. The standardised imagery prevalent in temples would have provided the ancient Egyptian audience with references to

213 Ibid., 5-6.
214 Ibid., 7.
216 Ibid.
understand the ceremonies and the importance behind them. The art functions as a mediator both a part of the real world and part of the divine, being all at once static and immovable as well as living and interactive. Scenes seen in temple complexes would also have likely influenced tomb chapel decoration to some degree. If we compare temples to the tomb chapels studied earlier then we see many contrasts and few similarities. The biggest contrast between private monuments to the dead and a public temple for the gods is that one functions privately while the other operates publicly to protect and maintain social order. Another contrast is the issue of access. Access to the temple was, as we have seen, very limited; preventing anyone but temple personnel and the king entrance into the sacred areas of the temple complex. Therefore, the decoration, in these spaces at least, truly was only for the eyes of the god and the king. In contrast anyone could visit the tomb chapels and were often sought after by the deceased through ‘Appeals to the Living’ and inviting decorations. However, these two religious structures did have one vital aspect in common. That the general public had some visual knowledge of what the scenes in tomb chapels and the decoration of the temples asked of them, and in both settings by interacting with the images—even just by looking—they effectively created living images that functioned to maintain order, provide for the deceased or the re-incarnated king respectively, and convene with the living. The images and art we have investigated in temples must have stirred within the viewers feelings of awe and magnificence. Unfortunately though the reception of the ancient Egyptian viewer in temples can be inferred but it is in no way as clear as the messages and reactions left behind by visitors to the tomb chapels; but it still exists even if it is faint.

In conclusion, temples functioned in a liminal space and had the primary and integral role of continuing the daily life of ancient Egypt. Temples provided the gods with homes and safeguarded them from the chaotic forces at work in the world. While kings and their temple staff had unlimited access to all areas of the temple and its decorations we know that the ‘average’ Egyptians did not and were kept to the exterior walls and outer courts during processions on ritual days and festivals such as the Opet Festival. The entire temple structure was designed and decorated to constantly reinforce the concept of the sacred space and acted as a microcosm in which the gods lived. There is evidence in the form of graffiti by temple personnel and caches of private statuary which prove that ancient Egyptians of every level of society were given at least partial access to these monumental structures and could watch and be part of the king’s rebirth and direct
prayers and wishes to the gods and the king. The art present on the outside of temples and the first entry courtyards which the public could access often were scenes which depicted the king’s conquests and battles which symbolically reinforced his dominion over the land and his ability to maintain ma ‘at. Though limited, the ordinary Egyptians would have gained visual literacy, which would have been immense seeing both the depictions on the walls, columns, and exterior surfaces as well as the ka statues of both royal and private individuals. Thus it should be unsurprising then that there was so much interaction with the tomb chapels and that we should understand the ancient Egyptians as having, at minimum, a basic understanding of the complex ritualistic concepts depicted on the temple walls which they visited and lived with.
CONCLUSION

“...images have taken over as the possessors of revolutionary force. They exceed our linguistic abilities to define and corral them; they are slippery things that operate within networks of our making, but run on their own rules. Their impact hasn’t made us all the same.”218

Though written three thousand years after the period of Egyptian history surveyed in this thesis, Anthony Byrt’s quote mirrors how images were perceived in ancient Egypt. Created by human hands, intentions, and demands, images in ancient Egypt possessed the ability to become living entities. They too, like art of the twenty-first century, run by their own rules and are often exceedingly difficult to place in any one category of study.

As has been shown over the course of this thesis, reception theory is a useful method for investigating how ancient Egyptians valued, interacted with, and understood the art which surrounded them. We can learn so much from looking at art from the perspectives of the viewer rather than the creators or commissioners. Ancient Egyptian art history is an area of research which is frequently overshadowed by scholars who favour linguistic and archaeological material. Whether intentionally or unconsciously done, images and the art of ancient Egypt have often been an afterthought and valued less in scholarship. Thankfully, thanks to the hard work of scholars such as Dorothea Arnold, Gay Robins and Melinda Hartwig—to name only a very few—the tide is turning and ancient Egyptian art history is coming into its own and demanding recognition as a distinct and valuable area of research.

This thesis has also shown that art and images in ancient Egypt were viewed as liminal areas between the sacred and the secular; which could be inhabited by the dead, the king and the gods. Throughout the research there has been overwhelming evidence that ancient Egyptians viewed and used images as a way to convene with the living and ensure their continued participation in life after death. Though literacy was scarce in ancient Egypt images from state temples, visits to tomb chapels during festivals and festal occasions, and processions of the gods during festivals, provided the ancients with the ability to view and absorb images and symbols creating an inherited visual literacy. While texts are integral to our knowledge of ancient Egyptian society often the accompanying images provided viewers who were illiterate or mildly so—such as women or lower class

218 Anthony Byrt, This Model World: Travels to the Edge of Contemporary Art (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2016), 222.
citizens—enough context so as to be understood to some degree. Likewise, while interior temple images were designed wholly for the gods and the king, the exterior reliefs and public courtyard drenched visitors with information about the gods and the king. I believe that the very act of gazing upon the wall art of tomb chapels and temples, this active engagement with the art, was to the ancient Egyptians an evoking of the figures depicted and allowed images to transform into, “living entities with lives of their own.”

While researching it became clear that Egyptologists need to pay more attention to Egyptian art history and acknowledge the value there is in studying it. So often in academia we make sweeping statements about culture, but, reception theory pushes us to provide explicit examples and seek out interpretations which may not have been sought otherwise. Thus, in my opinion every Egyptologist should use or try to use reception theory in their research. We should all care about reception theory because it is a useful method for looking at images and art and being able to confidently address how Egyptians viewed the world around them. Also we should begin to use methods which originate outside of our distinct disciplines to allow Egyptology to grow and trial new ways of approaching material. The stigma around using other disciplines methods for Egyptology needs to be addressed in future studies. Egyptology would benefit greatly if we used other methods and interacted much more freely with subjects like art history, sociology, anthropology and the sciences. The entrenched belief that there are only certain ways of looking at Egyptian history, and by the right people, is unnecessary and hindering Egyptology from achieving so much.

Before starting this thesis I had a naïve understanding of the attitude towards art history in Egyptology academia. Egyptology, as I mentioned in the first chapter, was founded in archaeology and linguistics and since its inception art has always played a lesser role and struggled to be seen as a distinct and valuable subject. I believe that the influence of the modern western world which sees these areas of culture as quite separate was part of the problem and left art out because it served as more of a base for other disciplines. However, as this thesis has shown art and images were understood in their own right more than texts—based on literacy—and can reveal to us more about the inherited visual literacy which existed. Therefore, it seems counterproductive to continue to avoid art and

images as areas which can teach us much more about ancient Egyptian society than we have understood before or strengthen what we already suspect.

This thesis presented a holistic approach to reception theory in order to reveal why it is so valuable to scholars. In chapter one the literature highlighted a key issue with regards to implementing reception theory in ancient Egyptian art history; that is, the lack of scholarship which focuses on wider uses of reception theory. The foundation texts introduced us to the stigma surrounding art history in Egyptology and the generalized statements which are used to describe the process of reception but without explicitly naming it. The newer scholarship which uses reception theory is small but incredibly adept at describing how and why we should be investigating the response people had to art and images. The issue is, however, these new scholars have focused almost entirely on reception which occurred in private tomb chapels. While these are areas with large numbers of reception evidence, reception theory is scalable and as proven in chapter three you can use it to investigate reception in large public temples as effectively as tombs.

In chapter two we surveyed several private Theban tomb chapels which revealed the different ways people left evidence of their reception and also helped to train our eyes what to look for. Within them they contain all the information we need to prove and study reception theory. As we discovered these tombs reveal the deceased’s intentions to ensure they remained part of life, and provisioned for eternity in the event of the destruction of their tomb cult. Crucially, every image in the tombs we looked at is intended to be seen and understood by a viewer. Likewise ‘Appeals to the Living’ were situated to entice passers-by to read the offering formula and to try to draw them in to make further offerings to the deceased in return for the dead’s assistance. These tomb chapels represent personal interactions from both the deceased and the living. From studying these interactions and how the spaces were used and understood by the ancient Egyptians, we can gain an appreciation for the value and sacredness images had and their powerful reach as well. There is visible interaction and intention in tomb chapels from both the living and the dead, and art is the mediator between these two different forces.

From the smaller private tomb chapels the thesis then explored the larger and more complex state temples in chapter three. This was an important step for this thesis to show that reception theory can and should be used to investigate larger and more complex sites. Though infinitely more difficult, primarily due to lack of surviving evidence, the
complexes of Luxor and Karnak are perfect examples of different types of reception which occurred inside and outside the temple. Though the interior scenes and rooms were areas unreachable by the everyday Egyptian, the outer court areas conveyed scenes of kings and gods which must have been understood to some extent by ancient viewers. I am not the first to have questioned the stereotype of understanding, Gay Robins noted it when she concluded her book on art that the everyday Egyptians, “[a]lthough excluded from entry, the non-elite must have received an unmistakable message concerning the power of the state.” Temples would have provided ample visual clues and fed into the inherited visual literacy of the visiting ancient Egyptians. The purpose of these monuments was not only to provide and worship the gods who dwelled within, but, also, to reinforce the king and the state’s dominion to its people and visitors. Clearly art was understood to a degree by everyone or else the pharaoh’s would have produced other expressions of their power.

Obviously there are limitations for applying reception theory. They include: lack of available evidence, modern projection and bias, direct relevance to research, and issues when applying to archaeological or linguistic material. For instances where we are unsure of who the audience was it is impossible to discuss reception theory without then speculating an audience. Also being removed from ancient Egyptian society means we are also prone to projecting our ideas and beliefs on images which may or may not have been used as we assume. In focusing on the receivers rather than the producers, we are much more prone to bias and overly investing images with powers they may not have actually had.

More scholarship needs to be done on reception theory and its application in Egyptology. In particular research into earlier time periods and temples would benefit greatly from being studied through the lens of reception theory. There should also be a broader application of this theory in Egyptology as a whole for the discussion around how audiences digest art, architecture, religion and literature is imperative for gaining a better understanding of how the ancients existed and lived. Simultaneously, while increasing the application of reception theory in art history there needs to be a continued discussion about the restrictions around Egyptian art history and how it is approached in scholarship. What once suited early scholars can no longer be accepted as the ‘norm’. The evidence

we have remaining to us should be engaged with in a diverse way. As we found in our study of tombs and temples, the intentions behind actions such as graffiti, dedicatory statues, art, images and ‘Appeals to the Living’, are revealing as to how Egyptians interacted with images and understood the world around them. There needs to be more of a push to ask “why?” to try and tease out new meanings from old treasures. I strongly believe that the next steps have to include reaching out beyond our own Egyptological framework and engaging with, in particular for art, different disciplines.
Figure 1: Tracing of the North Wall of the Tomb of Nakht (TT52). Shows Nakht and his Wife seated while the Sem-priest consecrates their image, with servants bringing in offerings. Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917), Plate XIII.
Figure 2: Tracing of the Fishing and Fowling Scene on the West Wall of the Tomb of Nakht (TT52). Representing eternal sustenance for the deceased and symbolic control over enemies and chaos. Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917), Plate XXII.
Figure 3: Colour copy by F.S Unwin of the wine making and bird catching scenes from the Tomb of Nakht (TT52). Detail from Figure 2 above. Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917), Plate XXVI.
Figure 4: Tracing on the East Wall of the Harvest Scene and Nakht and his wife offering to the gods (TT52). Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917), Plate XVIII.
Figure 5: Colour copy of the right-hand scenes of the ploughing from Figure 4. Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1917), Plate XXI.
Figure 6: Graffito no. 33 from the Tomb of Antefoker and Senet. Found in, Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I and of his Wife, Senet (No. 60)* (London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 1920), Plate XXXVII.
Figure 7: Graffito 5, Hay MS 29851, 68-9. This graffito is incredibly important for showing how visitors attached their names or texts to images in the scenes in order to try and benefit from them even more. Found in, Stephen Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161) as Copied by Robert Hay” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 72 (1986): 85-87. doi: 10.2307/3821481.
Figure 9: Graffito 3, Hay MS 29822, 10. There is another tracing of the text to the right, in front of mourners. Quirke asserts it is a re-wording of the left hand side. Found in, Stephen Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161) as Copied by Robert Hay” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 72 (1986): 81-83. doi: 10.2307/3821481.
Figure 10: Graffito 4, Hay MS 29822, 112 and Hay MS 29851,68. Like Appendix 2, this too has a tracing and a hand-copy from Hay. It is found in the same register as Graffito 3. Found in, Stephen Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161) as Copied by Robert Hay” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 72 (1986): 82-84. doi: 10.2307/3821481.
Figure 12: Graffito 2, Hay MS 29822. No note as to where it was originally found, Quirke places it on the right wall. The first line introduces that the passage is meant to be recited, likely in the ritual for the Valley Festival. Found in, Stephen Quirke, “The Hieratic Texts in the Tomb of Nakht the Gardener, at Thebes (No. 161) as Copied by Robert Hay” The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, 72 (1986): 80, 82. doi: 10.2307/3821481.
Figure 15: Opet barge scene: east wall, first register, water procession, barge of queen towing divine barque of the goddess Mut; three drawing enlargements, joined L C 036. Acetate, 8x10, Luxor Temple, Epigraphic Survey Negative 13791, © CHICAGO HOUSE. [removed for digital copy of thesis]
Figure 16: Procession in the Court of Ramesses II: south wall at right of door, attendants with sacrificial ox following three princes and attendants approaching the temple L A 046, L A 051. Acetate, 5x7, Luxor Temple, Epigraphic Survey Negative 13387, © CHICAGO HOUSE. https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/ee910177-e0d0-411b-ac53-00cebd2899e7
Figure 17: Court of Ramesses II: south wall at right of door, relief showing prince at head of procession approaching from right L A 051, L A 052. Acetate, 5x7, Luxor Temple, Epigraphic Survey Negative 13389, © CHICAGO HOUSE. https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/ac313f80-d2ea-4ec3-b8ee-fc71c34769c.
Figure 18: Ramesses II statue, northeast facade, east tower, gateway. Acetate, 8x10, Luxor Temple, Epigraphic Survey Negative 13109, © CHICAGO HOUSE. https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/7d33cab3-22ed-46ca-ae7e-9f48f2c4da09
Figure 19: Graffito 175. Found in, Helen Jacquet-Gordon, *The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak: A Manifestation of Piety* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2004), 64 and Plate 66. 


Haven: Yale Egyptological Seminar, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Graduate School, Yale University, 1989.


