

As an Egyptologist and historian I have tried to partner in this dissertation Egyptological and historical methods used on the topic of the uses of the past and on the issue of the presence of uses of the past in the Egyptian culture. There is a large discussion on these enquiries in both disciplines. I have focused on sources originating in the Egyptian New Kingdom (around 1540 to 1080 BC) and tried to analyse some issues related to the social memory and presumed historical awareness of this period. There is a specific material – a group of inscriptions called the “visitors’ inscriptions” (Besucherinschriften). These texts are well-known to Egyptology but in my opinion deserve even more attention, being an attestation to the culture of a period literate stratum – the scribes.

The thesis is divided into three major parts:

1/ the uses of the past – theoretical approaches, giving also the reasons for carrying out the analysis of the uses of the past of the ancient cultures, especially Egypt;
2/ the New Kingdom and presumed uses of the past in the Egyptian society of that time;

3/ the visitors’ graffiti, including:

- state of research, the graffiti database project;
- the description of the graffiti in a statistical overview;
- interpretations and conclusions, attempting also to insert the graffiti into the sub-elite culture of the New Kingdom Egypt;
- a catalogue of the Abusir and Saqqara graffiti.

The visitors’ graffiti are the core of the work. The area chosen is that of Abusir and Saqqara, in the period of 18th dynasty to the Ramesside period, mainly 19th dynasty. The research has taken a period of altogether five years, from 2001 to 2006, and it cannot be considered as concluded. The fascinating world of the education, career, ideas and mentality of the Egyptian scribe in the New Kingdom has many expressions and the graffiti are but one of its aspects.