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THE BEGINNING OF THE FESTIVAL CALENDAR
IN THE TOMB OF NEFERHOTEP (No. 50) AT THEBES

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The tomb of Neferhotep, divine father of Amun in the reign of Haremhab, was published by Bénédite in 1889¹, selected texts having already been drawn by Duemichen and Brugsch. The tomb was known to the early travellers, among others Hay and Cailliaud who copied part of the wall-decoration². A number of fragments of relief are at present lying on the floor of the tomb. One fragment, however, was removed from the tomb before any of the above mentioned travellers visited it, and it has spent a long life in the Bankes collection at Kingston Lacy³.

The name and the title of the tomb owner remain on the fragment along with those of a son also known from the tomb, thus establishing a certain link with Theban tomb no. 50. The nature of the inscription, the widths of the columns of hieroglyphs, and the height of the main register suggest that the fragment once belonged on the left side of the doorway from the passage to the shrine, next to the inscribed part called L in Bénédite's publication⁴. Unlike most of the other walls in the tomb which are almost completely

* I am indebted to The National Trust, Bankes Collection, Kingston Lacy for permission to publish the Bankes fragment, and to Miss D. Langslow of the Canterbury Cathedral Wall-paintings Workshop for allowing me access to it while restoration work was being considered. I also wish to thank the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, in particular the Chief Inspector for Upper Egypt, Mr Mohammed es-Sughayir and the Inspector on the West Bank, Mr Mohammed Nasr, who made it possible for me to enter the tomb of Neferhotep, and Inspector Taha Maamun who accompanied me. I wish to extend my thanks to Dr Lanny Bell for allowing me full use of the facilities offered by The Oriental

Institute, Chicago House, Luxor during my stay there in January 1984.

¹ Bénédite, *Tombeau de Neferhotep* in *Mém. Miss.* v [2], p. 489-540. The texts were 'rather inaccurately published', to use Gardiner's words (Nina de G. Davies and A.H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhât*, p. 115, n. 3), and the author places the tomb in the 'Asâsif instead of at Qurna.

² References to be found *ad loc.* in PM I². The Bankes fragment is not mentioned in this work.

³ W.J. Bankes travelled in Egypt between 1812 and 1825.

⁴ The height of the upper register of the Bankes fragment and of L is 37 cm, the width

deprived of colour, the yellow background remains on wall L, as it does in the main register of the Bankes fragment.

The list of festivals on the adjoining west wall of the passage actually begins in the top register of the wall next to the doorway (L), as Bénédite rightly observed. This becomes even more obvious when the text of the Bankes fragment is taken into consideration.

The festival dates extant on the walls by the end of the last century include the following: 17.I 3^{ht} (*W³g* Feast); 18.IV 3^{ht} (making the Osiris bed); 25.IV 3^{ht} (a 'Goddess Feast'); 1.I *prt* (*Nhb k³w* Feast); 22.I *prt* (Feast of 'The Two Pleasing Ladies' (Isis and Nephthys)); 4.IV *prt* (Feast of Bastet); 1.I *šmw* (Feast of Termuthis⁵); 23.IV *šmw* (making the Osiris bed and other rites); 30.IV *šmw* (New Year's Eve)⁶. The texts read from right to left and from top to bottom, with the dates written in chronological order.

In the top register of the Bankes fragment no dates or names of a feast are mentioned in the beginning of the text, but the rites of the lamp are similar to those carried out during the five epagomenal days⁷, and these would indeed be the only feasible dates to come between the New Year and the last day of the year.

The vignette shows the son of the tomb owner presenting offerings, including a huge jar of ointment and two tapers. The first column of text is damaged, but the remaining six provide an explanation:



... *tk³w pn nfr n wsir it ntr Nfr-htp m mⁿndt m msktt n ski:f nn htm:f n dt in s³:f w^b 'Imm-m-int m³: hrw*

'... this beautiful lamp for Osiris, the divine father Neferhotep, in the day bark and in the night bark. It shall not be destroyed. It shall not ever perish. Says his son, the *wa^b*-priest Ameneminet, justified.'

of the vertical columns of text being 4 cm. The columns of text in the second register are in both instances 4.5 cm wide. The entire height of the Bankes fragment is 44.5 cm, the width being 33 cm.

⁵ In the later Theban calendar, the month of Termuthis (Pharmouthi) is the name given to

the previous month, IV *prt*. This may be the effect of the sliding calendar. (I owe this observation to Mr J.D. Ray).

⁶ These feasts are quoted in Schott, *Alt-ägyptische Festdaten*.

⁷ Cf. Davies and Gardiner, *o.c.*, p. 96-8.


The subject of the lamp is taken up in the two left columns of text in L, where it is hailed as being the eye of Horus. The ritual of providing light for the deceased is explained in a text in Theban tomb no. 23, which is very similar to the text in the tomb of Neferhotep as it continues on the west wall⁸. A representation of a lamp placed in the boat of the deceased can be seen in Theban tomb no. 82⁹.

The text in the two columns to the left in the Bankes fragment concerns the rite of making an Osiris bed¹⁰. This is also known to have taken place from 18. - 25.IV 3_{ht} and on 23. - 30.IV 3_{mw}, data likewise provided in this tomb. The last column of text is partly destroyed along with the beginning of the paragraph which presumably specified the day of the initial preparations :



... hrw n iwḥ bšš sš ḥnkyt w3ḥ ... n nfryt r tpy [3_{ht}] sw


'... the day of moistening the barley and setting aside [offerings to the divine father of Amun Neferhotep?] ... until the first month of [3_{ht}], day ...'¹¹

On L there now follows another rite. The few signs remaining suggest a rite to do with anointing (☞ ḫ wrḥ). In Theban tomb no. 82 it is *mdt* oil which is presented on one of the epagomenal days¹². The word *wrḥ* may just conceivably refer to the anointing of the wick, although the expression used elsewhere for dipping the wick in the wax is  *sgnn*¹³. The text on L may join directly on to the partly destroyed column of the Bankes fragment.

⁸ Cf. N. de G. Davies, *JEA* 10, especially p. 12-4.

⁹ Davies and Gardiner, *o.c.*, pl. 12. — The word *tk3w* would seem to describe both the tapers, like those presented by Amenemhet on the Bankes fragment, and lamps consisting of a bowl with a wick in it, cf. Davies' discussion in the article on lamps quoted in n. 8. Cf. also the entry by Fischer in *LdÄ* ('Lampe') and a passage in Herodotus II, 67 (A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II Commentary 1-98*). For ordinary working lamps (*ḥbs*) see J. Černý, *The Valley of the Kings*, Chapter 5.

¹⁰ For this subject cf. Davies and Gardiner, *o.c.*, p. 115-6, and the entry by Seeber in *LdÄ* ('Kornosiris') with a reference to the text of 18.IV 3_{ht} in the tomb of Neferhotep.

¹¹ Three strokes are visible on the fragment, the total being probably 5 . The making of the Osiris bed took eight full days. If the day mentioned is the 5th, the rites would presumably have begun on the third epagomenal day.

¹² Cf. Davies and Gardiner, *o.c.*, p. 97 and pl. 32.


¹³ Cf. Černý, *o.c.*, p. 45.

In the lower register of the fragment we have part of a date, and otherwise mainly the tomb owner's name and title, written in two directions. Below the text on the right would be a representation of Neferhotep, facing left, as in several instances on the west wall, with the legend :






wsir it ntr [*n 'Imm*] *Nfr-htp m^{3c}* [*hrw*]

'Osiris, the divine father [of Amun], Neferhotep, justified.'

Then to the left is the beginning of the text which continues in the second register of L and on the west wall. The nature of the text suggests that it is indeed a continuation of the rites mentioned in the first register of the west wall, namely the *W³g* Feast which was celebrated not only on the 17th but also on the 18.I *3ht*¹⁴. The date partly destroyed on the Bankes fragment is therefore most likely to be 18.I *3ht*. Of the following signs only the tomb owner's name remains (written twice), followed by . From the text on L it is obvious that we are dealing with the completion of the rites which began the night before, namely the re-arranging of the model boats deposited in the tomb to face south after half the night has passed¹⁵.

On wall L the third register is much damaged, but from the Medinet Habu calendar we know that the feast mentioned, that of Sokar in Shetyt, was celebrated on 26.IV *3ht*¹⁶. The chronological sequence of the feasts is thus strictly adhered to in the calendar.

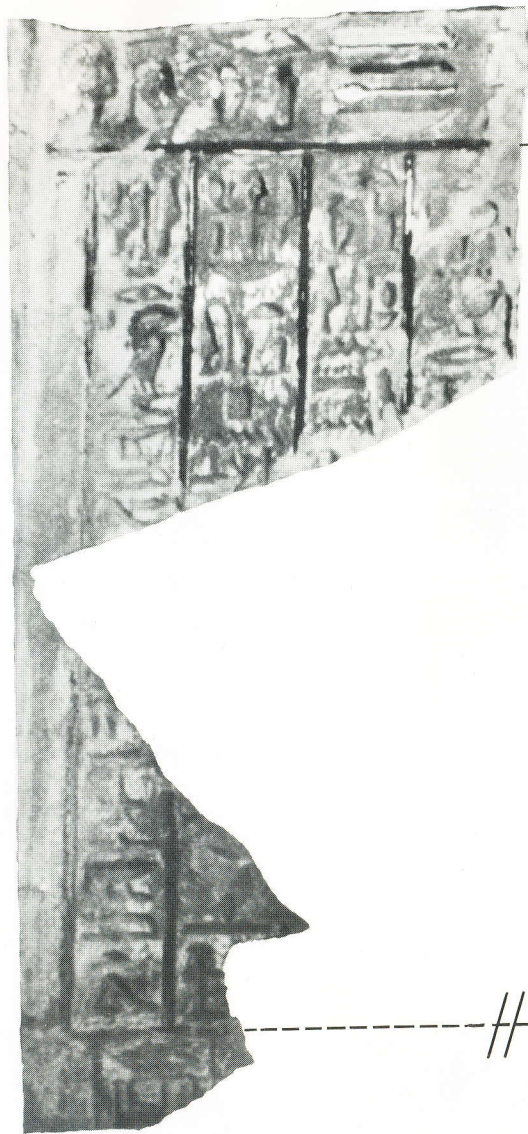
Along the upper edge of the Bankes fragment are the remains of a horizontal band of text, which continued on wall L and the west wall of the tomb. Only two signs are legible, a  and a  or , the latter possibly suggesting the title of the entire bulk of text on the two walls as being a calendar of festival days to be observed in the necropolis by those instructed by Neferhotep, just as his remote compatriot Hepdjefai arranged his funerary cult almost eight centuries earlier. The feasts are the traditional feasts which every Egyptian would normally know about. But the events which took place in Neferhotep's younger days must have induced him to make it absolutely sure that the funerary cult was back to normal after the Amarna interlude.

¹⁴ Cf. Schott, *o.c.*, p. 81-2.

¹⁵ A similar text in TT 299 specifies that it is the (symbolic) voyage to Abydos which is under-

taken, by means of the model boats (cf. Schott, *o.c.*, p. 81 (inscription 19)).

¹⁶ Cf. Schott, *ibidem*, p. 91 (inscription 74).



Wall L



The Bankes Fragment