Anointing Scenes at Theban Private Tombs of the New Kingdom

Prepared by

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Introduction

Although the passing of thousands years, the Egyptian civilization is considered on the greatest civilizations of the ancient world. The conservation of the ancient civilization is kept at the inscriptions and scenes recorded on the walls of the temples and tombs.

At the old city of Thebes, and on its west bank, the ancient necropolis is located and contains the tombs of priests, high scribes who are known by the nobles. The tombs are more than 400 tombs and they are located in the mountain of "EL Quran" in the north in the area of Dra Abu-Elnaga and extend till the south in the region of Deir EL-Madina.

These nobles were depicted on the walls of their tombs daily life such as supervising work and handcrafts, Agriculture, deceased with relatives, and anointing depicted many times at the privet tombs of the new kingdom.

There are many previous researches dealt with anointing in ancient Egypt like Thomson (1991) (1994).

The aims of this study are to identify the scenes of anointing to recognize the situation of these processes through displaying of scenes in the Theban private tombs of the new kingdom.

Methodology

This study is following a descriptive and analyzing Methodology to achieve its aims.

In this study will display anointing scenes at the new kingdom Theban private tombs. It will focus the situation of anointing scenes and examples for these scenes. And comparative between anointing in ancient Egyptian time and nowadays

Difficulties:

- 1 Most of the scenes are damaged.
- 2 Many tombs are not open for scholars and some of the scenes are not published.

PREFACE

An important class of ancient Egyptian cosmetics consisted of oil and fats (ointment) and their use is frequently mentioned in the ancient records and by several of the Greek and Roman writers. That in a hot, dry climate, such as that of Egypt, oils and fats should have been applied to the skin and hair was only natural, and the practice still persists in Nubia, Sudan and other parts of Africa. It was used in ancient Egypt for many purposes, as example for cleansing for scenting (perfuming) and oiling the body, for cooking and for medical purposes. Cleanliness was for the Egyptians a symbol of moral purity and essential to the dead and the living. Purification ritual was applied equally to the image of the god as to the bodies of men (body care). The principle cleansing agents were water and creams or oil to which perfumes or astringents such as lime had been added Soap was not invented until Roman time. In such a dry

climate it was desirable to apply cream to body and hair to prevent premature ageing.²

To be "anointed" is among other things to be made sacred; to be set apart and dedicated to serve God; to be endowed with enabling gifts and grace; to be divinely designated, inaugurated, or chosen for some purpose. The English word *anoint* derives from the ancient Latin *inunctus*, meaning "smear with oil". Anointing the body or head with oil or ointment seems to have been a mark of respect sometimes paid by a host to his guests. ³

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Anointing scenes

Nothing has as yet been said about the physical action which was involved in anointing. It has been demonstrated that from the Eighteenth Dynasty until the beginning of the Ptolenaic period the verb wrh referred to anointing the head, while gs referred to anointing the body. The manner in which the oil was applied to the various parts of the body cannot, however, be recovered from the texts alone. For this information we must turn to depictions of anointing. The representations of anointing occur in three major settings; within banquet scenes; during instances of ceremonial reward; and at ritual performances. By ritual performances I mean depictions of portions of such rituals as the daily temple ritual, the opening of the mouth ritual, and the funerary offering ritual. Occasionally these depictions are accompanied by labels identifying the action taking place. At other times we must infer a relationship between texts describing the general scene, the banquet, or the reward ceremony; and the depictions of these activities.

The little fingers and the seven sacred oils

in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Qar scene (fig. 1), the cult functionary extends his two little fingers towards the deceased, in a gesture very like the one that I have hypothesized as the original 'opening of the mouth' act.⁴ This gesture, however, is used to perform the ritual of anointing. A similar gesture, in which one little finger is offered while the other hand holds the jar (fig. 2), continues to be the typical gesture for anointing throughout Egyptian history.⁵

The use of the same gesture in both these rituals might be explained by the hypothesis that the anointing ritual was yet another version of the 'opening of the mouth' sequence. In practice, however, the two rituals seem to have been carefully distinguished. In the Pyramid Texts, neither the spells accompanying the seven sacred oils nor those that follow, accompanied by offerings of eye paint and cloth, make the slightest reference to the mouth of the deceased or contain any other elements that can be related to the birth sequence. Moreover, the oil rite was performed using a platter that was very like the platter used to hold the psš-kf set, but had seven round depressions for oils rather than recesses to hold ritual equipment. The occurrence in the archaeological evidence of complementary ritual platters for the two rites further demonstrates that the oil ceremony was performed along with the 'opening of the mouth' and was not replaced by it. The parallel relationship of the two rituals can also be seen in the Pyramid Texts and offering lists, where the anointing ritual directly follows the offerings made with the psš-kf set. In the pyramid of Unas, the second register of the offering ritual begins at this point, graphically emphasizing the parallel nature of the two rituals as well as the break between them.

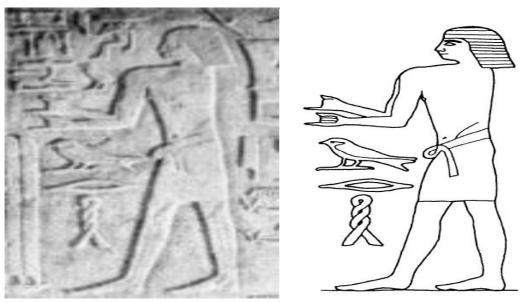


Fig 1 Anointing in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Qar (After Simpson 1976, Pl IX).

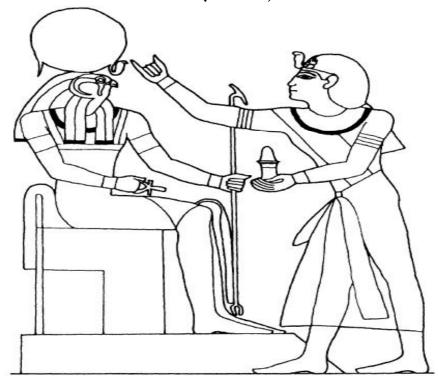


Fig 2 Seti I anointing the uraeus of Re-Harakhti, from his cenotaph temple at Abydos(After David 1981,no 14).

Banquet Scenes

A lot of Tombs from ancient Egyptian history depict scenes of banqueting. These scenes are over and over to be translated as -517 -

showing a funerary meal, but representations of banqueting on more "mundane celebration" are also found, and it is often difficult to tell how a particular scene is to be explained. Beginning with the Eighteenth Dynasty tombs, however, we find more detailed scenes of banqueting. These show the deceased and his wife seated on stools or chairs before a table filled with food offerings. Several rows of guests are often depicted as seated facing the guests of honor. These guests are depicted on a much smaller scale, and are separated by sex. The exception to this is the parents of the guest of honor, who are seated beside one another, just as the tomb owner and his wife. Servants are seen circulating among the guests and performing different duties. Usually male servants serve the men and female servants the women; but there are exceptions to this rule. The servants pour and serve the drinks of the banquet, tie wreaths or flower arrangements and fillets around the necks and heads of the guests, and, of interest here, apply ointment to the heads and bodies of the guests.. In addition to the guests and servants, these banquets were also attended by musicians, singers, and dancers who provided the entertainment and enjoyment for the celebration.8

These banquets occurred en several types of celebration. The main section seems to be between everyday scenes, in which the "master is still alive, and "mortuary" scenes, is which he is dead. Examples of mundane scenes are found in the tombs of Rekhmire (TTI00) and Kenamun (TT93). The banquet in the tomb of Rekhmire apparently took place when he went to greet the new King Amenhotep II upon his accession to the throne. In the banquet scene of TT93, the guest of honor is King Amenhotep II, shown as a child, rather than Kenamun, the tomb owner. The purpose of this scene, which Fox assumes to be "essentially biographical," appears to be to explain "the friendship between Kenamun's family and the King."

on the other hand Mortuary banquets divide into three groups; the funeral banquet, depicting the first meal "the deceased enjoys after his revivication; banquets occurring during particular mortuary festivals such as the New Year Festival, the Festival of Djesru, and the Festival of the Valley; and banquets representing the daily mortuary meal provided for the deceased. Now it should be

noted that these banqueting scenes show little or no difference in content, in any case of the celebration of the banquet. It appears that these scenes are not to be considered as reflecting a specific festival, but as an abstraction that may be applied to all festivals.¹⁰

Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by one servant

TT 56: the tomb of Userhat Eighteenth Dynasty (temp. Amenhotep II)

From all of the scenes of the festival painted in tombs, it is not possible to know if they represent the festivities in which the deceased actually participated when alive, or those to which he wishes to be associated after his death. For something as popular as that of the Beautiful Festival of the Valley, it would be risky to say that it represents either one of the two.

Here is what was written by the great Egyptologist Jan Assmann: "To have his meal has, at all times, been interpreted as an act of appropriate socialization to extract the dead from solitude, and to integrate him in a social sphere. [...] In the 18th Dynasty, it is in the circle of his parents and friends that the deceased has the funerary meal [...] (The scenes of banquet) have a more general sense. They emphasis the terrestrial character of the food of the dead and on its goal, which is to unite the deceased with his family. The festival definitely plays a major role in this meeting. As well as the tomb being a sacred place, permitting to establish a contact between the here-and-now and beyond, the festival is a sacred moment which facilitates this contact [...] The "socialization" of funerary belief is a decisive turn in Egyptian religion. It characterises the New Kingdom (c. 1500 - 1100 B.C.).

In this tomb we find a scene of anointing the body of a guest at a banquet which is typical of this type of scene. Here we find a scene in which a female quest is having her chest anointed by one female servant. The servant holds the right upper arm of the guest just below the armpit with her left hand; and with her right she applies ointment as far as one knows or can see just over the left breast of the guest. And we can see in this scene the jar of ointment

upon the ground below the servant (fig. 3)¹². This is a feature which appears in almost all of the scenes depicting the anointing of the body of a guest at a banquet even if in the Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by one servant or the Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. While the act of anointing the head of an individual as we will explain only required the attention of one servant; anointing the body required the services of two.¹³



Fig 3 TT 56 the tomb of Userhat Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by one servant. (by the researcher)¹⁴

Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants

TT100: the tomb of Rehkmire (temp. Thutmosis III—Amenhotep II)

In this tomb we find a scene of anointing the body of a guest at a banquet which is typical of this type of scene. Here we find a scene in which a female quest is having her chest anointed by a female servant. The servant holds the right upper arm of the guest just below the armpit with her left hand; and with her right she applies ointment as far as one knows or can see just over the left breast of

the guest. The second servant holds a jar of ointment in her two arms (fig. 4). This is a feature which appears in almost all of the scenes depicting the anointing of the body of a guest at a banquet. While the act of anointing the head of an individual as we will explain only required the attention of one servant; anointing the body required the services of two. Very similar scenes we can see in the tombs of Djeserkareseneb (TT 38, temp. Thutmosis IV) Djhouty (TT45, temp. Amenhotep II), TT 75 (Amehotep Si-Se, temp. Thutmosis IV) and TT 175 (owner unknown, temp).

Two registers below this scene show a male guest having his left forearm anointed. A male servant holds the forearm in both his hands. Behind him stands another male servant holding the jar of ointment (fig 5). Here a female guest is having her forearm anointed by female servants (fig. 6).²⁰

Here we find a scene in which a male quest is having his chest and his neck anointed by a male servant. The servant put his both hand on the chest and the neck of the guest. The second servant holds a jar of ointment in his two arms (fig. 7)²¹

Here we find a scene in which two male quest the anointed by two male servant. The scene show as two male guests sitting and standing in front of them two male servant. One servant holds a jar of ointment in his two arms. The second servant put his hand on the jar to be ready to anoint the male guests which sitting in front of him (fig 8).²²



Fig 4 TT100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. (by the researcher)



Fig 5 TT 100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants.(by the researcher)



Fig 6 TT 100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. (by the researcher)



Fig 7 TT 100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants.(by the researcher)²³



Fig 8 TT 100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. (by the researcher)²⁴

TT 38: the tomb of Djeserkareseneb (temp. Thutmosis IV)

It has already been noted that this tomb contains an anointing scene very similar to that found in TT 100 among other. This tomb also contains several unique scenes of anointing. We find a female guest is depicted seated on a low chair. Before her stand two female servants. The first one grasps the right forearm of the guest with her right hand while her left hand rests on the guests right shoulder. The servant is as far as one knows or can see applying ointment to the shoulder of the guest. The second servant holds a jar of ointment in her two arms (fig 9). ²⁵

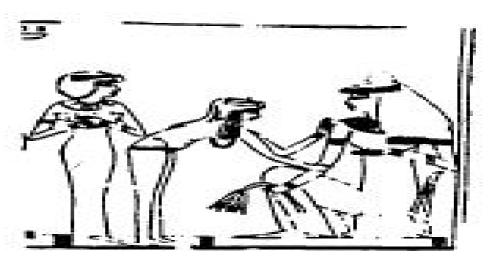


Fig 9 TT 38 tomb of Djeserkareseneb Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants.

TT 42: (Amenmose, temp. Thutmosis III-Amenhotep II)

The scene found in TT42 (Amenmose, temp. Thutmosis III-Amenhotep II) is very similar to that found in TT 38 and TT 100. This time a male guest is being anointed by a male servant while a female servant holds the container of ointment. Here the servant is apparently anointing the chest (and forearm?) of the guest, rather than his shoulder (fig.10).²⁶

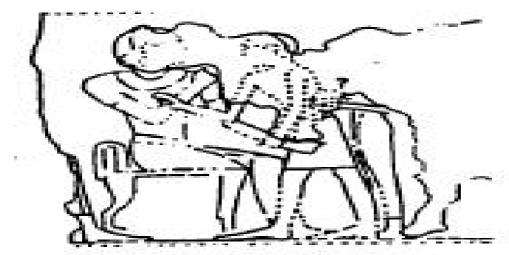


Fig 10 TT 42 tomb of Amenmose Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. (After, Stephen. Fig 82, 186)

TT 181: tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (menhotep III—IV)

In the tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (menhotep III—IV), in addition to the scene mentioned above, in which the head of a woman is anointed; we also find a scene in which the shoulder of a male guest is anointed by a female servant. In this scene the man is being anointed by a female servant who holds the jar of ointment in her left hand and applies it to his left shoulder with her right hand. At the same time, another female servant ties a collar around the man's neck (fig. 11). ²⁷



Fig 11 TT 181 tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants, (by the researcher)

Scenes depicting the Anointing of the Head by one servant

TT 82: tomb of Amenemhet (temp. Thutmosis III)

In the banquet scene depicting the funerary banquet in the tomb of Amenemhet (temp. Thutmosis III) there are two further scenes of the application of oil to the heads of individuals. Fig 12, a female guest is kneeling on one knee before a table filled with offerings (fig. 12). Her right hand holds a ictus blossom to her chest. Standing in front of her and lacing her is a female servant who holds a jar of ointment in her- left hand. Her right hand is extended toward the cone of ointment on the head of the guest. The servant appears to be replenishing the ointment cone for the guest.

The scene in fig 13 is almost identical to that described above. This time a male guest and male servant are the subjects of the scene. Rather than kneeling, the guest is depicted as seated on a stool before the table of offerings (fig. 13).²⁸



Fig 12 TT 82 tomb of Amenemhet Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by one servant,(

After Nina Davies and A, 1915, pl.16)



Fig 13 TT 82 tomb of Amenemhet Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by one servant, (by the researcher)

TT 112: tomb Menkheperrasonb (temp. Thutmosis III)

In this banquet scene we find the tomb owner (Menkheperrasonb) (temp. Thutmosis III) and his wife seated before a table of offerings observing two rows of female guests, servants bringing offerings, and butchers at work. The text in front of them states that they are diverting the heart seeing beauty (*shmh ib m33 bw nfr*). In the second row of guests a woman is depicted kneeling on her right knee. Standing facing her is a male servant. In his left hand is a large jar (presumably of ointment); and his right hand rests on the ointment cone on the woman's head (fig. 14).²⁹

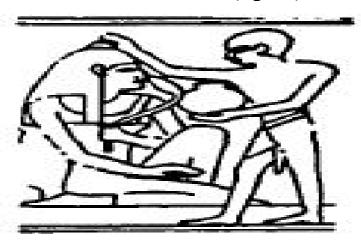


Fig 14 TT 112 tomb of Menkheperrasonb Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by one servant, (

After N. and N, 1933, pl.5)

TT 181: tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (Amenhotep III—IV)

In the tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (Amenhotep III—IV) we find a banquet scene depicting the daily mortuary meal.³⁰ In a row of female guests we find a woman seated on a chair under which is seated a cat. Before the woman stands a servant girl. In her left hand there is a jar of ointment. Her right hand is extended toward the ointment cone on the head of the guest (fig 15).³¹



Fig 15 TT 181 tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by one servant. (After N. Davies, 1925, p1.5.) Scenes depicting the Anointing of the Head by two servants

TT 40: tomb of <u>Amenhotep called Huy</u>, (temp. Amenhotep IV—Tutankhamen)

In the tomb of <u>Amenhotep called Huy</u>, (temp. Amenhotep IV—Tutankhamen) scene of anointing the head is found in a context different from the preceding banqueting scenes. We find a scene which appears to depict the anointing of the head of an individual. Huy is depicted as observing the delivery of tribute from Nubia. In the second row of figures we find a woman standing facing a man, also standing. In her right hand she holds a small receptacle similar in shape to the nw-hieroglyph. With her other hand she touches the forehead of the man (fig 16). While this appears to be a scene of anointing, this identification must remain tentative.



Fig 16 TT 40 tomb of <u>Amenhotep called Huy</u> Scenes depicting the anointing of the head and body by two servants, (by the researcher) **TT 77: tomb of Ptahemhet (temp. Thutmosis IV)**

In the tomb of Ptahemhet (temp. Thutmosis IV) we find a scene of anointing which is unique among banquet scenes (Fig 17). At present the scene is damaged; arid we must rely on the record made by earlier visitors to the tomb. The scene occurs in what Manniche refers to as a "traditional banquet scene;" and the portion of interest here occurs in the second row of female guests. Two women are depicted kneeling on a mat. The woman seated in front is facing her companion behind her, who is offering her a mandrake. Before the seated women are three standing female servants. One is pouring something from a jar onto the head of the first seated woman. A second servant grasps the right forearm of the woman with her left hand; and her right hand touches the right shoulder of the woman. Manniche notes that Wilkinson considered this to be "a unique bath scene". She remarks that Champollion stated that the liquid coming out of the jar was red; and this leads her to the conclusion that 'the two maids are undoubtedly in the process of pouring ointment over the woman and rubbing it into her skin." This scene would therefore appear to depict the anointing of both the head and the body. She further notes that there are no parallels to this scene. ³²

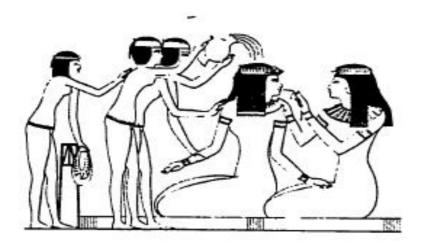


Fig 17 TT 77 tomb of Ptahemhet Scenes depicting the anointing of the head and body by two servants, (After L. Manniche, 1988, fig. 6),

TT 100: tomb of Rekhmire

In this tomb we find a scene in which a male quest is having his head anointed by a male servant. The scene show as three male guests sitting and standing in front of them two male servant. One servant holds a jar of ointment by one hand and anoints the guests by the other one. The second servant put one hand on the jar of ointment and anoint the guests by other one (fig 18).³³



Fig 18 TT 100 tomb of Rekhmire Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by two servants. (by the researcher)³⁴

TT 219: tomb of Nebenmaat

This tomb, belonging to a Nebenmaat is Ramesside in date. Vandier has noted that during this period elaborate banquet scenes are no

longer depicted. In their place are found simply rows of seated guests belonging to the family of the deceased. Here the deceased and his wife are depicted seated on chairs facing two rows of guests. In front of them stand a son and sister of the deceased. The son holds a jar (of ointment) in his left hand; and his right is extended toward the ointment cone on the head of his father. The sister is depicted as holding a jar of ointment in her right hand; while her left hand is raised, palm outward (fig 19). Presumably she is preparing to perform the same procedure for the wife of the deceased. This scene is unique among the banquet scenes in that it is the only one in which the deceased is depicted as the recipient of the anointing.³⁶

This is a feature which appears in almost all of the scenes depicting the anointing of the head at a banquet. While the act of anointing the head of an individual as we explained before only such required the attention of one servant; anointing the body required the services of two



Fig 19 TT 129 tomb of Nebenmaat Scenes depicting the anointing of the head by two servants, (After C. Maystre,, 1936) Conclusion

Banquets scenes occurred en several types of celebration. The main section seems to be between everyday scenes, in which the "master is still alive, and "mortuary" scenes, is which he is dead. The purpose of this scene, which Fox assumes to be "essentially biographical," appears to be to explain "the friendship between the tomb's owner and the guests.

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From all of the scenes of the festival painted in tombs, it is not possible to know if they represent the festivities in which the deceased actually participated when alive, or those to which he wishes to be associated after his death. For something as popular as that of the Beautiful Festival of the Valley, it would be risky to say that it represents either one of the two.

Finely There are a few deferens between the Scenes which depicting the anointing of the body and the other which depicting the anointing of the head, for example in the scenes which depicting the anointing of the body we find a scene in which a guests quest is having them chests anointed by one servant. The servant holds the right upper arm of the guest just below the armpit with one hand; and with the other applies ointment as far as one knows or can see just over the left breast of the guest. This is a feature which appears in almost all of the scenes depicting the anointing of the body of a guest at a banquet even if in the Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by one servant or the Scenes depicting the anointing of the body by two servants. While the act of anointing the head of an individual as we will explain only required the attention of one servant; anointing the body required the services of two.

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²LÄ III, .362

³ Stephen. E. Thompson, A Lexicographic and Iconographic Analysis of Anointing in Ancient Egypt, Brown University, (1991), 1-2.

⁴ W. K. Simpson, The Mastabas of Qar and Idu (Boston, 1976), 8.

⁵ R. David, A Guide to Religious Ritual at Abydos (Warminster, 1981), 66, no. 14.

⁶ A. M. Roth, Fingers, Stars, and the 'Opening of the Mouth': The Nature and Function of the *nt rwj*-Blades, The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, Vol. 79 (1993), pp. 57-79

⁷ J. Vandier, Manuel d'archéologie Egyptienne, vol. 4: Bas Reliefs et peintures (Paris: Editions A. et J. Picard et cie, 1984). 219.

⁸ Stephen. E. Thompson, A Lexicographic.....,160.

⁹ M. Fox, 'The Entertainment Song Genre in Egyptian Literature," Scripta Hierosolymitana 28 (1982) 271-273.

¹⁰M. Fox, 'The Entertainment,277.

¹¹ Assmann Jan: Mort et au-delà dans l'Égypte ancienne; Ed du rocher, Champollion collection, 2003

unpublished scene first published by the researcher

¹³ By the researcher.

unpublished scene first published by the researcher

¹⁵ N• Davies, The Tomb of Rekh—mi-Re at Thebes (New York: Arno Press, 1973, rpnt. of 1944 ed), p1.66.

¹⁶ N. de G. Davies, Scenes from some Theban Tombs (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1963), p1.6.

¹⁷ N. Davies, Seven Private Tombs at Kurnah (London: EES, 1948), p1. 4.

¹⁸ N. and N. de G. Davies, The Tombs of Two Officials of Thutmosis the Fourth (Nos. 75 and 90) (London: EES, 1923). Pl. 4 depicts female servants anointing a female quest; and pl. 5 shows male servants anointing a male guest.

¹⁹L. Manniche, Wall Decoration,p.35, fig. 31. In the upper row of quests we find a man being attended by two female servants, and in the lower register we find a female guest being anointed by two female servants.

²⁰ N• Davies, The Tomb of Rekh—mi-Re, pl.67.

²¹ unpublished scene first published by the researcher

²² unpublished scene first published by the researcher

²³ unpublished scene first published by the researcher

²⁴ unpublished scene first published by the researcher

²⁵ N. de G. Davies, Scenes from some Theban Tombs, p1.6

²⁶ Stephen. E. Thompson, (1991), fig 82, 168

²⁷ N. Davies, The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes, p1.5.

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³³ unpublished scene first published by the researcher

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