Abstract

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Space and Narrativity in Menna's Tomb Chapel (Theban Tomb 69)

Due to certain premises, the intuitively strong narrative character of Egyptian images is traditionally negated in most of the Egyptological research. Applying criteria which better fit the examined material, the issue of the narrativity of Egyptian images is treated anew in my ongoing PhD project on Space and narrativity in two-dimensional images of the Egyptian New Kingdom (University of Basel and École Pratique des Hautes Études – PSL Research University Paris). Owing to several innovative developments as well as to the exceptional quantity of preserved material, the reliefs and wall paintings of the New Kingdom (ca. 1550-1050 B.C.) lend themselves exceptionally well to the analysis of the pictorial mechanisms used by the artists in order to create an effect of action and narrativity. The differing degrees of narrativity and actuality are analysed considering different levels of spatiality, ranging from the individualisation of a single object to the space which is created by the monumental context of the images themselves. My goal is to work out a notion of narrativity which is immanent to the Egyptian image (rather than related to an assumed referential character). My research intends to combine Egyptological studies with interdisciplinary studies on the power of images with the aim of arriving at an understanding of Egyptian images which better corresponds to their producers' intention. In order to present a concise but comprehensive overview of my approach at the BAF 2018, I will present an in-depth analysis of a specific image in its monumental context. Thereby I hope not only to create possible links to approaches used in the study of Ancient Near Eastern monumental images, but also to get some new inputs in the last and therefore decisive phase of my research.