

Getting a Job in Old Kingdom Egypt: From Rite of Passage to Promotion

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ABSTRACT

Michelle Middleman – Getting a Job in Old Kingdom Egypt: From Rite of Passage to Promotion

This thesis is an investigation into the necessary requirements needed to obtain a career as an official in the Old Kingdom. Previous studies have focused on the titulary recorded in tombs to piece together the career pathways for the Old Kingdom officials. The focus on titles was due to the idealistic and formulaic nature of biographies, which in scholarship, devalued these texts in terms of their historical reliability, and paired with an underlying assumption that the titles themselves reliably documented a regular, consistent, and departmentally structured bureaucracy. The theme of meritocracy is the backbone of Old Kingdom tomb biographies, with the King as the bestower of all promotions in keeping with idealisation of King as the ultimate authority. During the 5th and 6th Dynasty, the penetration of Royal authority increased in the provinces, which resulted in officials settling and being interred in the nome that was under their authority. This political reform is directly reflected in the content of tomb biographies, in that provincial officials could now express a degree of independence and personality in their prose, rather than their inscription being constrained to the decorum of the Court. That is not to say that biographies prior to this reform were not without importance. Although they have repetitive phraseology and lack any real individuality, the ethical behaviour expressed by the tomb owners give an insight into the concerns and issues occurring in society at that time.

This thesis examines 6th Dynasty biographies as the core data set, and targets the new themes, expressions of individuality, as well as identifying any societal concerns inferred through the formulaic material. Furthermore, a multi-disciplinary approach is employed in terms of lexical, anthropological, and comparative study. This thesis determines a progression from rite of passage to promotion to ascertain the linear processes needed for an official to hold office. My work bridges the gap between ideologies and assertions of meritocracy and the practical realities of hereditary succession. The rite of passage called the *ts mdh* - tying of the cloth is evaluated in terms of how it pertains to career and the boy's socialisation into the adult world. Training and educational regimes are identified and the development of an official's career and how it was impacted by the office he would one day inherit is a core theme within this thesis. The King's role in hereditary succession is questioned and the issue of social mobility is examined. This work also sheds light on the problems that could arise from a system that depended on both elite bloodline and Royal favour to determine career.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDD Prologue '1: p56.: Johnson, J.H. 2001. *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/CDD_'1.pdf

(Accessed 04.09.22)

CDME: Faulkner, R.O. 1962: *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Oxford: Griffith Institute.

CT V: De Buck, A. 1954. *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts V: Texts of Spells 355-471*. Oriental Institute Publications Vol LXXIII. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

CT VII: De Buck, A. 1961. *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts VII: Texts of Spells 787-1185*. Oriental Institute Publications Vol LXXXVII. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Diodorus: Laurén, G. (ed). 2014. *The Historical Library of Diodorus in Forty Books, Vol 1: Books 1-4*. Sophron.

GG: Gardiner, A. 1927. *Egyptian Grammar: Being an introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd edition. Oxford: Griffith institute

HwB: Hannig, R. 2009. *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch –Deutsch*. Mainz: Verlag Philipp Von Zabern.

Jones: Vol: Jones, D. 2000. *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets, and Phrases of the Old Kingdom*, 2 volumes. BAR International Series 866. Oxford: Archaeopress.

KRI V: Kitchen, K. A. 1983. *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical V*. Oxford: B.H. Blackwell.

LED: Lesko, L.H. 2002-2004. *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*, 2 volumes. Berkley & Providence.

LES: Gardiner, A.H. 1932. *Late Egyptian Stories*. Brussels: Édition de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth.

Moralia V: Plutarch: Isis and Osiris (Loeb Classical library), translated by Babbitt, F.C. 1936. Cambridge, London & Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

PT: Sethe, K. 1908. *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Vol I-2. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichsche Buchhandlung.

Sertorius: Plutarch Lives VIII: Sertorius, Eumenes, Phocion and Cato the Younger (Loeb Classical library), translated by Perrin, B. 1919. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press

Tacitus: Agricola. Norwood, N & Watts, W. (eds). 1903. London: University Tutorial Press.

Urk I: Sethe, K. 1903. *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*. Leipzig: J.C Hinrichsche Buchhandlung.

Urk IV: Sethe, K. 1906. *Urkunden des 18th Dynastie*. Leipzig: J.C Hinrichsche Buchhandlung.

Wb I- V: Erman, A & Grapow, H. 1971. *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*. Berlin: Unveränderter Nachdruck.

INTRODUCTION

The career pathways of officials in the Old Kingdom have often been pieced together using title strings with little consideration of the training and education required to actively carry out the duties that came with office holding.¹ The theme of political reform and government is widely discussed, with the acquisition of offices relegated to a couple of paragraphs or a footnote. This thesis is an exercise to re-evaluate the processes and preparation that was necessary for an official to step into office. Additionally, a further aim is to investigate any issues that affected promotion and the official once he was in office.

The key to this study is close analysis of the Old Kingdom tomb biographies, more specifically those from 6th Dynasty. From the 3rd Dynasty, we see a deeper penetration of Royal authority within the provinces, leading to the eventual permanent settlement and burial of officials in the provinces from the 5th Dynasty onwards.² This bureaucratic reform directly impacted on the development of tomb biographies in that provincial officials could have more artistic license due to the distance from the Royal Court.³ Biographies from the Memphite region adhere to the decorum dictated by Court culture culminating in material that utilises formulaic phraseology to the point where it is hard to differentiate from one biography to the next.⁴ The most prominent point of reference expressed by Court society is centred on the King. The themes recall meritocracy in the form of promotions bestowed by the King, relationship to the King, and gifts rewarded by the King.⁵

¹ See Baer, 1960. *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom*, Kanawati, 1980a. *Governmental Reforms*, and Strudwick, 1885, *The Administration of the Old Kingdom*.

² See chapter 2.3 for governmental reforms.

³ For the prehistory, typology, and development of Old Kingdom tomb biographies, see Assmann, 1983: 71-78, Baud, 2005: 91-124, Gnirs, 1996: 191-241, Kloth, 2002: 227-257, Moreno Garcia, 2019: 25- 50, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 12-33 & 101-316, Stauder-Porchet, 2020c: 87-116, Vymazalová, 2019: 67-88.

⁴ See Coulon, 2020: 205-223, Eyre, 2019: 9-24, and Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 207-209.

⁵ For expression of Royal favour, see Baines, 2020: 52-54, Eyre, 2019: 9-12, Kloth, 2002: 65-71, 133-137, 151-173, and 212-217, Sherbiny, 2019: 61-65, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 35-73, 121-129, and 218-224 (Stauder-Porchet refers to this theme as loyalist expression), and Vymazalová, 2019: 67-88.

Personal life and individuality are backgrounded in favour of themes that demonstrated that the officials acted within the constraints of his expected social behaviour and his service to the King.⁶ The tomb biographies of Provincial officials began to develop motifs that expressed their independence away from the King, their authority in their nomes, and a social identity that was linked with their local community rather than, or as well as, the Royal Court. That is not to say these officials completely strayed away from the traditional decorum. There is an effort to conform to the ideology, and at times there are contradictory themes running through the same biography, where the official attempts to assert his authority and independence, but also express his loyalty to the King. The anti-ideological material and unusual themes we find in the biographies of provincial officials provide the core data set for this thesis. Memphite biographies and their formulaic phraseology are also utilised, as despite their repetition in subject matter, they still have value. Coulon identifies the issue with the use of stock phraseology and how this has impacted on the study of Old Kingdom biographies, stating; “The problem with the common use of terms ‘cliché, stock phrase’, and others is that they convey a negative connotation, suggesting that a large part of the autobiographical texts is marked by repetitiveness and is of limited value for both historians or philologists” (2020: 205). Despite the repetition, the themes would have had to resonate with the audience, and so would have to be a reflection on societal issues and concerns at that time. The close examination of the subject matter broached in the 6th Dynasty biographies allows a production of a linear pathway that demonstrates the course of office attainment from rite of passage to promotion.

The rite of passage - *ṯs mdh*, translated as the tying of the cloth is always expressed in conjugation within the narrative that describes the official’s career.⁷ When the tying of the cloth is employed in biographies, it introduces the list of promotions conveyed by the official. The nature of

⁶ See Kloth, 2002. *Die (Auto-) Biographischen Inschriften des Ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung* for variants of the phraseology pertaining to these themes.

⁷ See Kloth, 2002: 128-131 for the variants of the phraseology regarding the *ṯs mdh* rite.

this rite is often discussed briefly as part of a wider discussion concerning a separate topic, or often footnoted as merely a rite of passage pertaining to manhood. Chapter one sets out to examine this rite in terms of how it related to career, what the rite entailed, and its significance, both symbolically and physically. The *ts mdh* examples from the Old Kingdom biographies provide the basis for this study, but examples from religious texts are also employed. Every aspect of this rite is broken down lexically, meaning the words *ts* and *mdh*, and the words for youth that accompany this event – *hrd*, *id* and *hwn* are explored to elicit further understanding. Comparative material from other ancient and modern cultures are included in this study due to the enigmatic nature of the ancient Egyptian examples.

After the *ts mdh* comes the list of offices that were bestowed on the tomb owner by the King. The meritocratic theme is strongly woven through Old Kingdom tomb biographies, meaning we only get a glimpse of the end result i.e., the promotion. The official works hard, manages to achieve what no other official could do with his unique skills, and then the King rewards him with further promotions. The theme of meritocracy overshadows the hereditary factor when it came to office holding. Officials project a version of reality, in which, they were self-made men who independently climb the career ladder, when in actuality, offices were passed down from father to son. Hereditary succession and a meritocratic system of promotion should be mutually exclusive. Therefore, an aim of chapter two is to readdress the balance between filial promotion and the part the King plays outside the ideology of meritocracy.

The training and education required to fulfil offices is side-lined in biographies, as the real significance lay in the Royal favour, not the means necessary to function in their job. Chapter two sets out to identify different training regimes in order to determine how an official was prepared for his career. Further study is given to the influence filial promotion had on the education and training of a child. A child's profession was already known, which would allow a specifically targeted regime to be applied to the child to ready him for office. The inferences concerning training in the Old

Kingdom material are built on in this paper using comparative material from Middle and New Kingdom, as well as lexical studies and anthropological work.

Chapter three sets out to examine if the pre-determined highest appointment that a man could inherit from his father had any impact on his early career. If a man's profession was already known, it makes sense that any tasks and duties would be within the parameters of the office he would one day inherit. Effectively, a man could be mature and carry titles but still be training and working towards the highest appointment that he could inherit. The biography of Weni is utilised as a case study in this chapter, his father was a vizier, a title that Weni held later in life, and he has left us with a lengthy event-based narrative, detailing all his missions and duties before he inherited the viziership.⁸ This allows the study of how his previous endeavours related to the responsibilities of the vizier and to what extent filial promotion influenced the career pathway of an official.

The focus of chapter four is the problematic nature of filial succession and retaining a title once it had been inherited. This thesis examines factors such as complex family dynamics, the effect it had on succession, and the strategies employed to legitimise heirship. An issue to be addressed is the restrictive nature of hereditary succession in that higher offices could be retained by one family for generations. This had the potential to create resentment and jealousy from people outside of the bloodline, which in turn led to underhanded tactics to oust a man from office. The key to this investigation is reading between the lines and examining the unusual themes present in biographies. Biographies were manufactured to place the official in the best possible light, to leave the most positive memory of self in their society. Consequently, we would not expect a tomb owner to record negative events that jeopardised their office. However, we do have a rare example in the biography

⁸ For Weni's biography, see Lichtheim, 1973: 18-23, Piacentini, 1990, *L'Autobiografia di Uni, Principe e Governatore dell'Alto Egitto*, Simpson, 2003: 402-407, Strudwick, 2005: 252-257, and *Urk I*, 98-110.

of Pepyankhheryib whose tomb is located at Meir.⁹ Pepyankhheryib records that he was accused of unknown allegations, brought before the magistrates (his peers), and this may have resulted in the removal of office, but Pepyankhheryib is victorious in this case and retains his position. This extraordinary event is written in the same format as the ethical behaviour found in the Old Kingdom tomb biographies, making this hidden in plain sight. If the tomb owner needed to make a point concerning a negative event, then a way to achieve this was to interweave the instance into decorum, ideology, and natural custom. This idea provides the basis for this study of problematic succession in identifying the material that attempts to adhere to the traditional composition of a biography but there is an underlying extraordinary event manifest within the material.

It should be noted that all ancient Egyptian texts have been translated by the author and their references denote the hieroglyphic transcriptions used to translate the text. The commentary regarding the translated texts is not comprehensive due to the amount of primary material translated in this thesis, rather key issues with grammar and elucidation has been provided. Additionally, any ancient Egyptian words that have widely debated translations have been transliterated in this thesis but not translated. Any images of hieroglyphs have been taken from publications and these have been referenced accordingly. Due to the presentation of this paper in terms of its composition into subchapters, each chapter comes with its own separate introduction and conclusion to bring all the information together as a whole.

⁹ For Pepyankhheryib's biography, see Baines, 2015a: 25, Kanawati, 2010: 33-35, Strudwick, 2005: 368-371, and *Urk I*, 221-224.

CHAPTER ONE

The *ts mdh* Rite: Career Initiation

“The intention of all that is done at this ceremony is to make a momentous change in a boy’s life; the past is to be cut off from him by a gulf which he can never repass. His connection with his mother as her child is broken off and he becomes henceforth, attached to men. All the sports and games of his boyhood are to be abandoned with the severance of the old domesticities between himself, his mother, and sisters”
(Howitt, 1904: 532 – on the rites of passage of the Karnau tribes of South Australia).


In many cultures, the performance of a rite of passage changes the status of a boy and marks his initiation into the adult world.¹⁰ There is no straightforward evidence from ancient Egypt that suggests the customary practice of a rite of passage relating to the transition from childhood to adulthood. However, an ambiguity in the material and textual record is not a definitive indicator that an event did not occur to mark a new phase in a boy’s life. There is a phrase that is found in one 5th Dynasty and several 6th Dynasty tomb biographies which reads – “I was a youth who tied (*ts*) the *mdh*”.¹¹ Within the biographies, this statement occurs prior to the list of office appointments achieved by the official. For example, Qar of Edfu states in his biography;

¹⁰ See Chapter 1.7, Eyre, 2014: 295-297, Lancy, 2008: 272- 304, Marshall, 2021: 159-167, Olabarria, 2020: 182-188, and Van Gennep, 1960. *The Rites of Passage*.

¹¹ The nouns employed for the translation of youth are interchangeable, with examples featuring either *id*, *hrd* or *hwn*. The lexicon regarding youth is discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, the word *mdh* is not translated rather the transliteration will be used because of the uncertainty of the nature of this object, although, this will also be a topic of discussion in this chapter.






“I was a youth who tied (*ts*) the *mdh* in the time of Tety. I was taken to Pepy, so that I could be taught (*kmz.tw=i*) amongst the children of chiefs. I was appointed as sole companion (*smr wct*), overseer of the *hnty-s* (*imy-r n pr-cz hnty-s*) of the Palace before Pepy. Then the Majesty of Merenre had me sail South to Edfu as sole companion (*smr wct*), chief of the district (*hry-tp n spzt*), overseer of Upper Egyptian barley (*imy-r smc*) and overseer of priests (*imy-r hm-ntr*) ...” (Urk I, 253, 18 - 254, 4).¹²

The affiliation with the *ts mdh* and the motif of education/ career indicates that the tying of cloth marked the point in a boy’s life where he was considered ready to transition from childhood and embark on the preparation for adulthood. At what age in a boy’s life the *ts mdh* occurred, and what happened during this rite is difficult to ascertain. This is where the complexity lies, while we can place the rite within the realms of the onset of career/education, the nature of the event is unclear. The variable vocabulary employed for the word youth creates further complications. Three different nouns are used interchangeably within the *ts mdh* examples for the word youth – *id*, *hrd*, and *hwn*.¹³ It is unclear if the three terms denote an age range or if they define stages in the physical and mental development of an adolescent. What seems clear is that the varied use of *id*, *hrd*, and *hwn* does infer that the *ts mdh* was conducted with a degree of flexibility in terms of when it was performed on a male.


The lack of attestations for the word *mdh* adds further uncertainty to this rite of passage; and so translating *mdh* with any certainty is problematic. The only indication of the meaning of *mdh* comes from the accompanying determinative, which is either the fillet sign  (GG: S10)

¹² El-Khadragy, 2002: 209-211, Moreno Garcia, 1998: 151-160, Simpson, 2003: 412-413, and Strudwick 2005: 342-344.

¹³ *id* - CDME: 34, HwB, no 4362: page 129 & Wb I. 151: 8-9, *hrd* - CDME:204, HwB, no 25320: page 695 & Wb III. 397: 1-3), and *hwn* - CDME: 166, HwB, no 20031: page 553 & Wb III. 52: 2-3 and entry 4 suggests the translation young man in his 20’s.

or the band of string/linen  (GG: V12).¹⁴ This has led scholars to surmise that tying the *mdh* involved the boy tying on a headband/fillet, or a girdle worn around the waist, and so various interpretations have been applied.¹⁵ Lefebvre (1939: 218) transliterates and translates the 12th Dynasty stele of Samontu (BM EA 828) as, *ink hrd ts mdh* – “I was a child who fastened the girdle.” His transliteration of *hrd* is problematic as the word is not written fully out as  (HwB, no 25320: page 695) on the stele, rather it has been abbreviated down to only the determinative - child sitting (on lap) with hand to mouth  (GG: A17).¹⁶ This determinative can also denote other words for adolescence such as  *id* (HwB, no 4362: page 129) and  *hwn* (HwB, no 20031: page 553). *id* and *hwn* can be translated as youth giving the potential for a broader age range than the term child implies. The stele of Samontu, therefore, could be referring to the terms *id*, *hwn* and *hrd*, meaning Lefebvre’s ‘child’ may not be the most accurate interpretation.

Gunn in a side note in Lefebvre’s article argues that the *mdh* should be translated as a fillet because it has a back tie, whereas a girdle would be fastened at the front (Lefebvre, 1939: 219). Gunn (in Lefebvre, 1939: 219) elaborates further on this rite by stating “It has always been clear that the *ts mdh* is an act which marks the entry upon manhood, analogous to the assumption of the *toga virilis*, the tying of the fillet has perhaps some connection with the discontinuation of the side lock of youth”.¹⁷ Gunn attributes this rite to the removal of the side lock of youth, a hairstyle

¹⁴ The dictionary definitions of *mdh* vary: CDME: 123 -fillet, Van den Molen, 2000: 195 – to be invested with an insignia, Wb II. 189. 11 – belt, 190. 1-5 – head band, covering/diadem/ placing something on or around the head. The only irregularity is the writing of *mdh* in the biography of Qar of Edfu who employs the writing of the verb *mdh* – to cut or hew (see Wb II. 190.6), which is written with the axe determinative  (GG, T7).

¹⁵ See chapter 1.4 for further discussion on where the *mdh* was worn.

¹⁶ For the stele of Samontu (BM EA 828), see Landgráfová, 2011: 272-274 and Scott – Moncrieff, 1912: Plate 21

¹⁷ The *toga virilis* was a rite of passage in ancient Rome where a boy would exchange the *toga praetexta* of childhood for the *toga virilis* of adulthood. Once the exchange was complete, the child’s name would be entered into a census, denoting his adult status (see McWilliam, 2013: 271-272).

which epitomises childhood in ancient Egypt, with the side locks removal marking the transition from childhood to adulthood.¹⁸ Feucht (1995: 238-245) compares the *ts mdh* to a diploma ceremony, marking the end of childhood whereby a headband (the *mdh*) is placed on the male as a symbol of his maturity and his ability to take on responsibility. Staehelin (1969-70: 126-127) discusses the *ts mdh* in his article about *dẓiw* linen and determines that the *mdh* could be referring to a panel of cloth made into a loincloth or apron which was tied onto the male during the ceremony. Janssen & Janssen (1990: 107-109) suggest this rite involves the youth wearing a kilt for the first time to mark their initial appointment as tying the *mdh* occurs prior to the list of appointed titles.

The complexity in finding a suitable meaning is highlighted best when we see how academics have treated the same text. Using Weni as an example brings this issue to the fore. The hieroglyphs in Weni's biography reads – *ink [id/hwn] ts mdh*.¹⁹ Simpson (2003: 402) and Strudwick (2005:352) both translate this, as “I was a youth who tied the headband.” Gundacker (2015:66) reads “a boy who knotted the forehead band.” Whereas Lichtheim (1973: 18) renders the same line as “I was a fillet wearing youth.” Although the translations are similar, their meanings have a different inference. Gundacker, Simpson, and Strudwick's translation suggests a single action of tying the headband, whereas Lichtheim infers a habitual wearing of a fillet. Simpson attempts to shed light on the meaning by stating the *ts mdh* was a rite of passage which refers to the start of

¹⁸ For depictions and characteristics of children in ancient Egypt, see Feucht, 1995: 468-502, Marshall, 2021: 11-53, and Strouhal, 1997: 25-26. For hair removal as rites of passage and as a marker of gender, age, and status, in both ancient and Modern Egypt, see Blackman, 1927: 84-89, Marshall, 2021: 21-26, Morris, 2017: 316, and Robins, 1999: 55-69.

¹⁹ *Urk I*, 98, 12. I have transliterated both *id* and *hwn*, as there is debate as to what should be in the lacuna. Sethe (*Urk I*, 98, 12) reconstructs *id* but Brovarski (1975/1976: 3) argues that *hwn* is the more suitable option as this appears in other texts such as the biography of Qar (*Urk I*, 253, 18). *hrd* has not been reconstructed here as it does appear in one example of the *ts mdh* rite, but this in pyramid text 519 (see chapter 1.2). However, in the Old Kingdom biographies *id* and *hwn* are the terms to denote the noun youth.

manhood at the age of eighteen (2003: 402). Why eighteen is singled out by Simpson is not clear; it is certainly not appropriate to impose the relatively modern law-based principle that this age marks the beginning of adulthood in ancient cultures. Hinson (2017:55) states that it is vital that we do not use concepts of modern childhood as a guideline for ancient cultures and child development is shaped depending on the society and culture it belongs to.²⁰ Therefore, significant ages in our culture such as eighteen or twenty-one had no real significance in ancient Egypt.

The different interpretations and translations highlight the obscurity surrounding this event. There are three different theories regarding this rite; it marks the removal of the side lock of youth, it refers to the adorning of a headband, and the event was a clothing ceremony. What the scholars do agree on is the nature of the *ts mdh* ceremony, in that it marked a transition in a young man's life. The principal aspects of this chapter will be to re-evaluate both the action and nature of this rite and how this ceremony related to a youth's career. To further our understanding of this event, it is necessary to not only collect and examine examples of the rite, but also conduct a lexical study on the key words - *ts*, *mdh*, *hwn*, *id*, and *hrd* used in this phraseology.

²⁰ For a discussion on how children are viewed in ancient cultures see, Beaumont: 2013: 195-198, Hinson, 2017: 55-60, Hinson, 2018: 21-26, and Parkin, 2010: 97-114.

1.1 *ts mdh* examples from the Old Kingdom tomb biographies

Only a minority of the 6th Dynasty corpus of biographies and one 5th Dynasty biography refer to the *ts mdh* rite.²¹ They all follow a parallel structure, whereby, the male ties the *mdh* in the time of specific a King, followed by his various appointments of office, with the name of the reigning King at the time of these promotions. Unfortunately, these examples read more like a list rather than a detailed narrative, providing us only with a blueprint of their career from start to finish. For example;

Tjeti (El- Hawawish)

“I was a youth (*hwn*) who tied the *mdh* under the Majesty of Pepy. When I was judge and administrator (*s3b ʕd mr*), I was appointed to first of the King (*hry-tp nsw*), and I was appointed to overseer of priests (*imy-r hm-ntr*). Every companion who was in my district was under my authority (*hry-hr-i*).²² I was appointed sole companion (*smr-wʕt*) under the Majesty of Pepy. (When) I was appointed sole companion (*smr-wʕt*), I was caused to enter into the Palace...” (Kanawati, 1988a: Figure 35).²³

Weni (Abydos)

[“I was a youth *id*] who tied *mdh* under Tety. My office was as overseer of the store house (*imy-r pr šnʕ*). Then I acted as inspector of the *hnty-š* of the Palace (*šd hnty-š pr-ʕ3*) [...] [lector priest (*hry-hbt*)] and elder of the robing room (*šmsw db3t*) before the Majesty of Pepy. His Majesty appointed me in

²¹ Kloth, 2002: 128-131.

²² *hry-hr-i* – translates as under my sight.

²³ Kanawati, 1988a: 62, Stauder- Porchet, 2017: 244-245, and Strudwick, 2005:287. There are two blocks from Memphis which are thought to belong to an earlier tomb of Tjeti, which contain fragments of his biography that matches the El-Hawawish example, see Campagno, 2014: 20, Moreno Garcia, 2013c: 1035-1036, Strudwick, 2005: 287, and *Urk* I, 250, 8 – 251, 5.

the office of companion (*smr*), and inspector of priests of his pyramid city (*shḏ ḥm-nṯr*) ...” (*Urk I*, 98, 12-16).²⁴

Ibi (Deir el Gebrawi)

“I was [a youth *id*?] who tied the *mdḥ* under the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Meryre his Majesty of] my Lord the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Merenre, may he live [appointed me] as *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, sole companion and great chief (*ḥry-tp ꜥꜣ*) of *ḏwf* (Deir el Gebrawi)” (*Urk I*, 142, 8-9).²⁵

The recording of the *ṯs mdḥ* within the biographies is brief and straight to the point, with the whole event encapsulated with nothing more than two words. However, this was a significant event in a young man’s life, certainly important enough for it to be memorialised in writing and made a part of the biographical content. Weni, Ibi, and Tjeti offer no further information other than they experienced this rite. Fortunately, there are several examples which do include additional content and provide further information regarding the *ṯs mdḥ* rite;

Qar (Edfu)

“I was a youth (*ḥwn*) who tied the *mdḥ* in the time of Tety. I was taken to Pepy, so that I could be taught (*ḳmꜣ.tw=i*)²⁶

²⁴ Lichtheim, 1973: 18-23, Piacentini, 1990, *L’Autobiografia di Uni, Principe e Governatore dell’Alto Egitto*, Simpson, 2003: 402-407, and Strudwick, 2005: 252-257.

²⁵ Kanawati, 2007: 54-55 and Strudwick, 2005: 363-365. The reading of *id* at the beginning of this extract is uncertain, *Urk I*, 142, 8 reconstructs the word *id*. Kanawati (2007: Plate 54) also reconstructs the word *id* in his hieroglyphic transcription. However, Davies (1902, vol 1: Plate 23) leaves the lacuna blank in his transcription.

²⁶ For an alternative transliteration of *ḳmꜣ*, see Doret (1986: 30, comment 172) who transliterates *ṯꜣt* rather than *ḳmꜣ* based on the throw stick determinative (GG: T14), but he still translates as educate. *ṯs* written with the throw stick determinatives translates as support (*Wb V*. 407.16), meaning Doret’s rendering would read “so I could be supported amongst the children of chiefs,” which can be understood to have a meaning of educate.

amongst the children of chiefs (*hry-tp*). I was appointed as sole companion (*smr w^ct*), overseer of the *hnty-š* (*imy-r n pr-^cz hnty-š*) of the Palace before Pepy. Then the Majesty of Merenre had me sail South to Edfu as sole companion (*smr w^ct*, chief of the district (*hry-tp n spzt*), overseer of Upper Egyptian barley (*imy-r šm^c*) and overseer of priests (*imy-r hm-ntr*) ...” (*Urk I*, 253, 18 – 254, 4).²⁷

Ptahshepses (Saqqara)

“[A child (*hrd*) who was born to his mother] in the time of Menkaure. He was brought up (*šd=f*) amongst the King’s children in the Palace inside of the Royal harem (*ipt nsw*). A noble one before the King more than any child (*hrd*),
Ptahshepses.

[An *id* who tied the *mdh* in] the time of Shepseskaf. He was educated [...] amongst the King’s children in the Palace inside of the Royal harem. A noble one before the King more than any *id*, Ptahshepses.

[So, his Majesty favoured him]. His Majesty gave to him the Princess Khamaat as his wife, because his Majesty desired that she be with me more than any man, Ptahshepses” (*Urk I*, 51, 12 – 52, 3).²⁸

²⁷ El-Khadragy, 2002: 203-226, Simpson, 2003: 412-413, and Strudwick, 2005: 342-344. With regards to the unique nature of Qar’s biography given its Old Kingdom date, see Moreno Garcia, 1998: 151-160.

²⁸ Gundacker, 2015: 61-105, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 85-98, and Strudwick, 2005:303-304. Additionally, see Dorman,2002: 95-110 for a translation and a discussion about a fragment from a niched chapel in the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago (OIM 11048), which he argues belongs to the chapel of Ptahshepses.

Khentykaupepy (Balat)

“I was conferred (*nd*)²⁹ the office of the ruler of the oasis (*i3wt nt hk3 wh3t*)³⁰ when I was a young man who had tied the *mdh* in the midst of the great ones (*wrw*)” (Osing, 1982: plate 60, col 2).³¹

Qar’s experience of the *ts mdh* not only occurred prior to his appointment of office but also before his training at the Residence began. He ties the *mdh* under the first King of the 6th Dynasty Tety then he begins his Residential training under the third King Pepy I. This means there were several years between the *ts mdh* rite and his training during the reign of the ephemeral king Userkare.³² The gap in years between the *ts mdh* and his education at the Palace does not mean that some degree of training did not happen immediately after the rite took place. Qar’s father Isi may have taught him privately in the time between tying the *mdh* and being sent to the Residence for a more formal preparation for his career.³³ Qar continues to say he was taken to Pepy to be *km3.tw=i*. The choice of the verb *km3* –create or produce³⁴ is interesting, as one would expect *sb3* – to be taught or *sd* – to be brought up.³⁵ Therefore, Qar is saying he was taken to the Residence to be created.

km3 is used in a similar context in *The Tale of Sinuhe*. When Sinuhe returns to Egypt many years after absconding to Palestine and living as an Asiatic, the king says to his Queen;

“Look Sinuhe has returned as an Asiatic, one transformed (*km3*) by the sand dwellers” (Koch, 1990: B-265).³⁶

²⁹ *nd* is translated from an amendment from Osing, 1982: 32.

³⁰ For *hk3 wh3t* see Jones, vol 2, no 2435: page 664-665.

³¹ Osing, 1982: 29-33, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 288-290, and Strudwick, 2005: 375.

³² See Kanawati, 1984: 31-39 and Kanawati, 1988b, 12-17 for evidence pertaining to Userkare.

³³ Filial training will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.7 and 2.8.

³⁴ For *km3*, see *HwB*, no 34222: page 924 and *Wb* V. 34.1-8.

³⁵ See chapter 2.2 for a discussion regarding *sb3* and *sd*.

³⁶ Allen, 2015a: 55-154, Lichtheim, 1973: 222-235, Parkinson, 1997: 21-53, Parkinson 2002: 149-167, and Simpson, 2003: 54-68.

This excerpt implies that as Sinuhe has been living in this foreign land for a long time, he has become accustomed to their traditions to the extent where he himself is now foreign to his native Egyptians. The general sense of *ḳmꜣ* is the exposure to a certain environment and the gradual integration into that world, whether it be foreign or bureaucratic. On this basis, the translation of *ḳmꜣ* is context sensitive. Hence, for Qar it is translated as taught, as he is educated at the Residence as a child, emerging as an adult and official. For Sinuhe, transformed is the apt translation, as he flees abroad as an Egyptian, but becomes native to the foreign land after many years. At its core, *ḳmꜣ* signifies a transformative experience, moving from one state to another.

Sinuhe and Qar are not isolated cases; there are other examples, which confirm that *ḳmꜣ* is the verb of choice when describing a change of state. Pyramid text 247 of Unis is a spell for emerging from the Duat and being transformed in order to enter the sky, it reads;

Words Spoken, your son Horus has acted for you. The Great ones tremble when they see the knife, which is in your hand, as you came from the underworld.

Greetings to you wise one, Geb has created (*ḳmꜣ*) you and the Ennead have birthed you. Horus is satisfied because of his father, Atum is satisfied because of his years and the Gods of the East, and the West are satisfied because of the Great One who came to be in the embrace of the God bearer (*PT 247*, page 142, 257-258).³⁷

A further example of the use of *ḳmꜣ* is employed in Hatshepsut's divine birth story from her 18th Dynasty temple at Deir el Bahri. After Amun has had sexual intercourse with Queen Ahmose, he summons Khnum to shape the body of the child (Hatshepsut) that he has conceived with the queen. The inscription reads;

³⁷ Allen, 2015b: 44 and Faulkner, 1969: 59-60.

Words spoken by Khnum, the potter, Lord of Herer.³⁸ “[I have shaped you] ³⁹ from the flesh of the God foremost of Karnak. I have come to create (*kmz*) you from all the Gods” (*Urk IV*, 223, 6 - 9).⁴⁰

Pyramid Text 247 describes the successful emergence from the underworld to the afterlife, where the deceased transitions from the world of the dead, is then recreated (*kmz*) and reborn into a new state as one worthy of the afterlife amongst the Gods. Hatshepsut is separated from being a mere mortal child to a one fathered by Amun and created (*kmz*) by Khnum from other gods, placing her in the divine realm of Kings. The use of *kmz* is employed within a framework whereby a person is in a specific state, an act of separation occurs and the act of *kmz* delivers that person into a new phase. Taking all of this into account, we can view Qar’s experience in the same light whereby *kmz* is the action that denotes his change of state. Ptahshepses is in similar vein to Qar’s experience, in that, he refers to the *ts mdh* rite before he is educated at the Residence with him being described as a *hrd* prior to the tying of the *mdh* and an *id* at the time of the rite.⁴¹ The *ts mdh* marks an initiation from one state to the other whereby the young male is in an intermediate stage. Before the rite, he is a child, tying the *mdh* marks his readiness for a new phase in his life and separates him from childhood, then finally after the rite, he is moulded and shaped into an official via education and training.⁴²

The biography of Khentykaupery describes him tying the *mdh* in the company of the *wrw*. This suggests that an audience was privy to this event. The *wrw* translates as the great ones, the

³⁸ Herer is near el-Ashmunein in Middle Egypt. See Baines & Malek, 2000: 121 and 213.

³⁹ I have shaped you is reconstructed in the damaged area of the text in Naville’s translation, although he offers no transliteration for his reconstruction (1896: 15).

⁴⁰ Breasted, 1906, vol 3: 82 and Naville, 1896: 14-16 and plate XLVIII.

⁴¹ See chapter 1.9-1.9.3 for the terminology regarding developmental phases.

⁴² See chapter 2 for education and training.

refined and the oldest.⁴³ This could be referring to older officials or male relatives who represent the group of people belonging to the career sector in which the boy is to be initiated.⁴⁴ The other information to be gleaned from this, is that some sort of ceremony did take place or why else would there be an audience to the *ʿs mdh*.⁴⁵ It was not just the case of a boy tying on a headdress or kilt for the first time, there was some sort of ceremonial aspect to this rite, which required the presence of other people.

⁴³ For *wrw* see *HwB*, no 7759: page 215 and *Wb* I. 328. 14-15.

⁴⁴ In *The Teaching of Merikare*, the King advises his son to make great his great ones, referring to the officials who are closest to the Prince and are loyal, see Helck, 1977: XXI – XXII. See chapter 2.4 for a further discussion on this theme in *Merikare*.

⁴⁵ See chapter 1.7 for the ritual aspect of the rite.

1.2 Evidence of *ts mdh* in the Pyramid texts

Tying the *mdh* occurs in another textual source from the Old Kingdom, which helps build up additional context that is not present in the Old Kingdom biographical examples presented above. Pyramid text 519 compares the dead king's ascent to the stars with Horus's journey to claim his father's throne after he has left Akhbit, and the protection of his mother Isis. The spell reads;

... for the great Isis who tied (*ts*) the *mdh* in Akhbit, using *dziw* linen and censing (*idt*) in front of her son Horus, the young child (*hrd nhn*) so he may cross the land in his white sandals, so he might go to see his father Osiris.... (PT 519, page 182: lines 427-429).⁴⁶

Pyramid Text 519 highlights two further aspects of this rite, which is absent from the tomb biography accounts. Firstly, it is Isis who ties the *mdh* for Horus, which suggests the young man was a passive participant in the rite, meaning the action of the rite was conducted on him rather than the youth having to perform it himself. Secondly, Isis censes in front of Horus during the *ts mdh*, which further implies this event had a ritualistic context. From this, the tying of the *mdh* can be interpreted as a ceremony rather than a literal action.

It is notable that Horus is described as a *hrd nhn* and not an *id* or *hwn* parallel to the 6th Dynasty biographies. Although given the term young child, he is independent enough to leave his mother and seek out his father, with the *ts mdh* rite marking this fact (Feucht, 1995: 239). This does appear to be the case as further on in the text when Horus wins over his rightful inheritance from his uncle Seth in the presence of Geb. The spell continues with;

This Meryre will stand, having taken his revered state in your presence, just like Horus taking the house of his father from

⁴⁶ Allen, 2015b: 165-166 and Faulkner, 1969: 192-194.

the possession of his father's brother Seth in the presence of Geb (*PT* 519, page 186: line 1219).

After tying the *mdh*, Horus can leave his mother to join his father and eventually assume Osiris's position. In comparison, Qar follows the same pathway. The *ts mdh* is conducted, he is trained, and then he receives a series of appointments until he assumes his father Isi's position as great chief of Edfu.⁴⁷

A significant factor detailed in pyramid text 519 is the fact that Isis uses *dziw* cloth to make a *mdh* to tie on Horus, demonstrating that the *mdh* was not a type of cloth, rather, it was an item made from linen. Staehelin (1969-70: 126-127) discusses the use of the *dziw* in this rite and determines it was a panel of *dziw* cloth made into loin cloth for Horus and the *ts mdh* marked the wearing of the loin cloth for the first time. Mercer (1952: 603) describes a *dziw* as a linen garment used as a ceremonial dress to mark Horus becoming a man. As it was socially acceptable in ancient Egypt for children to be naked, it makes sense that a rite to mark maturity not only meant separation from the mother to start his career, but also leave childish traits of nakedness behind.⁴⁸ Now that the child was in a formal work-based environment, adult standards of decorum were an expectation, and this meant being clothed appropriately. There is further evidence of clothing changing the status of a boy in *The Teaching of Khety*. Khety is instructing his son about the virtues of being a scribe when they are on the way to the Residence for his son's training. Khety states;

“I will have you love writing more than your mother, I will have its beauty enter into your sight, and it is greater than any office. There is nothing like it in this land, when he starts to grow (*šz̄c̄.n=f wzd̄t*), he is (only) a child, (yet), he will be greeted, he is sent to conduct missions, before he returns, he

⁴⁷ For Qar's appointments, see *Urk* I, 251, 17 – 253, 17 and for his father's appointments, see Kloth, 2002: 327, 5-9. The hereditary nature surrounding the succession of office is discussed in chapter 2 and Isi and Qar are discussed in chapter 2.3 regarding political reforms and the changes made to provincial administration.

⁴⁸ See chapter 1.7 for discussion on gender and clothing.

has dressed himself (*dī=f-sw*) in a *dʒiʷ* garment” (Helck, 1970:

IIIc- IIIf).⁴⁹

Khety reveals that his son will be treated with a level of respect by being greeted, implying that adults are not obliged to acknowledge young children in the same way.⁵⁰ The young man in Khety’s teaching is independent enough to go on missions, so he will dress in a *dʒiʷ* garment to denote his new-found status. Tying on the *mdh* may work with the same principal. The youth transitions from the social group of children and into the adult world, and by wearing a *mdh*, either on the head or body, he illustrates that he is ready to conform to adult standards, and if he acts like an adult, he will be treated as such.⁵¹

⁴⁹ The earliest copy of this text dates to the 18th Dynasty but it is written in the Middle Egyptian phase of the language, which has led to uncertainty regarding the date of the text. For dating, discussion, and translation of the text, see Foster, 1999: 121-128, Lichtheim, 1973: 184-192, Parkinson, 1997: 273-283, Parkinson, 2002: 273-283 & 317-318, Quirke, 2004b: 121-126 and Simpson, 2003: 431-437.

⁵⁰ This is the case in modern Egyptian villages where adolescents and younger males are not permitted to address or even greet a group of older men in a social gathering, it is seen as the youngster attempting to function as an adult and this is not acceptable behaviour (Ammar, 1954: 115).

⁵¹ Where the *mdh* was worn is discussed in chapter 1.4.

1.3 Examples of *mdh* in other textual sources

The textual record also has examples of *mdh*, which are not preceded by *ts* but are used in conjunction with rituals which transfigures a person from one state to another. Papyrus Bremner-Rhind, dating to the end of the 30th Dynasty, contains in one of its sections, the songs of Isis and Nephthys. Two virgin priestesses who were the representatives of Isis and Nephthys sang these songs in the temple of Osiris. However, before the priestesses could embody the two Goddesses they had to go through a ritualistic process. The beginning of the song reads;

Beginning of the verse of the festival of the two kites which is performed (*iry*) in the temple of Osiris, foremost of the Westerners, great God Lord of Abydos, in month four of Akhet, day 22 until day 26.

May the temple be sanctified to its entirety (*dsr hr iw-dr=f*).⁵²
One shall bring two women pure of body. They shall be virgins (*nn wp=sn*)⁵³ and the hair shall be removed from their bodies.

⁵² To its entirety is written *iw r-dr=f* – Faulkner (1933: 1, comment C) states that the *iw* is a late writing of the preposition that later becomes Coptic e, which occurs often in this papyrus.

Additionally, Smith (2009: 104) reads *dsr hr iw-dr=f* as ‘the temple should be totally secluded’. As the root meaning of *dsr* is sacred or consecrated (*LED 2: 274*), words that are associated with a temple, there is no real need to veer from this translation.

⁵³ *nn wp=sn* reads – ‘They shall not be open’. Faulkner (1939: 132) and Smith (2009: 104) translates this as ‘who are virgins’. There is a similar example from papyrus Westcar where King Khufu demands women for his boating expedition, he states “Have 20 woman brought to me, with beautiful bodies, big breasts, braided hair and who have not been opened in child birth” (*imi in.t(w) n=i st-hmt 20 m nfrt nt h^c=sn m bnt hnskt nty n wpt=sn m ms(t)*) (Blackman, 1988: 5.9 – 5.11 and Sethe, 1924: 26 and for translation of papyrus Westcar, see Lichtheim, 1973: 215-222, Parkinson, 1997: 102-130, and Simpson, 2003: 13-24). There are two schools of thought for the term *nn wpt=sn*, in that it refers to virgins or women who have not given birth. Von Lieven, (2006: 20, note 74) suggests that in the case of Westcar the context is that the women were attractive of body, so virginity did not matter, just that their bodies were not marred by pregnancy. Whereas, in a temple setting, the ritual required purity and so virgin is an equally plausible reading. For a full translation and commentary of the festival of the two Kites, see Faulkner, 1939: 121-140 and Smith, 2009: 104-119.

Adorn (*mdh*) their heads with a wig [...] ⁵⁴ a tambourine (*sr*) ⁵⁵
 in their hands, their names shall be written upon their
 shoulders (*mtn rn=sn hr rmn=sn*), namely Isis and Nephthys, so
 they might sing from the verses of this book in the presence of
 the God (Faulkner, 1933: 1.1-1.5). ⁵⁶

In order to transfigure into the Goddesses, the priestesses must be virgins, be shaved of all body hair, and have the name of Isis and Nephthys written on their shoulders with a wig *mdh* (adorned) on their heads. ⁵⁷ These ritualistic actions separate the priestesses from their mortal state and transform them into divine entities. *mdh* in this text has been translated as the verb -to adorn to fit in with the context of the ladies placing a wig on their heads, whereas, in the previous examples it is employed as a noun. The verb *rdi* – to put/place ⁵⁸ is what would be expected in place of *mdh* as this is more commonly used (see the Teaching of Khety example above where *di=f* is translated as he is wearing), meaning *mdh* had a more specific meaning.

Coffin text 398 also employs *mdh* as a verb and a noun within the same section of text. This spell summons the ferryman so the dead could cross the waters in the realm of the dead over to the field of reeds i.e., the afterlife. The spells of the ferryman can be broken up into ritualistic steps:

- The deceased must wake the ferryman.
- The ferryman interrogates the deceased who must name all the parts of the boat and compare the parts to the Gods.

⁵⁴ The lacuna has a reading of the cowhide hieroglyph (GG: F28) but Faulkner had doubt with this reading (1933:1, Comment G-H).

⁵⁵ For *sr* - tambourine, see *HwB*, no 28934: page 787 and *Wb* IV. 191. 5-9.

⁵⁶ Papyrus Bremner Rhind is also known as BM 10188. For translation and commentary of this text, see Faulkner 1939: 121-140. See Smith, 2009. *Traversing Eternity*, who provides a background history, discussion of the composition, translation, and commentary of the whole papyrus.

⁵⁷ See figure two for a depiction of the rite of two kites from the New Kingdom tomb of Rekhmire.

⁵⁸ *HwB*, no 18557: page 515 and *Wb* II. 464-468.

- The ferryman asks the deceased where he needs to go, and the deceased must prove his knowledge of the field of reeds.
- On completion of these steps, the ferryman crosses the deceased over to the field of reeds (Assmann, 2005: 132).

Assmann (2005: 133) sums up this ritual by stating, “The deceased must cross a boundary between the realm of the dead and the place of eternal life. He must demonstrate that he is someone who belongs not in the realm of death but that of the Gods, and he succeeds in this by means of knowledge.” After the deceased had proven their knowledge of the afterlife, an initiation was carried out in recognition of their newfound state as one worthy of the afterlife. The conclusion of this spell reads;

Look descending after *iw3wt* is good (*is nfr h3t m-s3 iw3wt*).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *is nfr h3t m-s3 iw3wt* – Both Carrier (2004: 965) and Faulkner (1977 :36) translate this sentence as ‘how good is it to go down after *iw3wt*’. One would expect the exclamatory ending – *nfr.wy* for this translation to work (see Allen, 2000: 7.2 for the *wy* ending used for emphasis). Faulkner (1977: 41, comment 82) states that *is* at the beginning of this sentence is a particle derivative of *isw*, however, this is not normally translated as ‘how’, usually it is rendered ‘look’ or ‘behold’ (see GG: 232 and Allen, 2000:16.6.4). I have treated *is* as ‘look’ and *nfr h3t m-s3 iw3wt* as an adjectival sentence with the infinitive *h3t* acting as a noun and subject of the verb *nfr*.

Faulkner states *iw3wt* is a female spirit (1977: 41, comment 82). Carrier (2004: 965) translates *iw3wt* but only notes the variants in the different versions of the spell, rather than providing a commentary of his translation. However, there is a similar word – *iw3yt* that translates as substitute (CDME: 12). GG:111 briefly discusses *iw3wt* and determines it was used in several texts during the Middle and New Kingdom to describe a woman who was an *iw3yt* of an official and was substituting or representing another person. The later derivatives of *iw3yt* are Demotic *iw3t* (CDD prologue (I 11.1) page 56) and Coptic EYV/EOYV/ AOYe (Crum, 1938: 62) and again this means to pledge or representative. Given the similarity in spelling and the meanings of *iw3yt*, it can be supposed that this female spirit *iw3yt* belonged to the Gods of the underworld and she was charged with representing them, when she escorted the dead to the underworld. See also the Coffin Text dictionaries of Van der Molen (2000: 23) and Van der Plas & Borghouts (1998: 18), in which, both publications suggest reading *iw3wt* as substitute or divine name/title.

Look descending after *iwꜣwt* is good (*is nfr hꜣt m-sꜣ iwꜣwt*).⁶⁰
 May I go after her when the flame has come forth.⁶¹ Greetings
 to you eye of Horus⁶², who unites the Gods. The sky and the
 earth (*iry tꜣ*)⁶³ shall tremble because of me. The Gods shall
 remove themselves from their seats as they say “It is an
 equipped Akh who comes to this land, it is the Akh to which
 the Gods of the South, North, West and East have equipped”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *is nfr hꜣt m-sꜣ iwꜣwt* – Both Carrier (2004: 965) and Faulkner (1977 :36) translate this sentence as ‘how good is it to go down after *iwꜣwt*’. One would expect the exclamatory ending – *nfr.wy* for this translation to work (see Allen, 2000: 7.2 for the .*wy* ending used for emphasis). Faulkner (1977: 41, comment 82) states that *is* at the beginning of this sentence is a particle derivative of *isw*, however, this is not normally translated as ‘how’, usually it is rendered ‘look’ or ‘behold’ (see GG: 232 and Allen, 2000:16.6.4). I have treated *is* as ‘look’ and *nfr hꜣt m-sꜣ iwꜣwt* as an adjectival sentence with the infinitive *hꜣt* acting as a noun and subject of the verb *nfr*.

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⁶¹ Three of the examples differ to *r=k šdt prt* in T3L, M2NY and M5C the hieroglyphs read *m rkrk šdt* – when the flame creeps

⁶² *irt hr* – eye of Horus does not appear in all the examples. G1T, A1C, T3L and M2NY read *irt wꜣt* – eye of the path.

⁶³ *iry tꜣ* reads relating to the land (for *iry*, see CDME: 25).

⁶⁴ *in ꜣh ꜣpr n=f ntr rsy mhꜣt imnt ꜣbt* – This sentence is grammatically complex. It is a passive *in+* participial statement, whereby the action *ꜣpr* is done to the antecedent- the *ꜣh*, expressed with the use of the resumptive *n=f*. For passive participles with the use of the resumptive see Allen, 2000: 23.15 and GG: 377. Carrier (2004: 965) translates this section of text as ‘it is a blessed Akh who equips himself! The God of the South, the God of the North, the God of the West, and the God of the East, come so you can see me.’ However, the hieroglyphs read in *ꜣh ꜣpr n=f ntr rs(y) mhꜣtyw imnty ꜣbtyw* [...]. The word *ntr* does not appear with every directional area

[...].⁶⁵ Come so you may see me adorned (*mdh.kw*) with a *mdh*,⁶⁶ and being covered (*ʕfn.kw*) with a Royal headdress (*ʕfn*) [...].⁶⁷ Joy is given to me therein⁶⁸. The water of the lakes of rushes have been filled (*mḥ mw r=sn s(w) iʒrw*).⁶⁹ The papyrus thickets and their pools are in my possession (*ʒḥw š=sn m-ʕ=i*), for the ferrier to cross over (*ḏʒ ḏʒt*)⁷⁰. Hathor may your hand be given to me, so I might be taken to the sky, so I might sit amongst the great Gods to give judgement, and I will speak what is truth, and I will draw (*iḥ=i*)⁷¹ out the patricians and the people⁷², who come to me bowing. It is good (CT V, 398: 156-160).⁷³

and there is a whole line of lacuna after the list of Gods in variant MSC, which has not been considered by Carrier and so it was not necessarily the Gods being evoked to watch the deceased being adorned.

⁶⁵ The Lacuna here represents a line (157:e) that only appears in variant MSC but is very fragmented with only and *ʕ* and *k* remaining (see Faulkner, 1977: page 41, comment 87).

⁶⁶ *mdh.kw* is a form of the first-person stative.

⁶⁷ Line c is blank in four of the examples with broken text remaining in two. Faulkner (1977: 41, comment 88) notes the additions in M2NY and M5C “can scarcely be part of the original text.” However, he transliterates and translates as *r rmn nst=i* – ‘to support my throne’ and *n r [kkt] r rmn [nst=i]* – ‘because of [the creeping] snake to support my throne’ (Faulkner, 1977: 41, comment 88).

⁶⁸ There are two other variants to this reading – M2NY has *rdi.n n=i iḥ=i gb ʒwt-ib* – ‘My father Geb has given joy to me therein’. G1T and G2T reads, *rdiw ni ʒwt-ib im=s* – ‘Joy has been given to me therein’.

⁶⁹ *mḥ mw r=sn s(w) iʒrw* appears to read *mḥ mw r=sn iw iʒrw* but Faulkner (1977: 41, comment 89) suggests the reading lake - *s(w)* (GG: N37 pool of water) rather than island - *iw* (GG: N18 sandy tract sign) as islands cannot be filled with water.

⁷⁰ Another variant of *ḏʒ ḏʒt* is demonstrated in T3L which just reads *ḏʒt* which could be employed as an infinitive with the first-person suffix pronoun *i*, so *ḏʒt=i* – my crossing.

⁷¹ *iḥ* – to pull draw out (HwB, no 4257: page 126 and Wb I. 148. 11-21) in this context implies once the deceased has successfully negotiated to the afterlife, he will join the Gods to judge other people and draw out the good from the bad.


⁷² Rather than *iḥ=i pʕt rhkyt*, T3L reads *mʒ=sn pʕtw* – they might see the patricians.

⁷³ Faulkner 1977: 33-40 and Carrier, 2004: 958-967. It should be noted that there are other examples of *mdh* in the coffin texts, but unfortunately these examples are fragmented and obscure. The other spells in which *mdh* appears are spell 393 (CT V: 67 and Faulkner, 1977: 19), spell 914 (CT VII: 118-11 and Faulkner, 1978: 62), spell 922 (CT VII: 126 and Faulkner, 1978: 64-65) and spell 1018 (CT VII: 240 and Faulkner, 1978: 120).

The initial part of the conclusion to this ritual declares the dead as an equipped Akh, meaning the deceased one is appropriately prepared and in the correct state for the afterlife. The second part is an initiation, which occurs before the field of reeds is made available to the deceased. This initiation is the area of interest here as the deceased was adorned (*mdh.kw*) with a *mdh* and then covered in a headdress. According to Goebis (2008:24) headdresses and crowns aid the dead into marking a new state of existence such as becoming an Akh in the afterlife. This is the case with Coffin text 398 whereby the deceased belongs to the land of the dead until they prove themselves worthy of the field of reeds through knowledge of the afterlife. Then the adorning of the *mdh* marks the initiation of his new transition and his separation from the realm of the dead, followed by the wearing of the *fn* headdress to denote his transfigured status as an Akh.

When examining the use of *mdh*, it is always employed within a ritualistic context to describe a transition from one state to another. Although the sources cited above employ *mdh* as a noun and a verb, examples like this are scarce, demonstrating *mdh* was not a part of everyday language. This suggests that the usage of *mdh* is restricted to certain circumstances and can be considered ritual specific language. This is the reason for the paucity of attestations of *mdh* in the textual record to describe clothing or the action of dressing as a part of everyday life. The use of *mdh* and its association with marking change has demonstrated that the *ts mdh*, when referred to in the Old Kingdom tomb biographies, denotes a rite which changed the status of the boy. Furthermore, it is always included within the same context of the career of the tomb owner, meaning we can view tying the *mdh* as an event where a young male was able to enter the realms of the working world after it was performed.

1.4 What was the *mdh* and where was it worn?

The main theories regarding the *mdh* surmise that it was either a head band/cloth or an item of clothing such as a kilt. The evidence discussed so far supports the argument that it was a linen item worn on the head. The songs of Isis and Nephthys employs *mdh* as a verb to denote the action of placing a wig on the head.⁷⁴ Coffin text 398 also uses *mdh* as a verb meaning ‘to adorn’ and as a noun, describing the item being adorned, but it does not state where the *mdh* was placed (CT V, 398: 156-160). The subsequent line describes the adorning of a headdress (*fn*), consequently, it may appear to be unusual to treat *mdh* as a headcloth/band as this would mean two items were placed on the head in one rite. However, there was a ritual connected to the God Horus depicted in Ptolemaic temples which saw Horus receiving two crowns in one ceremony. Derchain (1955: 231) describes it as a rite of justification whereby Horus was judged worthy of being his father’s successor on the throne of Egypt and was adorned with the crown of justification to display his state of worthiness; and afterwards he is presented with the *wrrt* crown.⁷⁵ The rite of justification corresponds with the three elements – separation, transition and incorporation, which make up a rite according to Van Gennep (1960: 10-11). The separation is marked by the statue of Horus being taken from the main temple to the temple of the falcon. The transition comes with the anointing, offering, and the band of cloth tied around the head of the statue. Finally, Horus and the ruling King who was the representative of Horus had their Royal power renewed.⁷⁶ The crown of justification comes in many forms, which Derchain organises into types (1955: 228). Type one which Derchain (1955: 226) describes as “nothing more than a ribbon knotted behind the head” is identical to the determinative employed for *mdh* -  (See figure one below for

⁷⁴ See chapter 1.3.

⁷⁵ Van den Houen, 2014, 159: 179 and Van Gennep, 1960: 111-112.

⁷⁶ See Feucht, 1995: 244-245 and Van den Houen, 2014: 163-170 for the description of this ritual.

comparison).

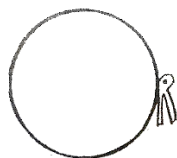


Figure 1: The type one crown, employed in the rite of justification (Derchain, 1955: 228).

Some of the examples of the justification rite use the word *mdh* in the texts which accompany these depictions of the ceremony. For example, at Edfu, Ptolemy IX is proclaimed the rightful ruler who wears the red and white crowns of Egypt, he is then compared to Horus to strengthen his legitimisation. The text reads;

He is like Horus, Lord of the West, and East with the *mdh* of his forehead with great... (*wr*) (Chassinat: 1932: 98).

Additionally, within the Book of the dead, spell Pleyte 168 was used to awaken the dead in afterlife, and associates the word *mdh* with the head, and as an action of denoting a state of justification.⁷⁷ Line 37 of the spell reads;

“Awaken yourself, one who comes to Poker, your noble head is adorned (*mdh*)(with) justification (*m3^c-hrw*) (Pleyte, 1881 :115).⁷⁸

The rite of justification legitimises the King’s rule and is parallel to Pyramid Text 519 in that Horus is wearing a *mdh* as a symbol of his legitimacy and readiness to take on his father’s role. The Book of the Dead, spell Pleyte 168 also links the *mdh* with adorning the head, as a symbol of state, and the validity of being worthy of that state. Collectively, the evidence presents that the *mdh*, when

⁷⁷ This papyrus is also known as Leiden T31 and dates to the Ptolemaic era.

⁷⁸ Pleyte, 1881: 98-128 offers a full hieratic transcription and translation of this text but no vignette. For full translation see Allen, 1974: 218-220 and for transliteration and translation see Quirke, 2013: 537-540.

used as a noun, was a linen band worn on the head, and as a verb to adorn something on the head.

It is interesting to note that the songs of Isis and Nephthys is a part of the imagery to denote a funerary ritual of a tomb owner in the New Kingdom in the form of the ritual of the two kites.⁷⁹

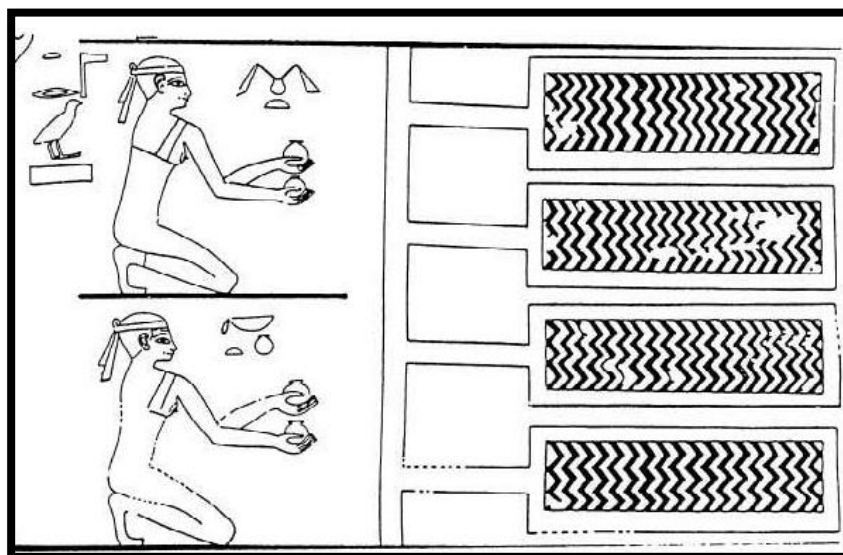


Figure 2: The rite of the two kites from the New Kingdom tomb of Rekhmire (De Garis Davies, 1946: Plate 79).

For example, figure two is a funerary procession scene from the tomb of Rekhmire that illustrates two women taking on the identity of Isis and Nephthys, who mourn Osiris, before bringing him back to life. There is a connection to the *mdh* in that both women wear a band of cloth identical to the type one head band used in other temple rituals.⁸⁰ It is difficult to ascertain if the ladies in this scene are wearing wigs like in the textual description of the rite in which the priestesses adorn (*mdh*) a wig on their heads.⁸¹ Despite the ambiguity regarding the hair, the connection to wearing this type of headband and the verb *mdh* can be traced through temple ritual.

⁷⁹ See chapter 1.3 for translation of the introduction to the songs.

⁸⁰ see figure 1 & GG: 10.

⁸¹ Robins, 1999: 67-68.

In terms of *ts mdh* as a rite of passage, the examples above would suggest that the linen headband was tied onto the young man. The crowning of justification marks Horus as the legitimate successor of his father and worthy of taking over his appointment. The *ts mdh* rite could feasibly have the same meaning in that the son is ready to embark on his career which is determined by his father's profession.⁸² The adorning of the *mdh* or to *mdh* the forehead is a physical indicator of the change of the boy's social status and his readiness for training, but also a marker that one day he would succeed his father professionally.

⁸² Succession of office is discussed in chapter two.

1.5 Was the *ts mdh* a part of a broader rite involving circumcision?

It is a valid consideration to surmise if the tying of the cloth (*ts mdh*) was in relation to the practice of circumcision, with the phrase *ts mdh* being an abbreviated expression of the rite. This would mean that the *ts mdh* - or the tying of a cloth and circumcision were both parts of the same complex childhood ritual. There is pictorial evidence from the Old Kingdom that can be comparatively studied with textual evidence to bring forward a reasonable case that circumcision was a childhood rite of initiation in ancient Egypt. A practice such as circumcision, which leaves a permanent mark on the body, was, and is, a customary practice to mark the changing status of a boy and move him into a new social group, for example, from childhood to manhood. Van Gennepe (1960: 71) regarding circumcision states “The mutilated individual is removed from the common mass of humanity by a rite of separation (idea behind cutting, piercing etc.) which automatically incorporates him into a defined group; since the operation leaves ineradicable traces, the incorporation is permanent”. The purpose of body changing rites aligns with the tying of the cloth in that a boy was initiated into the working world, which separated him from childhood and signified a new phase in his life, from which he could not regress.

The evidence surrounding the practice of circumcision in Egypt is fragmentary and there is no explicit evidence to suggest that it was universal. According to Herodotus, circumcision was conducted in ancient Egypt, he states, “Their concern for cleanliness also explains why they practice circumcision, since they value cleanliness more than comeliness. Priests shave every part of their bodies every other day, to stop themselves getting lice or in general being unclean as they minister to the God” (Herodotus, translated by Waterfield, 1998: 109-110). Herodotus was referring to the priesthood in this extract, meaning the reason for their circumcision was not necessarily the same motive for secular individuals.

There is limited textual and pictorial evidence, which can be interpreted as records of circumcision.⁸³ A scene from the 6th Dynasty tomb of Ankhmahor, located at Saqqara, depicts a scene of circumcision (see figure 3).

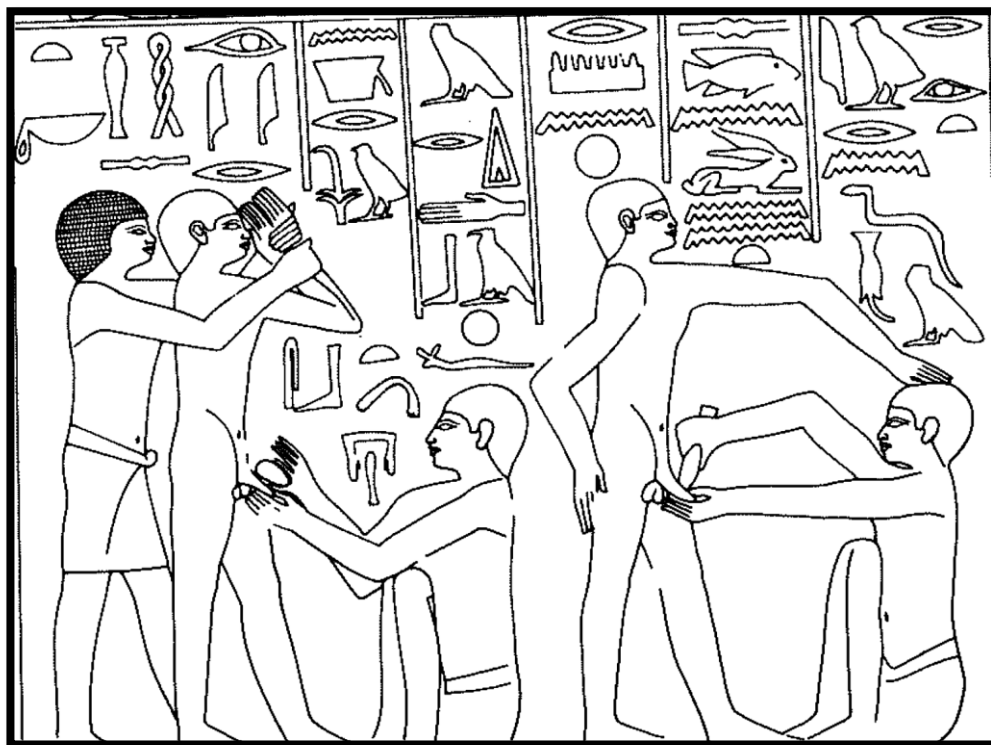


Figure 3: Scene of circumcision from the tomb of Ankhmahor (Kanawati, 1997: plate 55).

On the left of the scene, the arms of a naked male are held by a kilted figure, whilst another labelled *hm k3/Ka* priest, performs a procedure near the groin area of the restrained male. On the right side of the scene, another man stands as a second male crouches in front of him holding a tool to the standing man's penis. The captions label the action as *s^cb*, and it has been taken to mean circumcise. *s^cb* is determined by a sign of unclear interpretation, perhaps a knife or

⁸³ For discussions on the evidence concerning circumcision, see Bailey, 1996: 15-28, Feucht, 1995: 245-250, Marshall, 2021: 163-165, Quack, 2012: 561-651, Spigelman, 1997: 91-100, and Willems, 2013a: 553-558. See also Fitzenreiter (2006: 222-223) who argues that there is distinction in Old Kingdom male statues. Type one is classed as naked boy who displays the characteristics of youth, with the sidelock of youth and hand to mouth pose, and type two as naked male who is circumcised and wears amulets, collar, and wig.

razor and this had led to the translation of *sꜥb* as the castration of cattle.⁸⁴ The association of the word with castration, coupled with the determinative, lends weight to the argument that this scene represents circumcision. The two other captions read, “hold him do not let him pass out (*dbꜣ=f*)” and “indeed rub out/obliterate (*sin*) thoroughly.” Again, these captions can be related to the removal of the foreskin and one of the potential risks that could occur during the circumcision, i.e., fainting. However, the scene in the tomb of Ankhmahor could be an example of full body shaving rather than a case of circumcision.⁸⁵ The evidence presented for circumcision is transferable to the idea of full body shaving. The knife determinative, the rubbing out/obliteration could be referring to the body hair and even fainting, as to remove all the hair from the body must have been a lengthy process. Although, when examining the scene in figure three, the tool held by the ka priest is held against the end of the penis which one would not expect with shaving pubic hair.

Additional evidence derives from textual sources. A First Intermediate Period stela from Naga ed Der belonging to man called Weha (*wḥꜣ*) records an event which suggests mass circumcision. The relevant section of the stela reads;

“I was circumcised (*sꜥb.kw*) with 120 men. There was none who struck? (*shꜥ*), there was none who was struck (*shꜥw*) there. There was none who scratched (*ꜣhꜥ*) there, there was none who was scratched (*ꜣhꜥw*) there” (Dunham, 1937: Plate: 32).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *HWB*, no 26359: 725 and *Wb* IV. 43.11. For the lexical interpretations of *sꜥb*, see Bailey, 1996: 23-25, Quack, 2012: 569-570 & 580-584, and Spigelman, 1997: 95.

⁸⁵ See Eyre 2014: 297, Quack, 2012: 571, and Spigelman, 1997: 93-94.

⁸⁶ Dunham, 1937: 102-104, Eyre, 2014: 297, and Quack, 2012: 584-585.

Dunham (1937: 104) translates the verb *sꜥb* as circumcised based on a conversation with Gardiner, who suggested *sꜥb* was analogous with the Coptic word for circumcision. Crum (1939: 320) confirms this translating *sbbe* as circumcision in the dictionary.⁸⁷ Dunham (1937: 102-104) also translates *shꜥ* as struck, which along with the verb *ꜥhꜥ* – to scratch, presents the reason why the youth is being restrained in the tomb image of Ankhmahor. Weha is saying that everyone acted appropriately during the ceremony. In the biography of Mereri from Dendera (late Old Kingdom), he makes the following statement regarding his social responsibility in his city;

“I buried the old and I circumcised (*sꜥb*) its youth
(*ndsw=s*) (Fischer, 1968: 149).⁸⁸

Like the stele of Weha, the word *sꜥb* is used to describe this rite. It is interesting that Mereri has placed burying the old and circumcision within the same bracket of good social behaviour. By employing death and circumcision in conjunction with each other, the ancient Egyptians viewed circumcision on par with death in that it was a change of state that required the appropriate organisation and rituals, therefore, if a male had no family to prepare this rite for him, it became the responsibility of the local leader to ensure this occurred.

The textual record also has examples that include circumcision as a ploy to legitimise the capabilities of a man and their right to rule.

Nehri from Beni Hassan (Grandfather of Khnumhotep)

“He ruled this city as a child (*sꜥt*) before he had lost the
foreskin (*n fht=f mtꜥm*)” (Kanawati, 2014: plate 11, line 184-
186).

⁸⁷ For *sbbe* see Quack, 2012: 581

⁸⁸ The feminine pronoun *s* in *ndsw=s* is referring to the Mereri’s town. For Mereri, see Quack, 2012: 584-585.

Berlin Leather roll

“Lord of my two shares (*nb psšt=i 2*)⁸⁹as a child (*nḥn*) before the foreskin was removed for me (*n fh̄t n=i m̄z̄m*)” (De Buck, 1938: 49).⁹⁰

Florence Stele 2450

“...(before) the foreskin was removed... ((*n*) *fh̄t n=i m̄z̄m*)”

(Bostico, 1959: 29b).⁹¹

The Berlin leather roll and Florence stele 2450 are both referring to the prowess of Senusret I. The Berlin leather roll has more context, stating that Senusret I ruled Egypt from an early age before his circumcision. Nehri has the same motif but from a non-royal perspective in that he ruled Beni Hasan before his circumcision. The inference is that being placed into a position of power before circumcision was an extraordinary event.⁹² It is significant that these examples refer to the removal

⁸⁹ *psšt=i* is referring to the two lands.

⁹⁰ The Berlin leather roll dates to the 18th Dynasty and is a copy of a 12th Dynasty stele or wall inscription from the temple of Heliopolis. The inscription is a self-eulogy and eulogy praising Senusret I and the work he commissioned on the temple. For a full translation of the Berlin leather roll, see De Buck, 1938: 48-57, Lichtheim, 1973: 115-118, and Parkinson, 1991: 40-43.

⁹¹ This stele belongs to an official called Montuhotep and records expeditions in Nubia and praise for Senusret I. The relevant section of the stele is very fragmented and so context has been lost but it is the same phraseology as the Berlin leather roll above. For Florence stele 2450 see Breasted, 1906, vol 1: 230-235, plate 3 and Obsomer, 1992: 57-74.

⁹² It should be noted that both Lichtheim (1973: 116) and Parkinson (1991: 41) translate *m̄z̄m* as ‘swaddling cloth’. Quack (2012: 587-589) argues for the removal of clothing based on the verb *fh̄* – ‘to loosen’ (*Wb* I, 578.7), and states it is a clothing ritual, comparing it to the *ts mdh̄*. Further to Quack’s suggestion that the verb *fh̄* is related to clothing, is the fact that it is usually determined with the strip of cloth with fringe plus folded cloth sign (GG, S:28) or the band of string/linen sign (GG: V12). The subject of *fh̄* is the noun *m̄z̄m* and this is where circumcision comes into play as the Florence Stele and the example from Khnumhotep both determine *m̄z̄m* with the phallus sign (GG: D52). Furthermore, the Berlin roll determines *m̄z̄m* with man striking with stick (GG: A24) and cord (GG: V6) determinatives. The male orientated determinatives have led to the

of the foreskin within the context of career, meaning circumcision was symbiotic with occupation, meaning Senusret I and Nehri of Beni Hasan worked outside of normal parameters by taking their positions pre-circumcision. Therefore, the inclusion of *flht n-i mtzm* within the content of biographies and texts regarding the King, was designed to make an impact on the audience. Even if these statements are hyperbole, the concept of being active professionally in an adult way pre-circumcision was considered an unusual and impressive feat.

A fragment of a scene which lends weight to the practice of circumcision in a Royal context has been found within the pyramid complex of Djedkare, at Saqqara (5th Dynasty). The fragment shows two boys in the centre, both naked, with a woman on the left holding on to one of the boys and a man holding a type of tool to the genital region of the other boy on the right (see figure 4).⁹³

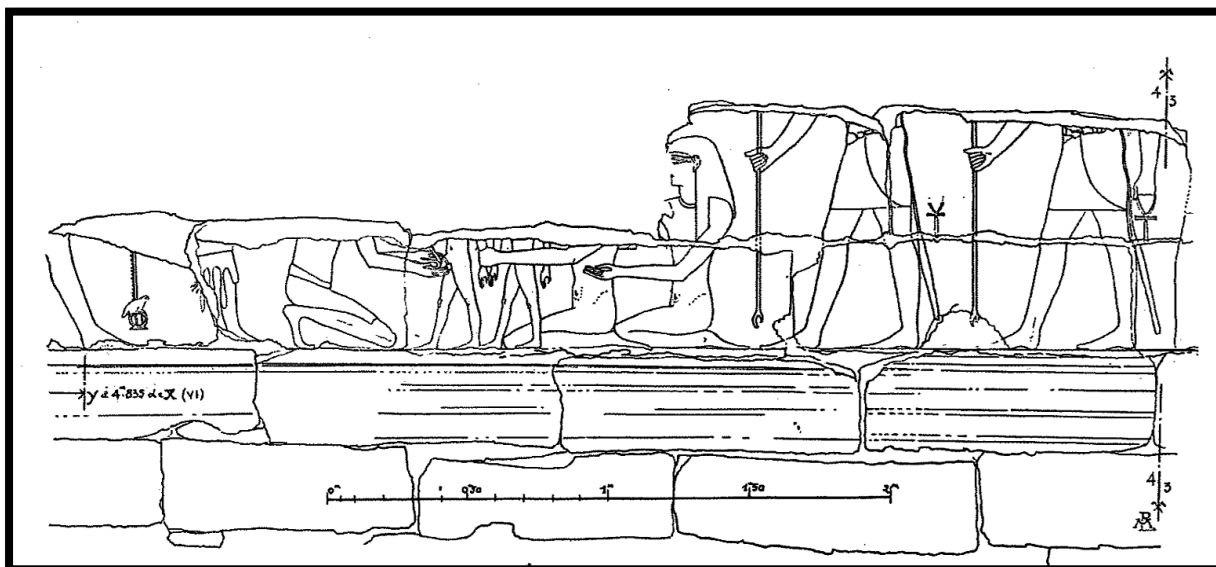


Figure 4: A circumcision scene from the pyramid complex of Djedkare located at Saqqara (Megahed & Vymazalová, 2015: figure 1).

translation foreskin for *mztm*. *mtzm* is usually translated as a woman's garment (CDME: 150 & Wb II. 175.11), and the significance of this is discussed in chapter 1.7.

⁹³ See Megahed & Vymazalová, 2011: 155-164 & Megahed & Vymazalová, 2015: 275-287.

The temple of Mut at Karnak has a similar scene, which is damaged, but does provide more context than the Djedkare example (see figure 5).⁹⁴



**Figure 5: A circumcision from the temple of Mut at Karnak, 19th/20th Dynasty
(Pillet, 1952: figure 7).**

The temple of Mut scene illustrates two boys supported and held from behind by two women with a male kneeling in front of the boy, holding a tool against the genital area.⁹⁵ The two scenes are similar to the image in the tomb of Ankhmahor (see figure 3). Whereby, a male is held from behind whilst another man kneels in front with a tool held towards the penis. In the temple of Mut, the scenes which accompany the circumcision scene have also suffered damage, but the most intact sections show Amun with a King, a scene of a birthing bed with either women or Goddesses squatting either side of two children, the circumcision scene is next in the sequence, followed by a seated God and Goddess holding small children.⁹⁶ The weight of evidence is that circumcision was practised as a marker of coming of age at least among the ruling elite.

⁹⁴ Pillet 1952: 77-104.

⁹⁵ Pillet (1952: 102) suggests the second boy is the prince's double who is waiting for his turn.

⁹⁶ Pillet, 1952: 78-81, fig 1-7.

1.6 A theory regarding circumcision in a Royal context

Megahed & Vymazalová (2015: 275-287) argue that the Royal circumcision scenes are part of a wider story regarding a rite called the birth legend of the King (see figures 4 & 5). A cautious approach should be taken as the birth legend theory is based on fragmentary evidence and is speculative. However, given the obscurity surrounding this rite, it is worth observing all suppositions. The order of events that occurred during the birth legend is seen in its fullest on the walls of the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahri. The sequence of events within the rite are as follows.

- 1) The Queen Ahmose unites with Amun to conceive Hatshepsut
- 2) Khnum shapes the Royal child
- 3) The Queen mother gives birth with assistance from various Goddesses
- 4) Amun-Re welcomes the child
- 5) The divine cow and various Goddesses nurse the child
- 6) Child is presented as the crown Prince
- 7) Gods and Goddesses assign the King and Ka numerous years of life
- 8) Purification of the Prince with the current King and Gods affirming Hatshepsut as the

successor.⁹⁷

Megahed & Vymazalová (2015: 280-281) attributes event seven in the sequence - the assignment of years by the God, as being the act of circumcision, based on the similarities between the surrounding context and the circumcision scene from the temple of Mut (see figure 5), and scenes in the temples of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III (see figures 6 & 7).

⁹⁷ For the scenes of the birth legend of the King, see Naville, 1896: 14-18 and plates XLVI – LV. For discussion of these scenes, see Megahed & Vymazalová, 2011: 160-161, Megahed & Vymazalová, 2015: 279, and Oppenheim, 2011: 174-176.

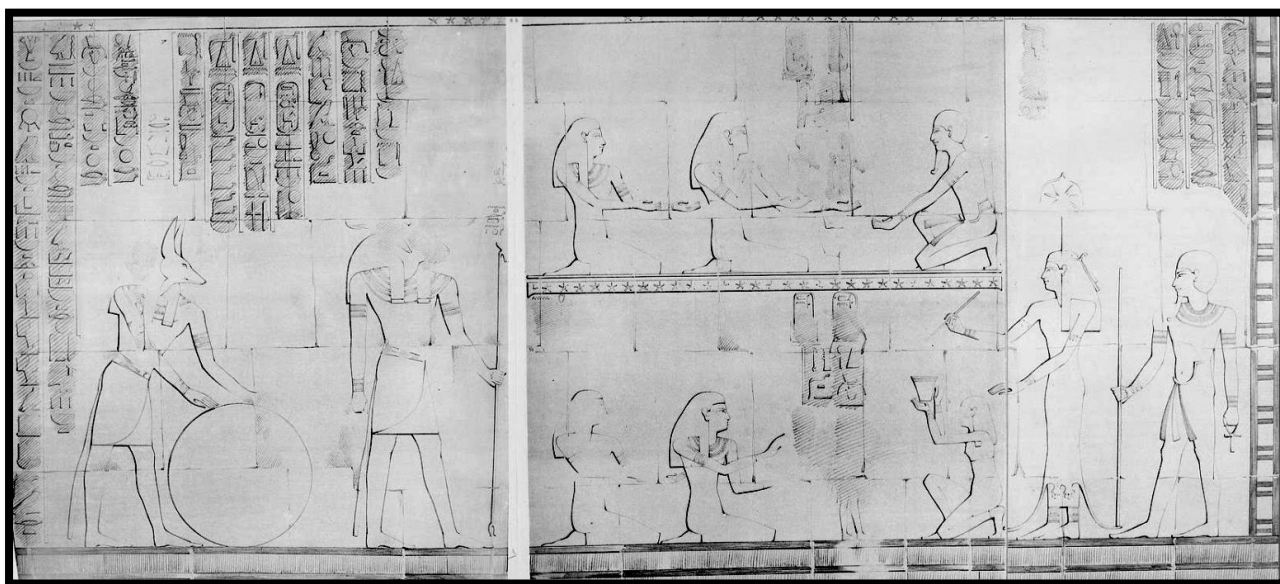


Figure 6: A scene of circumcision included in the birth legend of the King from the temple of Deir el Bahri (Naville, 1896: plate LIV).

Figure 6 is a scene from the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahri. The legs of a small child with two females kneeling in front of him and holding their arms up towards him is depicted in the centre of the scene. Behind the boy, a kneeling figure holds a pot with the Goddess Shesat stood behind with a staff pointing towards the boy. The birth legend is also played out on the walls in the temple of Amenhotep III at Luxor, furthermore, the scenes in Amenhotep's temple include a comparable image to the scene described above from Hatshepsut's temple (see figure 7).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ For the full scenes illustrating the birth story of the King on the walls of Amenhotep III's temple, see Brunner, 1986: Plates IV – XV. For a discussion of these scenes, see Megahed & Vymazalová, 2011: 160-161, Megahed & Vymazalová, 2015: 277-281, and Oppenheim, 2011: 176.

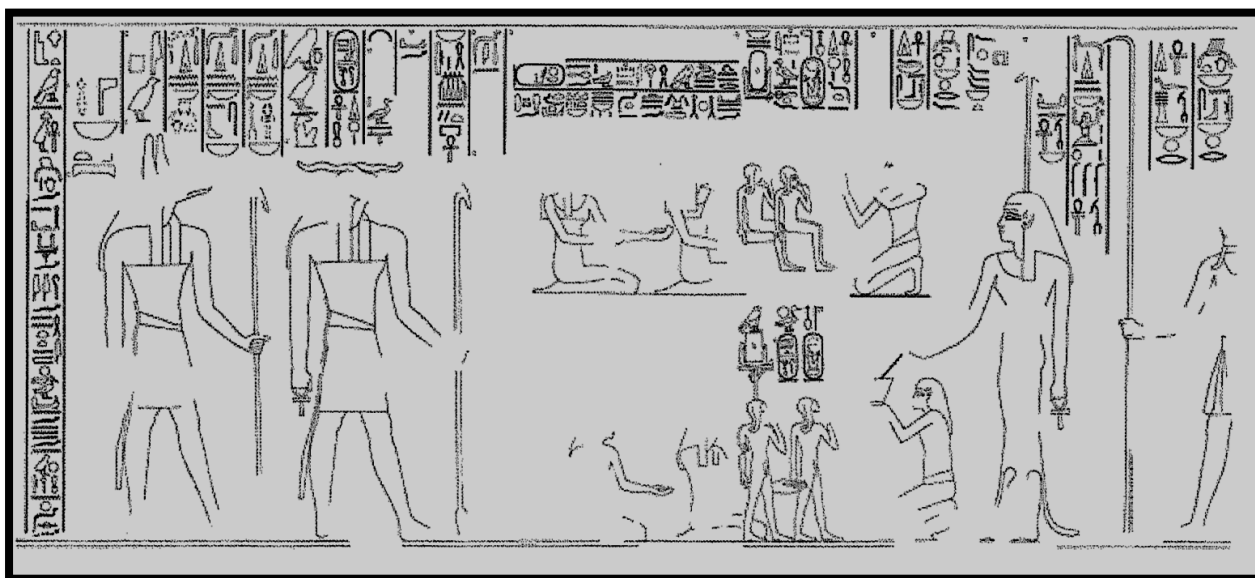


Figure 7: A comparative scene from the temple of Amenhotep at Luxor to the circumcision scene featured in the temple of Hatshepsut (Brunner, 1986: Plate 15).

Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain if these scenes represented the act of circumcision as the action taking place directly in front of the small boy/s is damaged in both examples. Megahed & Vymazalová (2015: figure 7) have reconstructed the scene to incorporate circumcision based on the example from the temple of Mut and the Djedkare fragment (see figure 4 and 5, and figure 8 below for the reconstructed scene).

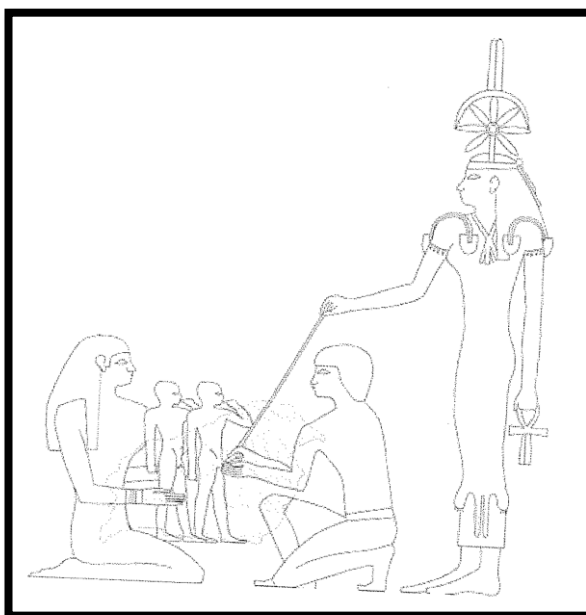


Figure 8: Theoretical reconstruction of the damaged area from the scenes discussed above from Hatshepsut's and Amenhotep's temple to depict circumcision (see Megahed & Vymazalová, 2015: figure 7).

The whole meaning of this scene is the crown Prince is sanctioned by the Gods to become the next King. Therefore, if circumcision were a part of the birth legend, this would demonstrate that circumcision was significant in recognising and marking the successor to the throne.

Oppenheim (2011) argues that the birth legend can be traced back to the Middle Kingdom and several fragments from the causeway of Senusret III at Dahshur are an earlier representation of the King's birth legend. One of the fragments depicts the lower half of killed Gods, determined by the hieroglyphs which appear to refer to giving health – a prerogative of the Gods (see figure 9).

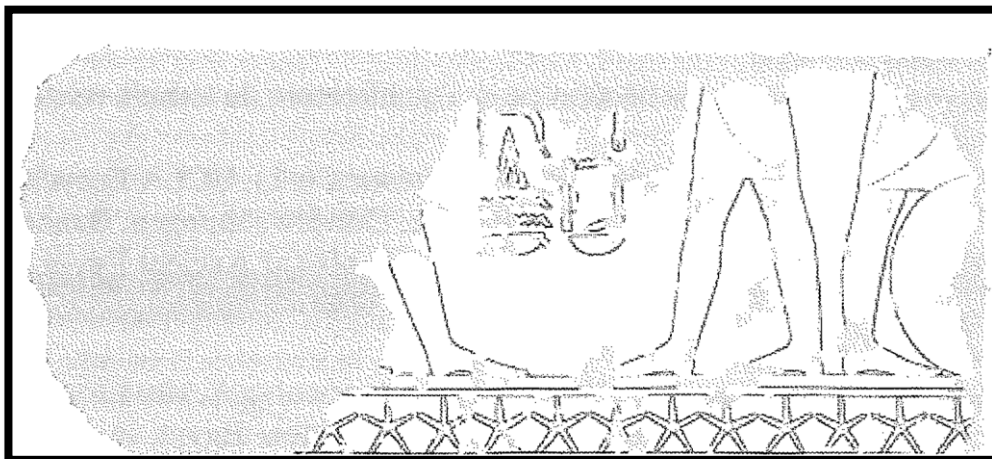


Figure 9: A fragment from the causeway of Senusret III illustrating the legs of three kilted figures and a fragmented disc (Oppenheim, 2011: Figure 2, page 178).

This scene bears a resemblance to the left side of the proposed circumcision scene at the temple of Hatshepsut where we can see Anubis rolling a disc with Khnum stood next to him (see figure 6).

A second fragment has the remains of a hieroglyphic text. Unfortunately, the lacuna and the various orientation of the hieroglyphs hamper our understanding of the translation and meaning (see figure 10).

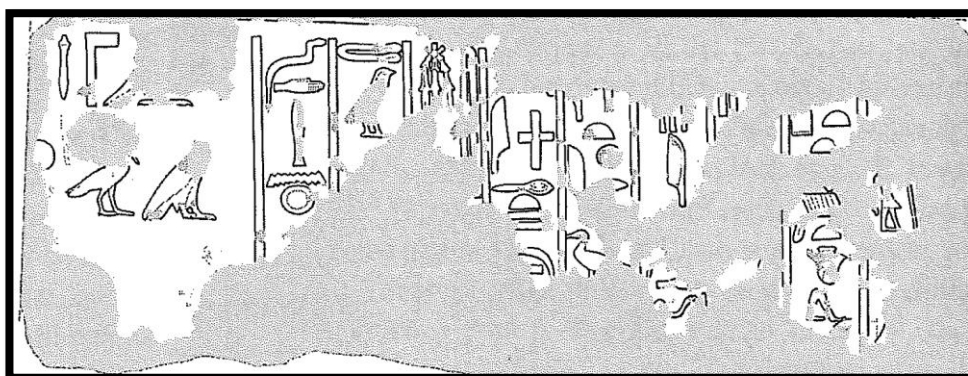


Figure 10: Remains of a hieroglyphic text from the causeway of Senusret III at Dahshur (Oppenheim, 2011: figure 5, Page 182).

Although the complete context is lost, we can see the hieroglyphics *ms* which suggest that this may be referring to the birth of Senusret III (Oppenheim, 2011: 182-183).⁹⁹ This motif is a part of the birth legend of the King where we see the Queen mother assisted by the Gods during the delivery of the

⁹⁹ see CDME: 1 for *ꜣw-ib*, for *ms* see CDME: 116 and for *ht*, see CDME: 200.

future King and the presentation of the child to Amun.¹⁰⁰ The temple of Amenhotep has a comparable scene in which the hieroglyphic text is very similar but includes the image of Amun-Re welcoming the Prince (see figure 11 below). The Amenhotep III scene reads *sꜣ n ḥt* – son of his body, referring to Amun-Re and a wish for the future king is expressed - may you be joyful (*ꜣw-ib=k*). The words for son (*sꜣ*), body (*ḥt*), and joy (*ꜣw-ib*) are present in the Senusret text, suggesting a similar theme was present in the Middle Kingdom.

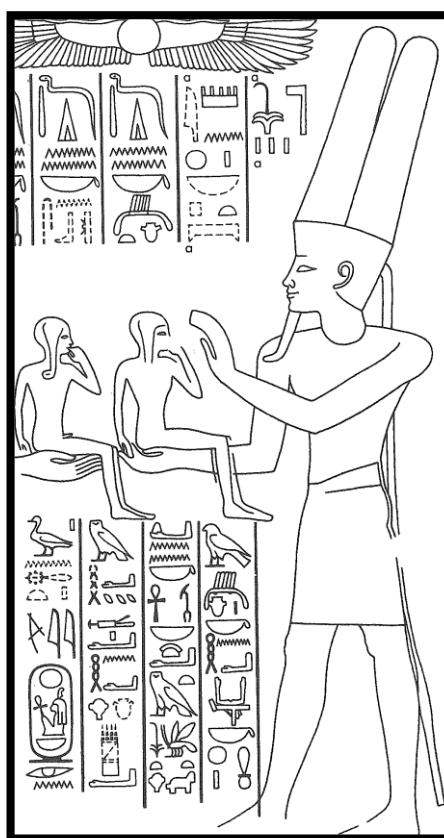


Figure 11: The presentation of the child Amenhotep III to Amun-Re (Brunner,1986: Plate 14).

A third fragment shows part of a purification scene (see figure 12). A child stands under two streams of ankhs.

¹⁰⁰ For the scenes regarding the birth of the future King in the temple of Hatshepsut, see Naville, 1896: Plate LIV and for Amenhotep III, see Brunner, 1986: Plate IV.

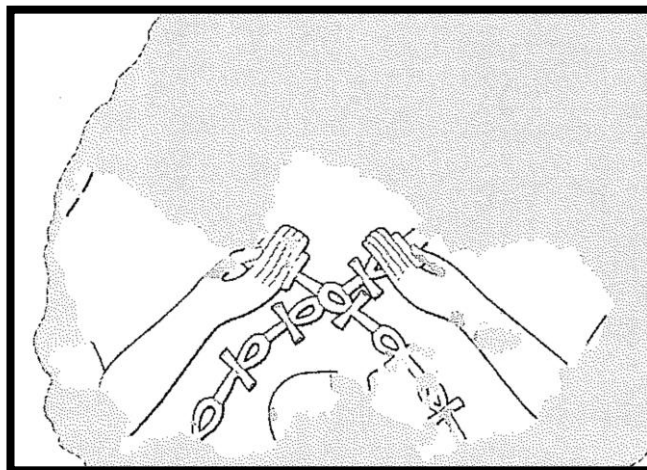


Figure 12: A scene of a purification rite of a child from the causeway of Senusret III from Dahshur (Oppenheim, 2011: Figure 6, page 184).

Hatshepsut is also purified in the final scene of her birth legend where the Gods confirm her to be the next successor to the throne.¹⁰¹ The Senusret III causeway fragments put forward a case that the birth legend was a part of the Middle Kingdom Royal repertoire. To add weight to this, we have the reference to the removal of the foreskin as a proclamation of the power of the King that also dates to the Middle Kingdom.¹⁰² The fragment from the temple of Djedkare (figure 4) places this rite into the 5th Dynasty, meaning circumcision as a marker of manhood and succession was extant in a Royal context in the Old Kingdom.

It is feasible to suggest that the birth legend of the King was purely mythological and symbolic, a rite which was only meant to be played out on temple walls rather than a reality. However, we have evidence which implies non-royal circumcision was also performed so it makes sense that this custom was not just a part of Royal dogma. The ideology of the King always surrounds itself with the divine and the rite to rule was legitimised by the Gods. A rite of passage that was customary to Royalty and private individuals would have a degree of separation between how it was carried out on kings and ordinary men. The man performing the proposed circumcision

¹⁰¹ Naville, 1896: Plate LV.

¹⁰² See the translation of the Florence stele and the Berlin Leather roll in chapter 1.5.

on Ankhmahor has the label *hm-k3/ka* priest (see figure 3) whereas the scenes from the temple of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III (figures 6 & 7) portray the Gods preceding over the events taking place during the birth legend. We see the Goddesses helping the Queen mother give birth in the temple of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep.¹⁰³ We know this is not the reality of the situation but obviously, the Queen did give birth to the next King. The inclusion of Gods and Goddesses does not mean that the events are purely fictional, rather it is a version of reality, which legitimises the child as the God sanctioned successor to throne.

The interpretation of the birth legend of the King depends entirely on the reconstruction of the scene, which is not entirely substantiated. However, the scenes, both private and Royal, do depict rituals of childhood. The tying of the *mdh* as a reference to a rite, which included circumcision in a non-Royal context, is plausible theory. A Royal prince was inducted on the pathway to Kingship during the birth legend in which he was circumcised to permanently mark his newfound adult status and legitimise his succession. The *ts mdh* has the same perspective, in that it is used to introduce the career-based content within the Old Kingdom biographical material to denote a rite, which a boy experienced on the cusp of starting his career. Furthermore, there is material from the Old Kingdom which presents the idea that circumcision and the birth legend of the King had its origins in the Old Kingdom. The fragment depicting circumcision belonging to Djedkare suggests that this rite was carried out on Royalty as early as the 5th Dynasty. Additionally, Pyramid text 519 demonstrates a plausible connection between the tying of the *mdh* and the birth legend of the King. Horus ties the *mdh* and is deemed ready to join his father, where he is accepted as next in line to the throne in the presence Geb and other Gods.¹⁰⁴ Pyramid text 519 links the *ts mdh* to the birth legend and therefore, connecting circumcision to the *ts mdh*. The legend of the King's birth places Royal circumcision in a context of induction on to the pathway of succession

¹⁰³ For the birth scene of Amenhotep III, see Brunner, 1986: plate 9, and for Hatshepsut, see Naville, 1896: plate LI.

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 1.2.

whereby the Prince is marked and accepted as the next in line to the throne. This rite or at least the circumcision part of it can be extended to non-Royals who were next in line to take over their father's position based on the evidence from the tomb of Ankhmahor, the stele of Weha, and the statement made by Nehri from Beni Hasan who claims he ruled before his foreskin was removed. Effectively, if the tying of the cloth is in conjunction to circumcision, then this would explain why the *ts mdh* is always presented in the context of career. However, one could argue if the *ts mdh* is referring to circumcision, then why not use the same vocabulary and phraseology. A viable reason that circumcision is made more ambiguous in the Old Kingdom biographies is because the *ts mdh* is describing the performance of the ritual. In contrast, the employment of *n fht=f tzm* is just to reference that they had power before their foreskins were removed rather than describing the occasion of the actual removal. The ritualistic nature of the *ts mdh* is more esoteric which separates it from the ordinary and the everyday use of language to describe the event.

1.7 The connection and symbolism between the *ts mdh* - tying of the *mdh*, circumcision, and rites of passage

Although, it cannot be truly ascertained that circumcision and the *ts mdh* were concordant events performed at the same time in ancient Egypt, there is a solid argument, given the evidence that a rite of passage existed and was integral to placing a boy onto the road to manhood. The performance of the *ts mdh* rite and/or circumcision on a boy marked a transition relating to his masculine identity, in which the preparation for his career was a significant by-product of this event. The tying of a headdress must have had a symbolic meaning linked to the changing status of the boy, however, there is no evidence from ancient Egypt pertaining to what the tying of the cloth represented. Fortunately, in both modern and ancient times, and other cultures, the use of clothing to mark a boy shedding his femininity during rites of passage is recorded. Boys dressed in girl's clothing as a part of ritual practice to denote their pre-masculine status is found in ancient Athens. The Athenian Oscophoria festival saw a procession of boys led from the sanctuary of Dionysis in Athens to the sanctuary of Athena Skiras in Phaleron. Two male youths who were on the cusp of manhood led the procession and would wear female attire.¹⁰⁵ Beaumont (2013: 204) states the reason for the youths wearing girl's clothes was "while shortly therefore, they would assume a fully gendered masculine identity, the Oscophoria festival gave public expression to their marked liminal position between juvenility and maturity and consequently between masculinity and femininity". The boys were not yet considered in a masculine state and were feminised for a final time, by wearing girl's clothes during the rite, once the rite was complete, he would shed the feminine attire and was then recognised as fully male.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ For gender identity and pre-masculine status of boys, see Beaumont, 2013: 203-204, Chapin, 2007: 229-255 and Miller, 1999: 243, and Robins, 1999: 55-69.

¹⁰⁶ Alternatively, in ancient Greece, gender is understated in the depictions of boys on fresco walls from Thera who are painted without genitals up until the age of twelve, in fact it is boys engaged in activity such as fishing

Lancy (2008: 287) discusses that social maleness is not inherent in a boy, and a certain degree of femaleness is acquired by a male child due to being born of, nursed, and raised by woman. Therefore, rituals such as circumcision and the wearing of female clothing is symbolic of the boy shedding his femininity and embracing his masculinity. Solidifying masculinity through ritual is, for instance, demonstrated even now within the Anga tribe of Papa New Guinea, who celebrate a rebirthing ritual that is usually performed on boys 8-12 years old, where they are covered in red ochre to symbolise blood and pushed through a narrow structure, which signifies a birth canal, and finally the boy is covered in yellow clay (new born babies are covered in yellow clay at birth) (Lancy, 2008: 287). The point of this ritual is the boy is separated from the feminine influences in his life and reborn in the male world. Again, Van Gennep's (1960: 10-11) three elements belonging to a rite of passage is valid in terms of separation, transition, and incorporation. Therefore, the separation was from the domestic context and maternal sphere, the transition was tying the cloth and/ or the circumcision, and finally the incorporation into the male realm and expected behaviours, according to their social gender.

This socially pre-masculine state in young boys appears to be present in Ancient Egypt and shows there was socially more gender fluidity pre-rite of passage, and a ritual was needed to mark the transition from maternal to paternal care and the incorporation into male society. The fishing and fowling scene in the tomb of Nakht situated at Thebes (TT52) and dating to the New Kingdom depicts the tomb owner with two small children and two older children (See figure 13 below).¹⁰⁷

in the scenes that have genitals (Chapin, 2007: 239-246). The fishing boy is learning a trade and contributing within society; hence his masculine physique is made more prominent within the scene.

¹⁰⁷ For publications regarding the tomb of Nakht, see Shedid & Seidel, 1996: *Tomb of Nakht: The Art History of an Eighteenth Dynasty Official's Tomb at Western Thebes* & De Garis Davies. 1917. *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*. For discussions on fishing and fowling scenes, see Chauvet, 2011: 272, Dunnichiff, 2012: 109-113, Feucht, 1992: 157-159, Harper, 1987: 120-121, 136, 140-141, 176- 177, 184-185, 193-194, 198-201, & 335-339, Quirion, 2020: 128-140, and Woods, 2015: 1897-1910.

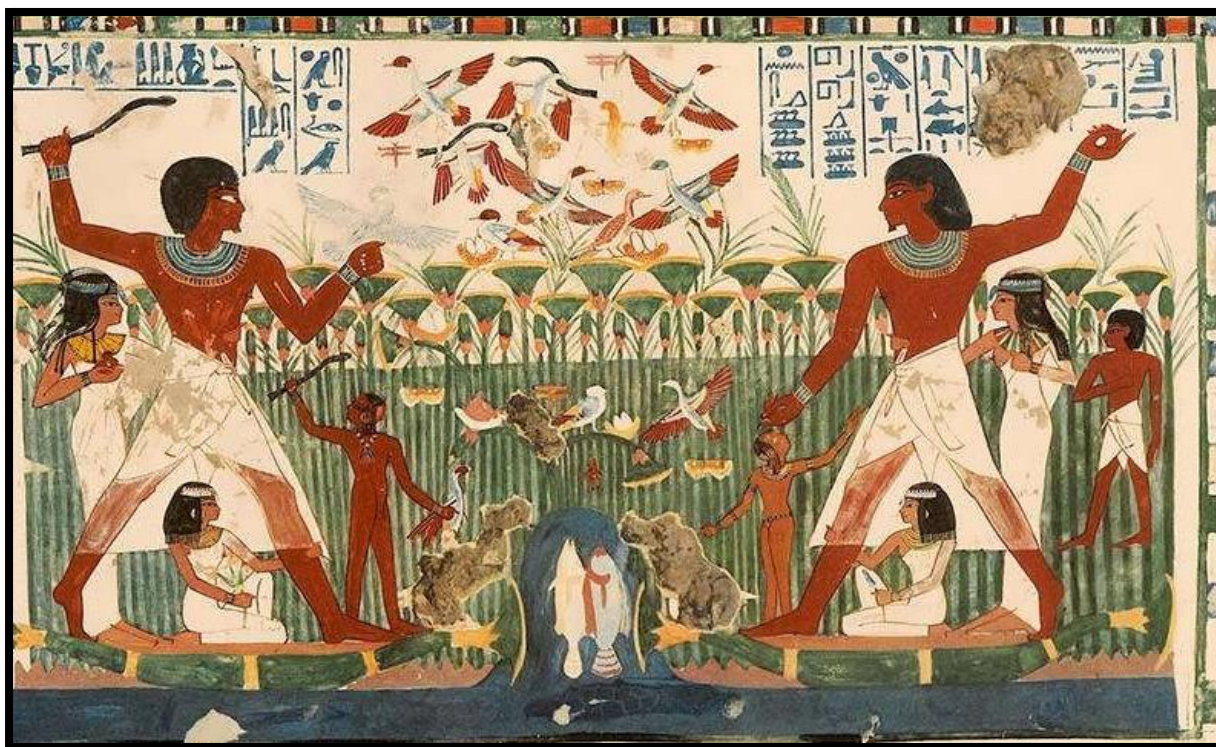


Figure 13: The fishing and fowling scene from the tomb of Nakht at Thebes (TT52) (Shedid & Seidel, 1996: 56-57).

On the left side, is a fowling scene with the youngest boy stood in front of his father on the skiff, and on the right-hand side, a fishing scene with the youngest girl stood at the front of the skiff. Despite the difference in gender, they both have the same hair style - side lock of youth, they both wear earrings and necklaces, and are mostly nude (the female child does appear to be wearing a thin girdle around her waist). The only differentiation is the colour of the skin with the boy's being a darker shade like the other males in the scene and the boy is actively participating in the hunt with his own throw stick (see figure 14 below).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ For depictions and characteristics of children in ancient Egypt, see Feucht, 1995: 468-502, Strouhal, 1997: 25-26, and Marshall, 2021: 11-53.



Figure 14: Enhanced images of the young boy (left) and girl (right) from Nakht's fishing and fowling scene above.

In contrast, the gender of the older boy and girl who are stood behind their father in the scenes, are clearly marked in accordance with their sex. They have gender appropriate attire to differentiate their sex, with Nakht's daughter being in a full dress and medium length wig and the son is wearing a white kilt, cropped hair style, and is without earrings like his father (see figure 15 below).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ See Marshall, 2021: 11-26 & 67-76 and Robins, 1999: 55-69 for a discussion regarding hair and identity in ancient Egypt. For a similar discussion regarding identity in ancient Greece and other cultures, see Chapin 2007: 229-231 & 247-248, and Sanchez-Romero: 2009: 17-37.



Figure 15: Enhanced images of the older boy and girl from Nakht's fishing and fowling scene above.

Nakht's tomb scene demonstrates that there is a degree of gender neutrality in appearance when the child is in the earlier stages of development, however, as the child matures, gender becomes more demarcated with sex appropriate clothes and jewellery. This concept is also demonstrated with determinatives as there is the seated man (GG: A1) and the seated woman (GG: B1) determinative to differentiate between the adult sexes but the child determinative (GG: A17 and A18) does not discern between the sexes.¹¹⁰ Lancy's (2008: 287) observation regarding the acceptance of gender neutrality pre-ritual is the case in ancient Egypt, with boys and girls having matching hair and jewellery. However, once the boy transitions into the male arena, this ambiguity is no longer socially acceptable.

Gender identity is also a key theme in circumcision rituals in modern Egypt that not only used cloth as a part of the rite but also purged the boy of any feminine behaviour and influences. Blackman (1927: 87-89) states that during a circumcision in Egypt, during the 1920's, the boy would wear a felt cap on his head, which was purchased by the parents especially for the rite and only worn for this occasion. Additionally, after the foreskin had been removed, the barber, who

¹¹⁰ See Marshall, 2021: 49-50.

performed the circumcision would take the mother and aunts of the boy and tie them together and place them outside of the house, which signified the boy was no longer under the control of the females in his family (Blackman, 1927: 87-89). Ammar (1954) in his publication *Growing up in an Egyptian village*, discusses social life in an Aswan village and includes the circumcision ritual in his study. Prior to the ceremony, the barber who performs the circumcision, places a girl's headdress on the boy, which signifies the boy's last chance to indulge in any behaviour that is not gender appropriate (Ammar, 1954: 122). Ammar further elaborates by stating when the cloth was removed and the circumcision took place, the boy was forbidden from showing any signs of pain or to cry out at any point because this is considered shameful and not masculine behaviour (Ammar, 1954: 122). The wearing and removal of the headdress marks the transition of the two states; the wearing of the headdress allows the young man to act outside of his social gender expectations for the last time, whereas, the removal marks the conformity of masculine behaviour, proven by his endurance of pain during the circumcision.¹¹¹ Lane (1836: 64) also discusses circumcision albeit in less detail than Ammar (1954: 64) but he does mention that the boys who are being circumcised are dressed in girl's clothes.

There is a correlation between the modern circumcision ritual described by Ammar and the lexical language used for circumcision in ancient Egypt. The reference to circumcision in the Berlin leather roll, the Florence stele, and the extract from the biography of Khnumhotep use the noun *mꜥꜣm* for the word foreskin that was loosened (*fh*).¹¹² The spelling and meaning of *mꜥꜣm* is contradictive as it is described as a woman's garment but has masculine determinatives.¹¹³ A theory

¹¹¹ Circumcision as a test of masculine behaviour is a concept that appears in modern day. The Maasi warriors of Africa assess a boy's worthiness during circumcision, if he flinches then it is viewed as a loss of honour (Lancy, 2008: 279-280).

¹¹² See chapter 1.5.

¹¹³ For translations of *mꜥꜣm* CDME: 150 and *Wb* II. 175.11 and the masculine determinative signs are the phallus sign GG: D52 and man striking with stick GG: A24.

for this peculiarity can be found in the modern-day rite. The boy wore the girl's headdress to express any feminine traits for one last time. In ancient Egypt, the boy would don the *mꜣꜣm*. Then the cutting of the foreskin is when his social masculine identity comes into play. With the use of one word - *mꜣꜣm*, the two sexes were represented within the act of circumcision.

There are other similarities to the ancient Egyptian examples of circumcision and the modern Egyptian ritual, which strengthens the argument that aspects of the *ꜣꜣ mdꜣ* may have survived into more recent times and so could correspond to tying on a headdress during the circumcision process. There is not a text in the Koran, which sanctions circumcision on Muslims, it is thought to be the product of Prophetic tradition (Ammar, 1954: 120). Therefore, circumcision cannot be the product of Muslim religious practice as it was a continuing cultural tradition. Additionally, Lane when discussing the Copts and circumcision, states it is the "relic of an ancient custom" (1836: 527). The more modern circumcision ritual may hold some residual elements that were traditional from ancient times, and it was a rite of passage denoting the onset of adulthood rather than a religious matter. The stela of Weha included the boast of appropriate behaviour and this was expected from the boys of Aswan where proper male behaviour i.e., the endurance of pain had to be carried out. Furthermore, Weha claims he was *sꜣb* with 120 boys which could be taken as 120 were circumcised at the same time as Weha or 120 boys were present at his ceremony.¹¹⁴ In comparison Ammar (1954:116) states the guests present at the circumcision rites at Aswan included the boy's age mates, friends, and family. This rite was social event in modern Egypt and if the stele is referring to 120 men being present at the circumcision of Weha then this is another parallel between the ancient and modern ceremony.

An interesting comparison to ancient Egypt and circumcision in the 1900's is what occurs after the circumcision at Aswan. Ammar (1954: 123) reports that the mother of the boy takes the foreskin, wraps it in bread, and throws it in the Nile. In ancient Egyptian mythology, when Osiris has

¹¹⁴ see Chapter 1.5 and Dunham, 1937: 104.

been dismembered by Seth, the only piece of his body that Isis does not retrieve, is his penis, which has been tossed into the river and eaten by fish (*Moralia* V, 47). The New Kingdom *Tale of the Two Brothers* has a similar example. The wife of the eldest brother Anubis has tried to seduce the younger brother Bata and in failing to do so, she has accused Bata of attacking her. Anubis seeks revenge, and on finding his brother, Bata angrily reacts.

“As for you [coming] to kill me (*hdb=i*) in falsehood (*m grg*)¹¹⁵, and you carrying a spear on account of (*hry-st-r*) the vagina of the wife (*kꜣt tꜣ hwt*)¹¹⁶.” He took a reed knife (*sft gꜣs*)¹¹⁷ and cut off his phallus (*hmn*) and threw it in the water. The catfish (*nꜣrw*)¹¹⁸ swallowed it (*ꜣm(=f)*)¹¹⁹ (*LES*: 16-17, lines 7.7-7.9).¹²⁰

Ammar has no explanation for the mother conducting this action but the fact the foreskin is wrapped in bread suggests it may be to entice the fish to eat the foreskin. Some of the ancient concepts have seeped down through the years and have shaped the way the modern-day rituals were carried out. What the author has been attempting to do here is demonstrate that aspects of circumcision in more modern times may have its roots in ancient times and the wearing of the headdress as a part of the ritual may stem back to ancient Egypt, this is what the *ts mdh* is referring to, and the *mdh* is a girl's headdress or band and was symbolic of the innate femininity garnered from his maternal care. Furthermore, boys needed a marked event to kickstart their masculine

¹¹⁵ Gardiner emends this sentence from *ir pꜣ pꜣy=k hdb=k m grg* to *ir pꜣy=i (iit) hdb=i m grg*, stating the double *pꜣ* at the beginning of this statement is a dittograph, inserting the infinitive *iit* before *hdb* – ‘to kill’, makes sense in the context of Anubis coming to kill Bata, and changing the third person pronoun =*k* to the first person pronoun =*i* as Bata is talking in the first person (*LES*: 16a, comment a-c).

¹¹⁶ *kꜣt tꜣ hwt* has been subject to different translation, for instance, Lichtheim, 1976: 206 translates ‘filthy whore’, and Simpson (2003: 84) ‘sexually aroused slut’ For *kꜣt*/vagina, see *LED* 2: 167 and for wife/mistress/*hwt*, see *LED* I: 304.

¹¹⁷ *sft* has been written *sfn* in error (*LES*: 17a, comment a).

¹¹⁸ *nꜣrw* has been written *nꜣdw* in error (*LES*: 17a, comment b).

¹¹⁹ Gardiner suggests adding the suffix pronoun =*f* to the verb *ꜣm* – to swallow (*LES*: 17a, comment c).

¹²⁰ For translations see Lichtheim, 1976: 203-211 and Simpson, 2003: 80-90.

identity as their time in the household under the care of the woman of the family had influenced him greatly up until the point of this ritual.

1.8 The significance of the verb *ṯs*

The verb *ṯs* has the root meaning – to tie/ bind,¹²¹ but there are other derivatives such as connect, set up/begin¹²² and assemble/put together.¹²³ The reading of *ṯs* in the context of the *ṯs mdḥ* ceremony can be interpreted as having a multifaceted meaning. In a literal sense, the boy physically had a *mdḥ* tied on to his body, but figuratively another aspect of *ṯs* was the binding of him to the new stage in his life, with a further connotation that the boy would be made into an official, in the same way Qar went to the Residence to be *ḳmz*- created. All the meanings of *ṯs*, are therefore, relevant to this rite and open to interpretation. There is a ritual described by Lane (1836: 502-503), from modern Egypt, called the binding of youth ceremony that encapsulates all the facets of *ṯs*. When a son is admitted into his intended trade, a ceremony occurs whereby a Nakeeb places a shawl around the boy, and ties three knots on it, whilst reciting. This is performed in front of the master of the trade, who belonged to the profession that the boy was entering, and a few of the boy's friends would be present during the ceremony (Lane, 1836: 503).¹²⁴ Afterwards when the boy is formally admitted into the trade, he is called a Meshdood, meaning bound (Lane, 1836: 503). The binding of youth not only conveyed the physical act of tying the knots on the shawl wrapped around the boy, but also had the allegorical meaning representing the binding to his career. The binding of youth ceremony is like tying the *mdḥ* in ancient Egypt as not only did the event mark solidifying his social gender identity but also introduced the preparation for his career. The metaphorical meaning behind the knotting and tying can be viewed as a sort of marriage, where the boy is bound to his sex and career by the knotting action and a specific set of words, forming a rite. Once completed, he is officially a part of the male orientated world pertaining to career.

¹²¹ *HwB*, no 38271: page 1034 and *Wb* V. 396. 12-19.

¹²² *HwB*, no 38289: page 1935 and *Wb* V. 397. 5-25.

¹²³ *HwB*, no 38283: page 1035 and *Wb* V. 398. 1-11.

¹²⁴ A Nakeeb is the man who officiates at the ceremony.

Ostraca from Deir el Medina dating to the New Kingdom support the proposition that the reading of *ts* should be perceived with a multi-level meaning, and additionally infers that the transmission of the Old Kingdom *ts mdh* rite survived into New Kingdom, or at least elements of the rite. Firstly, Hinson (2018: 92) discusses the transitional points in a male's career development, firstly, at the point of initiation, the boy is described as an *ꜥdd* – boy, then the next phase he is a *mnḥ* – youth, and finally a *rmṯ-ist*– workman.¹²⁵ This is relevant as several fragments of ostraca mention the binding (*ts*) of the *ꜥdd*, referring to the initiation into the workplace.¹²⁶ The ostraca in question are parts of the journal recordings regarding the works on the Royal tombs. Two of the examples read;¹²⁷

O. DEM 40: Month 1 of Akhet, day 29

One (*-tw*)¹²⁸ bound (*ts*) the boys (*ꜥdd*)

(Černý, 1935b: Page 10 and plate 22& 22a, recto line 12).

O. DEM 320: Month 4 of Shemu, day 24

Day of binding (*ts*) the boys to the [...]

(Černý, 1939: Page 21 and plate 24, line 3-4).

¹²⁵ For the full discussion of career initiation and progression at Deir el Medina, see Hinson 2018, 91-103. Černý (1973: 113-119) also notes the terms used to express the transitions of males during career progression. For *ꜥdd* see Feucht, 1995: 515-516 and *LED I*: 84, for *mnḥ* see Feucht, 1995: 520-521 and *LED I*: 188 and for *rmṯ-ist*, *LED I*: 272. This is parallel to the developmental stages *hrd-id- ḥwn* employed in the Old Kingdom (discussed in section 1.9 or see Brovarski, 1975-1976: 1-8).

¹²⁶ See Hinson, 2018: 91-93 for a discussion regarding binding ceremonies at Deir el Medina.

¹²⁷ For other examples see O. Ashmolean 70, also known as O. Gardiner 70 (Černý & Gardiner, 1957: Plate 48 & 48a, verso line 7, O. Cairo 25298 (Daressy, 1901: 76) and O. Cairo 25800 (Černý, 1935b: page 92 and plate CIX).

¹²⁸ Černý (1973:115) believes the indefinite pronoun *-tw* is referring to the King, in this case Rameses IV and he is initiating the boys into work life. However, O. DEM 352 refers to the Vizier (*tsṯy*) presiding over the binding of the *mnḥ* – youths to their father's position, meaning *-tw* could be referring to the vizier. For Ostraca DEM 352, see Černý, 1951, page 4 and plate 3 and Černý, 1973: 114 for a translation.

ts is written with either of the following determinatives, the post of balance determinative (GG: U39), with the legs (GG: D56) or the walking legs determinative (GG: D54), and on occasion with both, and translated as raise up/lift/ go up.¹²⁹ Consequently, in the context of work, *ts* has been translated to appoint/promote. Unfortunately, what the *ꜥdd* is bound to is lost or omitted but as these examples come from a journal recording works on the Royal tombs, it can be argued that they were being inducted into work. The evidence presents males on the younger end of the spectrum appointed using the word *ts* in a career-based context and introduced into the working world. *rdi* or *nd* was usually employed as the verb to describe appointment and is commonly expressed with regards to promotion in biographies.¹³⁰ In both Old and New Kingdom, *ts* is associated with the initiation of a boy into his profession.

The Deir el Medina examples do not mention a *mdh*, but some ostraca refer to the giving of food and other items when the binding happened, which suggests that a ceremony or celebration accompanied this event;

O. Berlin P12406

A list of the things (*rdit rht tꜣ hrt*) which Nebamun gave to him after his binding (*m-dr ts=f*). What was given to him as his favour: 20 loaves, fish -30 in number, 2 *rsb* jugs, a *dꜣiw* garment...

(From the Deir el Medina database <https://dem-online.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/fragment.php?id=300>:accessed on 02/09/2021: recto, lines 6-12).

¹²⁹ See *LED II*: 234 and *Wb V*. 405.1-12.

¹³⁰ For various examples of *rdi* and *nd* used to denote promotion, see Klothe, 2002: 133-137.

O. Glasgow D 1925. 72

Year 15: The taking of things which [...] made [...] 5 loaves [...] the time of his binding (*ts=f*) to the [...] ¹³¹ (McDowell, 1993: plate X & Xa).

From the two ostraca above, we can see that food items, jugs and garments were bestowed on a boy at the time of his binding. Interestingly, O. Berlin P12406 lists a *ḏzīw* garment as a part of the favours given to the male after his binding. This is the same garment that is referenced in *The Teaching of Khety*, whereby Khety is still a child but given tasks at the start of his career and is dressed in a *ḏzīw* garment to celebrate his new-found status within the adult world. Furthermore, Pyramid text 519, describes Horus tying the *mdh* with *ḏzīw* linen before he leaves his mother Isis to pursue the office of his father Osiris.¹³² Although, the *ḏzīw* linen is made into head garment for Horus rather than clothing. In the New Kingdom, Janssen (1975: 265-271) sums up that a *ḏzīw* garment was the usual dress of a workman in the village.¹³³ It would make sense that in the event of introducing a boy to the work force a garment associated with workmen would be given to him, in the same way it is given to Khety and Horus in the examples above.

¹³¹ McDowell, 2013: plate X restores *r rmt-ist* in the lacuna here and translates as the gang (page 13) and Hinson (2018: 91) translates as crew with the restoration *ī[st?]*.

¹³² See chapter 1.2 for the translations and discussions regarding *The Teaching of Khety* and Pyramid text 519.

¹³³ See Janssen, 2008: 52-55 for a list of primary sources from Deir el Medina where a *ḏzīw* garment is referenced.

1.9 At what age did the *ts mdh* occur?

The age in which this rite occurred is difficult to determine. The biographies provide two age ranges, *id*, and *hwn*, and pyramid text 519 describes Horus as being a *hrd nhn* when the tying of the *mdh* occurred. We must first consider how ancient cultures envisaged and marked age as it may be completely different to how age is viewed in modern times. Beaumont (2013: 195) studied children in ancient Athens and determined that age is measured in life phases rather than by a number, meaning words to describe children are recognised phases and ability rather than their number of years since birth.¹³⁴ This is the case in Aswan in the 1950's where a child was referred to as a *muaddabah* which means disciplined, if he or she conformed to the expected behaviours associated with their age group (Ammar, 1954: 28). Boys at Aswan from a farming background are also labelled according to physical capabilities, for example, at 7-10 years old he is a *hawwel* who can direct water into the farm sections, 12-13 years he is a *marraga* who carries fertilizer, stage three sets in with the growing of his moustache where he becomes a fully-fledged farmer or a *fellah* (Ammar, 1954: 29).¹³⁵ Although this is from a farming context, the different nouns – *hrd*, *id* and *hwn* used in the biographies to represent the word youth present the same principal. However, it is difficult to assign a specific age range or phase to the terms used to denote childhood in ancient Egypt. Hinson (2017: 56) ascertains that a good approach to evaluate the terms are “The answer is not to study words with the expectation that they demarcate age in biological years specifically, but rather to look for something distinguishing the individuals which they describe, such as developmental characteristics”. Furthermore, Brovanski (1975-1976: 1-8)

¹³⁴ See Parkin, 2010: 97-115 for examples of this from ancient Greece. For a discussion evaluating childhood from an ancient Egyptian perspective, see Eyre, 2014: 295-297, Hinson, 2017: 97-15, and Hinson, 2018: 10-23. For a summary of terms for children in ancient Egypt, see Feucht, 1995: 503-514 and Marshall, 2021: 51-53.

¹³⁵ Terminology for children denoting stages of development and ability, rather than birth age is similarly found in other modern-day cultures. The Giriama people of Kenya call a child of 2-3 years old a *Kahoho Kuhuma Madzi* – a youngster who can be sent to fetch water, a girl from 8- around puberty is a *Muhoho wa Kubunda* – a child who pounds maize, a boy of the same age is a *Muhoho murisa* – a child who herds (Lancy, 2008: 235).

recognises this issue of assigning ages to the words to describe childhood and youth in his study and so he attempts to put the words into chronological order rather than pinpoint each one to a specific age. Brovarski's chronological ordering for the words are *hrd-id-ḥwn* (1975-1976: 6).¹³⁶ In order to better understand the *ts mdḥ* rite, it is worthwhile to re-evaluate and build on Brovarski's lexical work. Additionally, it is important to adopt Hinson's methodology pertaining to the study of the terms of childhood, by examining the context of its usage to gauge their meaning in terms of the development of children in relation to training and working.

There are two Old Kingdom texts which Brovarski employs to confirm his chronological ordering of *hrd-id-ḥwn*. The 5th Dynasty biography of Ptahshepses describes his upbringing at the Residence and the *ts mdḥ* rite, he states;

“[A child (*hrd*) who was born to his mother] in the time of Menkaure. He was brought up (*šd=f*) amongst the King's children in the Palace inside of the Royal harem (*ipt nsw*). A noble one before the King more than any child (*hrd*),
Ptahshepses.

[An *id* who tied the *mdḥ* in] the time of Shepseskaf. He was educated amongst the King's children in the Palace inside of the Royal harem. A noble one before the King more than any *id*, Ptahshepses.

[So, his Majesty favoured him]. His Majesty gave to him the Princess Khamaat as his wife, because his Majesty desired that she be with me more than any man, Ptahshepses” (*Urk* I, 51, 12 – 52, 3).¹³⁷

¹³⁶ For a similar study in the New Kingdom regarding the terms to describe the developmental stages of boys in the context of work, see Černý, 1973:113-119 and Hinson, 2018: 91-103. For a brief reference see chapter 1.8.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 1.1, Gundacker, 2015: 61-105, and Strudwick, 2005:303-304.

At the earliest stage of his life from birth to the beginning of his education he is described as a *hrd*. The second phase of his youth is as an *id* where he ties the *mdh*, after which, his education continues. He continues to say he took a wife, but Ptahshepses omits whether at this point he was still considered an *id* or had moved on to another phase. Ptahshepses, repeats the same narrative twice in his biography and substitutes the word *hrd* for *id*, indicating that the ancient Egyptians themselves made a distinction between these separate phases as the *hrd* and the *id* were educated in separate groups. At this point we have the chronological order for terms regarding youth as *hrd* – *id*.

hwn can be placed within the sequence with the translation inscribed on the offering table of Mersuankh from Giza, dating to the 4th/5th Dynasty (tomb G8990). He lists his titles as;

The overseer of the *id* of the Residence and inspector of the
ka priest Mersuankh, beloved of his Lord, the beautiful *hwn*
Mersuankh. (Hassan, 1928: plate LXVIII).¹³⁸

Mersuankh describes himself as a *hwn* with the title overseer of the *id* of the Residence. If he is tasked with the job of overseeing the *id*, then *hwn* was clearly at a higher level (Brovarski, 1975-1976: 1-8). It would be a suitable appointment for a *hwn* who was in the preliminary stages of his career but was trained up to the extent they could undertake more responsibility. Overall, we now have the plausible chronology *hrd-id-hwn*. To further understand these phases, it is necessary to build on Brovarski's data set and examine each of these terms for youth separately.

¹³⁸ For translation Hassan, 1932: 110. The title overseer of the *id* also appears in the tomb biography of Mersuankh, see Strudwick, 2005: 296-297.

1.9.1- *hrd*¹³⁹

Brovarski places *hrd* at the youngest end of the age range and the biography of Khety II from Siut (tomb IV) confirms this. Khety states,

“A child (*hrd*) at the side (*r-gs*) of his mother, a *nds* at the side of his wife” (Griffith, 1889: Plate 13, line 33).¹⁴⁰

During the *hrd* phase, Khety is under the care of his mother. Ptahshepses also mentions his mother in the same context as *hrd*, from the time of his birth to when he begins his education, akin to Horus in pyramid text 519 who is with his mother in Akhbit as a young child (*hrd nhn*) before he is sent to his father. Therefore, at some point during this phase, the child begins their education and training. A degree of separation from the mother occurs now as he enters a more masculine environment. The gradual introduction into the masculine environment was practised in ancient Greece. A boy at age three is still very much under the umbrella of the maternal world but he is placed under the care of a male caretaker – a *paidogogos* to provide him with male influence. By aged seven, the boy’s education is increased, and he is exposed more to the public domain which he will fully join when he is considered a man (Beaumont, 2013: 201). Horus and Ptahshepses as a *hrd* share a similar experience to boys in ancient Greece whereby early in their development they are under the care of their mother, but at the latter end of this stage, they are placed on the periphery of the masculine domain with the start of their education.

¹³⁹ For a summary of *hrd* see Feucht, 1995: 537-539.

¹⁴⁰ Schenkel, 1965: 82-89.

1.9.2 - *id*¹⁴¹

As Mersuankh is overseer of the *id* at the Residence and Ptahshepses is educated as an *id* at the Court, education and/or training is continued during this phase. Ptahshepses and Mersuankh indicate that the appointment of office did not occur during the *id* phase of youth. Although there are references (discussed below) that employ the word *id* as a title with the purpose to attach the *id* to a specific institution during their training. In the Old Kingdom tomb of Wepemneferet, there is a scene that depicts fifteen figures, who are acting as witnesses and kneel before the tomb owner. Wepemneferet is granting his son Iby (drawn on a smaller scale stood in front of his father) parts of his tomb.¹⁴² Each of the figures are accompanied by their names and titles (see figure 16 below).¹⁴³ The last figure on the top right-hand side is of relevance regarding the *id* stage (see figure 16 & 17).

¹⁴¹ For a summary of *id*, see Feucht, 1995: 513-514.

¹⁴² This scene is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.1.

¹⁴³ For a full list of the names and titles see Hassan, 1936: 191. For the full summary of the tomb see Hassan, 1936: 179-201.



Figure 16: Tomb scene from the eastern wall within the tomb of Wepemneferet at Giza. Wepemneferet is standing on the left, drawn in large scale with 15 smaller figures facing him on the top four registers to the right (Hassan, 1936: figure 217, plate LXXVI).

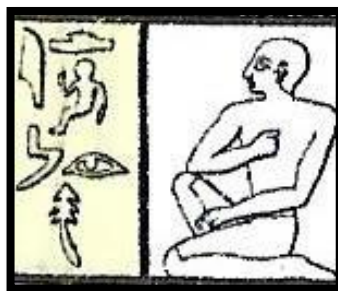


Figure 17: The figure of interest from the scene in figure 16 above, which is labelled *id m33* but with no title.

Unlike the other figures, he has no title pertaining to an appointment of office, rather he is labelled an *id m33*, which translates as the *id m33*, meaning his status is *id* and his name is *m33*.¹⁴⁴ He is acting as a witness here, observing the endowment that Wepemneferet is placing on his son Iby, so despite not being titled, the *id m33* is carrying out some sort of official duty here.

¹⁴⁴ Goedicke (1970: 32) suggests the reading of Gendarme (military personal) for *m33*. See Goedicke 1970: 31-43 for a discussion regarding this scene. However, this would mean that the name *id* comes first and then the title *m33*, whereas all the other figures in the scene are labelled title and then name, so it is unlikely that the *id m33* would follow a different format to the rest of the figures.

We see another example of this in another Old Kingdom tomb at Giza belonging to a man named Kanenesew (tomb G2155). Again, we have the tomb owner standing before his children and offering bearers, and in the far left, is a fragmented figure with the caption *id nfr htp* (see figure 18 & 19).

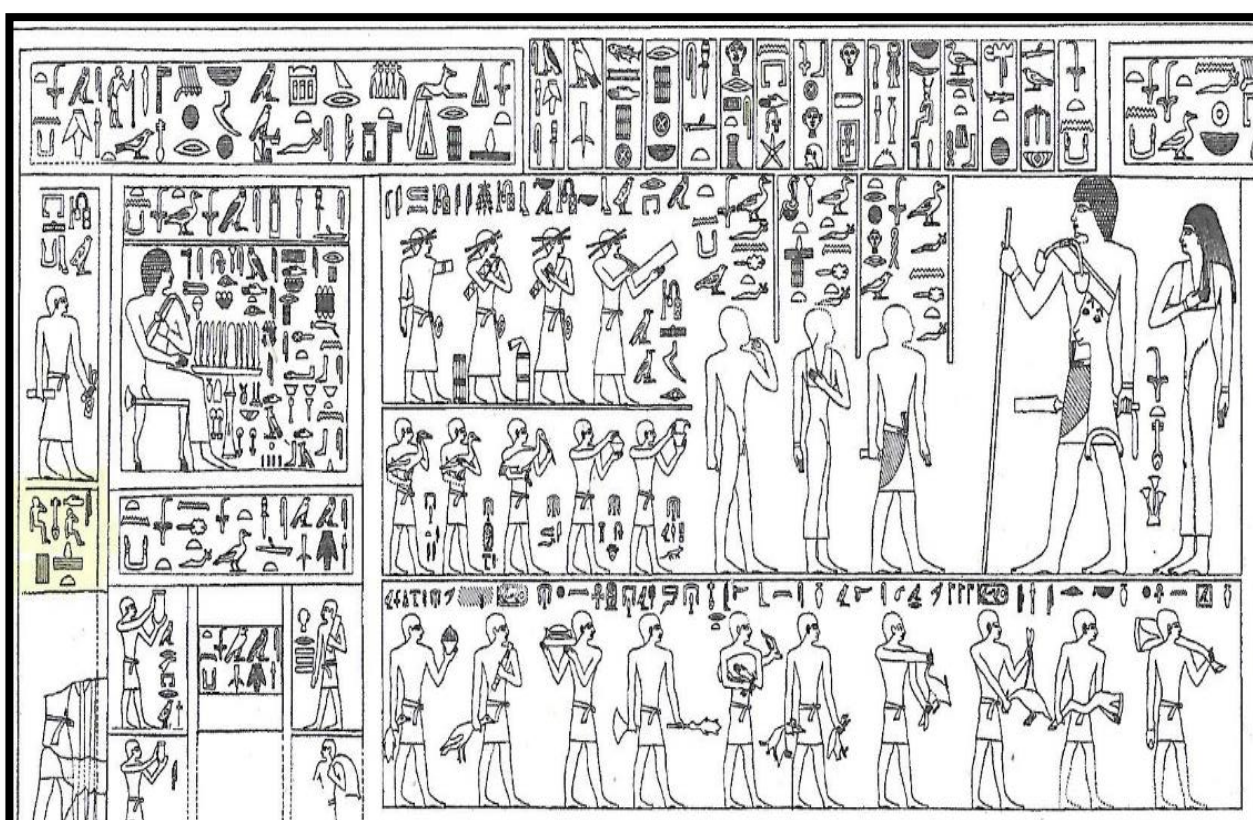


Figure 18: Scene from the west wall of the tomb of Kanenesew. Kanenesew is in the centre register with his wife surrounded by offering bearers. The figure of interest is at the bottom, left hand corner and is damaged (Junker, 1934: figure 8).

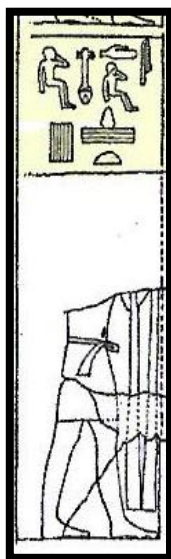


Figure 19: The figure of interest from figure 18 above. This person is labelled *id nfr htp* but he has no titles.

The fragmented figure is surrounded by people with either titles of appointment or filial epitaphs. *id nfr htp* translates as either the youth Neferhotep or the titles are the *id* and cadet (*nfr*) with the name Hotep.¹⁴⁵ If cadet is the correct reading, then it corresponds to the idea that an *id* was in a phase of education/training. Additionally, being grouped together with other appointed men suggests that they were working or training towards a certain profession but were not yet at a level to be officially appointed. An argument can also be made that *id* was a part of name in both examples so that would give us *id-m33* and *id-nfr-htp*.¹⁴⁶ However, if the whole caption is the name of the individual depicted, then this would mean the figure is without any title. There is evidence which adds weight to the fact that *id* could be a part of a title and during training they were

¹⁴⁵ For *nfr* translated as cadet see *HwB*, no 15567 & 15568: page 432 and Jones, vol I, no 1807: page 483 who also translates *nfr* as recruit or conscript. For discussions of *nfr* see Faulkner, 1953: 35 and Feucht, 1995: 524-525.

¹⁴⁶ Fischer, (1960: 9) argues that there are no attestations of the name *id-nfr-htp* anywhere else on record, but we do see *nfr-htp* which strengthens the case that we are looking at a separate name and title here.

attached to a certain institution, but they were not given a specific job title. Jones (vol I, no 1287-1292: pages 346-347) has noted six epitaphs containing the word *id*;

<i>idw</i>	youths
<i>idw pr-ꜥ</i>	youths of the Great House (Palace)
<i>idw n msw nsw</i>	youths of the King's children
<i>idw ḥwt ꜥꜣt</i>	youths of the great Palace
<i>idww nw ḥwt nꜥr</i>	youths of the temple
<i>idw nw ḥnw</i>	youths of the Residence

These titles correspond to the tomb scenes in that an *id* was included as a part of the working world but were still on the periphery using the generalised title *id*, rather than a specific appointment. Additionally, the *id* was attached to a certain sector such as a temple or the Royal Residence, which infers a kind of work placement. For example, Neferkhufu, an official of the 5th Dynasty who held the title *idw pr-ꜥ* – *id* of the Residence and later a *shꜣ n idw* – inspector of the *id*.¹⁴⁷ Neferkhufu was an *id* in the Residence, no doubt still in the training phase of his career but later he oversees the *id* as an inspector. Unfortunately, there is no definitive material, which records the duties of an *id* (Fischer, 1960: 12). However, there is a fragment of a biography belonging to an unknown official that gives a possible indication of the type of work that was expected of an *id*.¹⁴⁸ The biography reads;

¹⁴⁷ Fischer, 1960: 1 and Plate 15.

¹⁴⁸ For publication of this fragment, see Goedicke, 1959: 8-11. Goedicke dates this fragment to the 5th Dynasty and surmises its provenance as Giza based on its shared similarities with the event-based biographies of Debheny and Washptah (Goedicke, 1959:8).

Now, a time when he (unknown official) fell ill (*mn=f ht*), his Majesty caused that a carrying chair (*hwd*)¹⁴⁹ was taken from the Residence to carry out (*ḏst-kst*)¹⁵⁰ the work under his authority (*hr-ꜥ=f*)¹⁵¹. His Majesty caused the *id* of the Residence to be appointed to him, to enter into the Residence with him (Goedicke, 1959: Plate II).¹⁵²

The extract of the unknown official illustrates that the *id* were recruited to carry him in his chair to the Residence, giving us an example of a task belonging to the *id* of the Residence. There is no evidence from a temple context, but Posener- Kriéger (1976: 462) suggests that *id* of the temple were children of the temple staff or who grew up near the temple and were charged with performing certain tasks. The level of responsibility was higher than that of a *hrd*, but they did not have an official title, meaning they were not yet at the highest level of potential that they could reach.

¹⁴⁹ For *hwd*, see *HWB*: no 23033: page 634.

¹⁵⁰ For *ḏst-kst*, see *HWB*, no 39437: page 1067.

¹⁵¹ *hr-ꜥ=f* - reads under his arm.

¹⁵² Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 36-37 and Strudwick, 2005: 322-323.

1.9.3 - *ḥwn*¹⁵³

ḥwn appears more frequently than the other terms for youth in the phraseology describing the tying of the *mdh*. Unlike *id*, we do not have examples of *ḥwn* attached to a temple or Palace and no evidence of specific duties like in the case of *id*. Jones (vol I, no 1866: page 498) only has one entry which is *ḥwn nfr* and translates this as either youth or recruit. Mersuankh employs this epitaph on his offering table, however, he also has two titles – overseer of the *id* of the Residence and inspector of priests.¹⁵⁴ This illustrates that appointments of office were available to youths during this phase. This was certainly the case in the 12th Dynasty. The stele of Ikherneferet (Berlin 1204) reads;

“My Majesty appointed you to a companion (*smr*) when you were a *ḥwn* of 26 years” (Sethe, 1924:70, 7).¹⁵⁵

Ikherneferet confirms that the first appointment was granted to him when he was a *ḥwn*. Additionally, he was 26 and still considered a *ḥwn*, not exactly a young child, which suggests a person was considered a *ḥwn* in the initial stages of his career despite his actual age.

There are attestations, in some tomb scenes, of the *ḥwn* attached to the labouring class, who are engaging in manual labour, thus demonstrating that a level of physical capability was required to perform certain duties to be classed as a *ḥwn*. The first is a bird netting scene from the Old Kingdom tomb of Pepyankhheryib at Meir. The third register depicts net haulers closing the net filled with birds as the signal man looks on (see figure 20). The caption above this scene reads;

¹⁵³ Feucht, 1995: 531-534.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter 1.9.

¹⁵⁵ Chapter 2.2 discusses Ikherneferet with regards to the terms used to denote his upbringing at the Residence. See also Landgráfová, 2011: 204- 207 and Lichtheim, 1973: 123 – 125.

Oh, *ḥwn* who are with me cover (*ḥbs*) yourselves, your nets are full (*wrš.ti*) (Kanawati, 2012: plate 29).¹⁵⁶

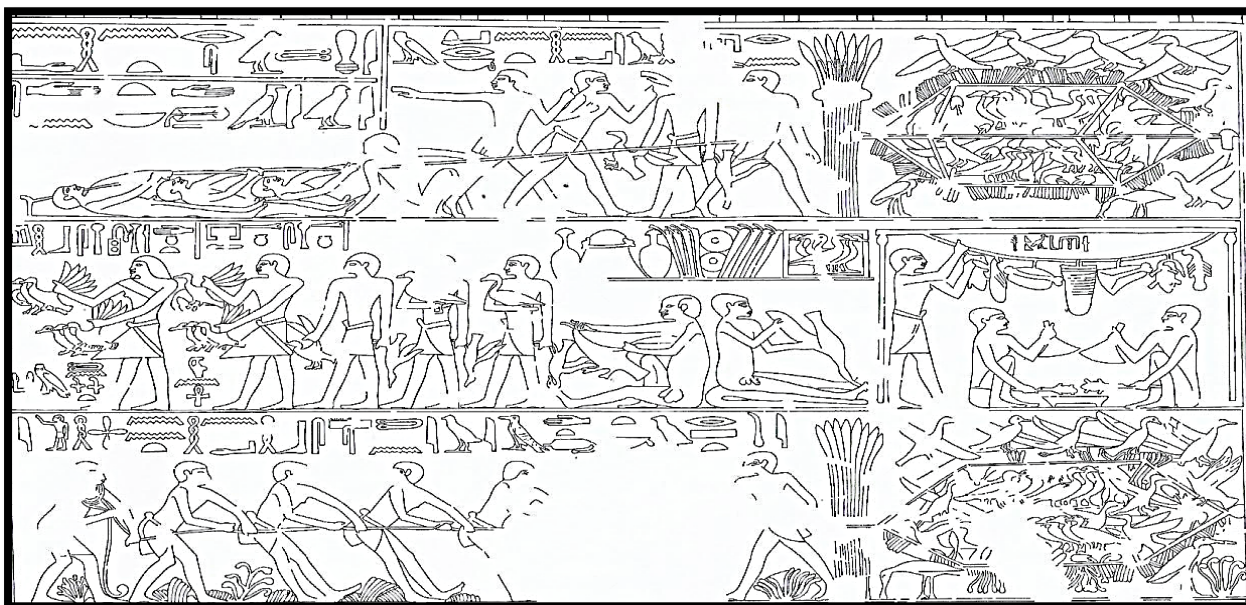


Figure 20: Bird netting scene from the tomb of Pepyankheryib. The bottom register shows a group of youths described as *ḥwn* netting birds (Kanawati, 2012: Plate 29).

A fishing scene from the 5th Dynasty tomb of Niankhkhnun and Khnumhotep also illustrates the *ḥwn* engaged in manual labour. In the bottom register, the *ḥwn* are dragging nets to capture fish (see figure 21 below).

¹⁵⁶ For *wrš* see *HwB*, no 47989: page 221. It must be noted that there is an asterisk next to the entry in *HwB* which implies the reading is uncertain. *wrš* is in the stative form, indicated by the *-ti* ending. The signal man telling the haulers to cover themselves (*ḥbs*) may hold the meaning brace yourselves.

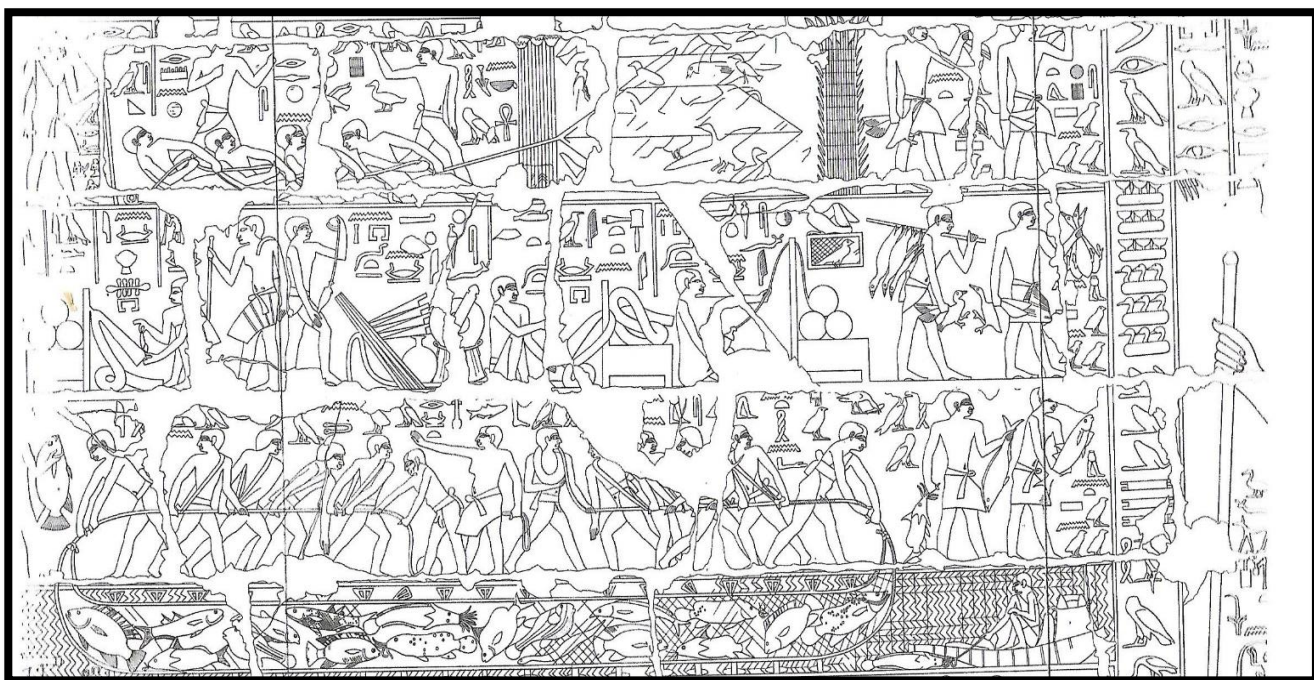


Figure 21: Fishing scene from the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep. The bottom register shows a group of *ḥwn* netting fish (Moussa & Altenmüller.1977: Plate 12).

A kilted man stands in the middle of the fishing scene and appears more mature than the figures catching fish, judging by his portlier physique. The kilted man is overseeing the *ḥwn* and calls out;

“Oh, *ḥwn* the overseer of fishermen has seen you” (Moussa & Altenmüller, 1977: Plate 12, scene 13.3.1).

In both scenes, the word *ḥwn* is used as a general term to address the group of working youths.

The fishing and bird netting scenes demonstrate that within the labouring class, a *ḥwn* could carry out manual labour under the guidance of a more mature male. They were not at the highest level of their career i.e., supervisory, but they were engaged in the working world. A *ḥwn* in the preliminary stages of appointments is also seen in the evidence from an official perspective.

Mersuankh is overseer of the *id* and Ikherneferet is appointed as a companion (*smr*) when they are a *ḥwn*, indicating that like the *ḥwn* in the fishing and bird netting scenes, they had a position in office, but they were not at the highest level that they could reach.

1.10 Conclusion

The material record regarding the *ts mdh* rite is far from clear but this chapter has attempted to fill in the grey areas to further understand this rite. The physical side of the ritual involved tying a *mdh* on to the boy meaning he was passive participant in the rite. The *mdh* could be made from *qziw* linen which means it was not a specific type of cloth, it was an object of clothing made from cloth. The attestations of *mdh* as a verb or noun were associated with the head either adorning something on the head or a *mdh* being worn on the head. This event involved censing and was overseen by other people (the *wrw*) which suggests a ritualistic process during the rite. The purpose of this event is associated with the start of manhood and career. Qar's rite was performed before he trained at the Residence and the other examples claim to have this rite of passage before they were appointed. Overall, the evidence surrounding the word *mdh* outside of the biographies appear in ritualistic texts which separates and transitions a person from one state to another. The separation experience shifts the boy from the feminine domestic sphere and any traits of female influence were left behind and were no longer acceptable. Once the *ts mdh* has been performed, the boy had to adhere to the social expectations of his sex. It is possible that tying cloth on the head was a part of a wider ritual that included circumcision. The tying of a *mdh* was a symbol of transition to mark the preinitiation state of the boy with the circumcision delivering him into his new status and making it permanent. Both the *ts mdh* and the examples of the removal of the foreskin (*n fht=f m tsm*) are used within a narrative which also includes career, suggesting these rites, whether separate or part of the same ritual, were associated with the initiation into the working world.

The age in which the *ts mdh* was performed appears to be flexible given the different terms used to describe the youth. From studying the use of *hrd*, *id* and *hwn* within the context of the working world, a developmental phase can be assigned to these terms (see table one below).

<i>hrd</i>	Mother's side	Begins education
<i>id</i>	Continues education	Training under specific institution
<i>hwn</i>	Training continues with added responsibility	Early career and first appointment

Table 1: Lexicon for youth and its correspondence to the level of training and appointment.

There is no clear indication as to why *hrd*, *id*, and *hwn* were all subject to this rite. Personal preference may be a factor, in terms of when the father thought his son was ready or worthy. An argument can be made that an *id* became a *hwn* after he had tied the *mdh*, therefore, we should translate – “I was an *id* who tied the *mdh*” and “I am a *hwn* who had tied the *mdh*”. Another possibility is these phases were based on capability and not on age, meaning biology may have been a determiner of when this rite was conducted. Ammar stated that when a boy in his farming village grows a moustache, he becomes a fully-fledged farmer called a fellah, and this occurs after two other phases (1954, 29). Naturally, boys develop at different rates and so if this ritual were based on biological changes during puberty and their maturity level, then this would explain the different terms employed for the word youth.

CHAPTER TWO

Training and Acquisition of Office in the Old Kingdom

*“Then the Majesty of this God said “Teach him about speaking first (*hr-ḥst*). Then he will set an example (*ir=f bi*) to the children of officials.¹⁵⁷ May all the obedience (*sḏm*) and honesty (*mtt-ib*) of the one who speaks to him, enter him. There are none born wise” The Teaching of Ptahhotep*

(Žaba, 1956: 5.3 -5.6).¹⁵⁸

The performance of the *ts mdḥ* signified the separation from childhood and the initiation into the masculine world of career and office holding. Unfortunately, the biographies are not particularly forthcoming concerning the next phase of development and lack references to the training processes required to work towards an appointment of office. According to Ptahhotep’s teaching above, a son’s training began at home under the guidance of his father. Consequently, due to the lessons imparted by his father, when the son is placed with the other children of officials, he will set a good example amongst his peers.¹⁵⁹ This advice suggests that for children of officials, education began at home, after which, training moved on to a more formal setting amongst their contemporaries. The biographical material makes little fuss about education, moving straight from the *ts mdḥ* to a list of promotions, omitting a training regime, or indeed, any kind of preparation from the narrative. If we revisit Weni’s experience, he states;

¹⁵⁷ *ir=f bi*, translates as he will do a good deed. The meaning here is a boy will be a good influence for the children of officials if he is taught adequately by his father. Therefore, *CDME*: 80 suggests good example when *ir=f* and *bi* are used together.

¹⁵⁸ Allen, 2015: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, Simpson, 2003: 129- 148, and Žaba, 1956, *Les Maxims de Ptahhotep*. For other examples of teachings see Parkinson, 2002: 235-277.

¹⁵⁹ See Willems, 1972: 215.

“[I was an *id*] who tied the *mdh* under Tety. My office was as overseer of the store house (*imy-r pr šn^c*), then I acted as an inspector of the *hnty-š* of the Palace (*šhd hnty-š pr-^cz*) [...] [lector priest (*hry-hbt*)], and elder of the robing room (*smsw n dbzt*) before the Majesty of Pepy” (*Urk I*, 98, 12 - 15).¹⁶⁰

Weni’s promotions are the focus here, but how he was prepared for these appointments was not a priority for the subject matter within the biographical content. On face value of Weni’s statement, he tied (*ts*) the *mdh*, and then he was immediately appointed into office. However, the omitting of training regimes in the 6th Dynasty material lies in the predominance of the theme of meritocracy present in the biographies. Officials claim that the issuing of appointments were based purely on merit, self-achievement, and a special relationship with the King, resulting in Royal favour.¹⁶¹

Meritocracy as a system of career advancement is expressed in a framework whereby an official would express his abilities in an office which led to recognition from the King and further promotion would ensue. Weni’s biography continues to stress the meritocratic theme of promotion. He states;

“While my office was as [...] [his Majesty appointed me] as judge and mouth of Nekhen (*szb r nhn*), for his heart was filled with me more than servant (*bzk*)” (*Urk I*, 99, 2 – 4).¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Lichtheim, 1973: 18-23, Piacentini, 1990, *L’Autobiografia di Uni, Principe e Governatore dell’Alto Egitto*, Simpson, 2003: 402-407, and Strudwick, 2005: 252-257.

¹⁶¹ For meritocracy and Royal favour in ancient Egypt, see Bárta, 2020a: 1-28, Eyre, 2011: 703, Frood, 2010: 476-478 and see Moreno Garcia, 2016: 491- 512 for discussion on Royal favour versus private wealth. Stauder-Porchet, 2017:35-73 and Stauder- Porchet, 2020b: 197-222 discusses Royal favour in the context of how it is structured into tomb biographies.

¹⁶² [] Sethe’s reconstruction.

Weni is saying that he was the King's favourite and his ascent up the career ladder was the result of this Royal patronage. Weni is by no means, an isolated case in conveying a system of promotion based on meritocracy in his biography. A vizier of the 6th Dynasty called Kagemni says;

“He of the curtain, judge, and vizier (*tꜣyꜣy sꜣb tꜣꜣy*) Kagemni, he says, the Majesty of Tety, my Lord, may he live, appointed me as overseer of all places (*imy-r st nb*), of all duties of the Residence, as one strong of heart for his Majesty according to everything what his Majesty had ordered to be done, through my excellence (*ikꜣr=i*) and through my worth (*špss=i*) before his Majesty” (Edel, 1953: Plate 3, 1-3).¹⁶³

Additionally, the biography of Qar of Edfu reads;

“The Majesty of Merenre had me sail South to Edfu as a sole companion (*smr wꜣt*), chief of the district (*hꜣry-tp spꜣt*), overseer of Upper Egyptian barley (*imy-r šmꜣ*) and overseer of priests (*imy-r hm-nꜣr*) because of my excellence (*ikꜣr=i*) and my worth (*špss=i*) before the heart of my Majesty” (*Urk I*, 254, 3 - 5).¹⁶⁴

Weni, Kagemni, and Qar are all archetypal examples of how meritocracy was expressed within Old Kingdom biographies.¹⁶⁵

With regards to Weni's family, he only mentions his mother and father using formulaic phraseology, stating;

“Indeed, I was beloved of his father, favoured by his mother [...] and kind to his brothers” (*Urk I*, 109, 17 – 110, 1).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ This extract from the biography of Kagemni has been translated using Edel's restorations. See also *Urk I*: 194-196. For full translation, see Strudwick, 2005:285-287.

¹⁶⁴ El-Khadragy, 2002: 209-211, Moreno Garcia, 1998: 11-160, Simpson, 2003: 412-413, and Strudwick 2005: 342-344.

¹⁶⁵ For more expressions of meritocracy in the Old Kingdom biographies see Kloth, 2002: 65-71 and 151-173.

¹⁶⁶ See Kloth (2002: 75-76) for more variants regarding family relationships.

The lack of narrative concerning family is commonplace in Old Kingdom tomb biographies, but we do have exceptions with the biographies of Djau of Deir El Gebrawi and Sabni of Aswan whose fathers are a central theme in their self-presentations and Nekhabu of Giza who outlines his brother's career in his biography.¹⁶⁷ Weni provides no explicit indication of what sort of family he comes from in terms of rank and status, giving the overall effect that he was a self-made man who benefitted immensely from Royal favour. Initially scholars took the meritocratic content within these biographies as reality. For example, Kanawati (1980a:20) discusses Weni's promotions and states "one wonders about the special treatment of a man of a presumably modest origin. No explanation is given except for the King's trust in him, which must have been particularly appreciated at this time."¹⁶⁸ Kanawati (1980a: 20) suggests that Weni started from humble origins but managed to work his way up appointments of office through impressing the King and earning Royal favour. However, the rediscovery of Weni's tomb at Abydos in 1999 by Janet Richards, brought new evidence to the fore that contradicted Weni's self-made man persona. The archaeological material associated with Weni's tomb, plays out a different story regarding his career. Janet Richards found a fragment of a door jamb, lying in surface fill near the North-East side of Weni's mastaba that depicted Weni commemorating his father Iuu who holds the title vizier below (see figure 22).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ For the biography of Djau, see Strudwick, 2005: 357-388, for Sabni, Strudwick 2005: 335-339, and for Nekhabu, see Strudwick 2005: 265-269. See chapter four for a discussion regarding the paternal based motif running through the biographies of Djau and Sabni, and chapter 2.7 and 2.8 for Nekhabu and his brother.

¹⁶⁸ Eyre, 1994a: 107-121 also discusses Weni as a social climber, however this was published before the rediscovery of Weni's tomb.

¹⁶⁹ For the door jamb, see O'Connor, 2011: 78-79, Richards, 2002: 90, and figure 22. Additionally, Herbich and Richards (2005: 141-149) conducted a geophysical survey around the area of Weni's tomb and discovered the possible location of Iuu's tomb, lying North of Weni's tomb, suggesting we have a family complex of tombs. The door jamb discussed above was found between the North corner of Weni's mastaba and the South corner of this newly identified structure, adding weight to the argument that it belonged to Iuu.

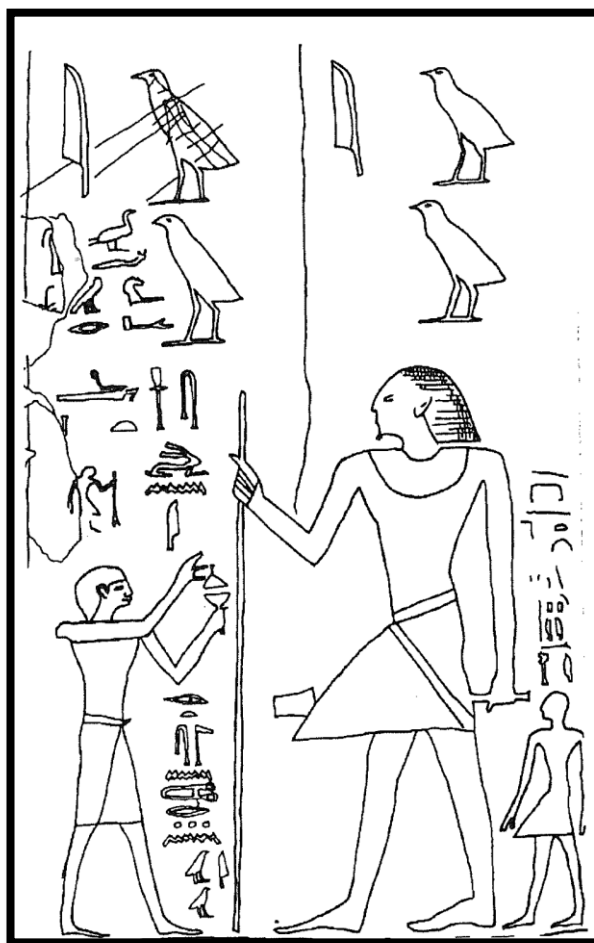


Figure 22: Line drawing of the offering scene in which Weni venerates his father, the vizier Iuu (Richards, 2002:94).

The door jamb shows Weni on the left of the scene, drawn on a smaller scale, and making an offering to his father Iuu. The accompanying caption states;

His eldest son (*s3-f smsw*), the *h3ty-c*, overseer of the South (*imy-r šm^c*) and sole companion (*smr w^ct*), Weni the elder.

Additionally, during a French expedition at the necropolis of Pepy I at Saqqara, four blocks were discovered, that were remnants of a mastaba, with an inscription which matches the biography of Weni from Abydos, suggesting Weni also had a tomb at Saqqara.¹⁷⁰ On a block from one of the surviving columns, Weni holds the title of vizier which is not present in his biography at Abydos (Collombert, 2015: 153). Furthermore, in conjunction with the Saqqara block, Weni also had a

¹⁷⁰ See Collombert, 2015: 145-157.

second false door commissioned for his Abydos tomb to commemorate his promotion to vizier (see figure 23).¹⁷¹

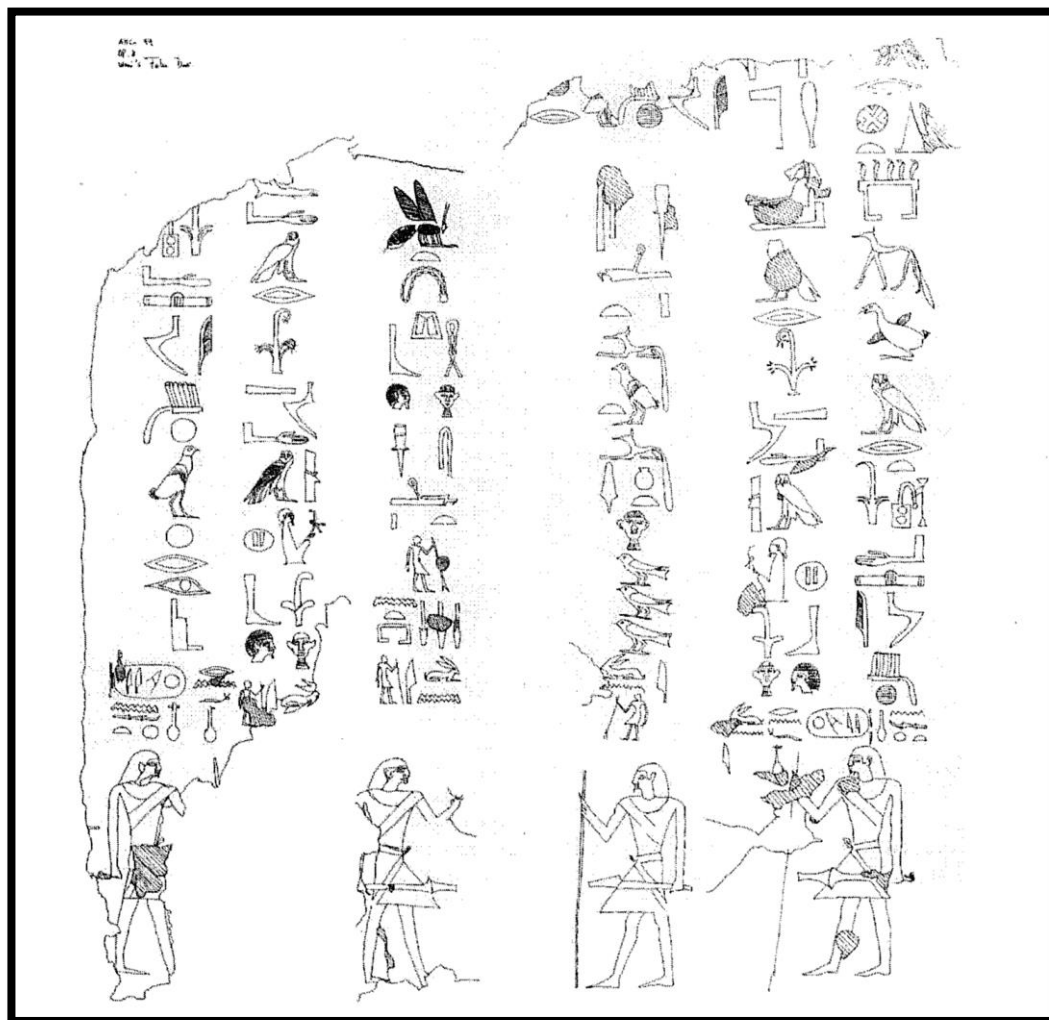


Figure 23: The second false door commissioned by Weni, which includes the Vizier title in the third right hand column (Richards, 2002: figure 15).

The second false door was made of a superior quality, out of white limestone, and was of Royal workshop standard, whereas the first false door did not include the vizier title, and is pink washed stone and painted (Richards, 2002: 90). The second false door bears the title vizier (*t3yty s3b t3ty*) written in the third column on the right-hand inscription. The quality compared with the

¹⁷¹ See Richards, 2002: 90-94 and Martinet, 2019: 93-94 for a discussion regarding the two false doors belonging to Weni.

first false door can be viewed as a reflection of his new status as the highest-ranking official in Egypt. As Weni's father Iuu was a vizier, Weni hardly came from humble origins as a son to the most powerful official in Egypt.¹⁷² Weni assumed the role of vizier like his father, suggesting that the nature of promotions also had a hereditary nuance rather than a wholly meritocratic system and he was always in line for his offices via his paternal affiliation.¹⁷³

During the Middle Kingdom onwards, hereditary based promotions become more explicit in the textual record. The expectation that office would be passed down from father to son came first in the address to the living and then secondarily in curse formulae, where punishment includes the exclusion of family from succession.¹⁷⁴ The three examples below demonstrate that the passing down of an office was a standard expectation in ancient Egypt;

Stele of Beb – unknown provenance (Leiden V88)

“I handed (*swd.n(=i)*) over my business (*wprwt (=i)*) to my son while I was alive. It is my son who makes my name live on this stele. He acted as heir to me as a dutiful son (*kn sz*)”
(Landgráfová, 2011: 280).¹⁷⁵

Khnumhotep (Beni Hassan, Middle Kingdom) - Tomb warning

“Moreover, as for any ka priest (*hm-kz*) or anyone who will damage it (his tomb and funerary cult); neither he nor his son in his office shall exist” (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 112).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Despite evidence regarding Weni's parentage, even recent publications, such as Bussmann (2020: 476) describe Weni as a low ranking official and use Weni as evidence for social mobility (social mobility is discussed in chapter 3.2). Weni can hardly be an example of social mobility being the son of a vizier.

¹⁷³ See chapter 3 for a case study regarding Weni and his title vizier.

¹⁷⁴ For discussion and examples of threats regarding the succession of office, see Morschauser, 1991:125- 129. See chapter 4.3 for the removal of office.

¹⁷⁵ Landgráfová, 2011: 280-282.

¹⁷⁶ Kanawati, 2014: 33, line 99.

Hatnub Graffiti 49 – protection of the inscription and image of the great chief Amenemhat of the Hare nome

“Moreover, as for him who shall destroy my name upon my statue; it is the Gods of the Hare nome who shall destroy his children in his office after his death” (Anthes, 1928: page 77, Plate 31).¹⁷⁷

Not only do these extracts illustrate that appointments had a hereditary factor, but they were also regarded as natural in ancient Egypt.¹⁷⁸

Although the transmission of offices from father to son is not a well-defined theme that is expressed in the Old Kingdom biographies, it does not mean that evidence for hereditary promotions is completely absent from the textual record. The familial nature of promotion within the Old Kingdom, is expressed in a less obvious fashion when compared to the Middle Kingdom examples cited above, since hereditary appointments would contradict the theme of meritocracy. This is the case in the biography of Henqu (Deir el Gebrawi) in which he makes a statement that indirectly alludes to hereditary promotion in the Old Kingdom. Henqu when describing his moral behaviour states;

“He who buried the [age]d, he who released (*wḥ*) [your free ones (*nm̄w-tn*)] from the ro[pe]s (*k[ꜥs]*) which you dragged (*itn-tn*) on the canal (*mr*). Look you grew old in the [hall (*sh*)] of the officials” (*Urk I*, 76, 17 – 77, 3).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Morschauser, 1991: 169-170 and Shaw, 2010: 160-161.

¹⁷⁸ For other Middle Kingdom examples see the stele of Intef (MMA 57.95) (Landgráfová, 2011: 28-31), the stele of Nebepusenusret (BM EA101) (Landgráfová, 2011: 216-218 and Lichtheim, 1988:122-124), and the stele of Sehetepibre (CG 20538) (Landgráfová, 2011: 220-225).

¹⁷⁹ Kanawati 2005: 71-73, plate 66-67, Lichtheim, 1988: 23-24, Schenkel, 1965: 41-44, and Strudwick 2005: 366-368. See also chapter 2.10 which discusses how this extract relates to social mobility and manual labour.

There are two activities that demonstrate pulling ropes as manual labour. Firstly, in the tomb of Henqu II a fishing scene shows several men pulling on a thick rope to retrieve the nets from the water (Kanawati, 2005: 55). Secondly, two Old Kingdom tombs of In-Snefru-ishetef (Wilson, 1944: plate 14 and 15) and Ptahhotep (Wilson, 1944: plate 3) have scenes showing rows of men towing boats by hand during the

The use of suffix pronouns in this example, subtly intimates the hereditary nature of promotions. The men that this statement targets were initially from the labouring class, who pulled the ropes before being promoted to official status (*srw*). Henqu says that he released your (*tn*) free ones from the ropes which you (*tn*) pulled rather than using *-sn* - they pulled, which implies he released the singular person who is reading this statement from the ropes, and not the free ones directly. Henqu infers that by releasing one person from the ropes created a domino effect in that by promoting one person from manual labour to official status, those who succeeded him would be spared the ropes and inherit the same elevated status and grow old in the hall of the officials. The fact filial appointment has been expressed in a minor detail such as the use of pronouns, illustrates that hereditary appointment, although not at the forefront of biographical material, did happen. Paternal succession was expressed in Old Kingdom biographies, just in a more ambiguous fashion than in the Middle and New Kingdom.

Another subtle indication to hereditary succession in the Old Kingdom can be found in tomb scenes, for example, in the tomb of Ty, dating to the 5th Dynasty, and located at Saqqara. Ty had 4 sons but only the titular of two of his sons Demedji and Ty junior have survived.¹⁸⁰ Demedji and Ty junior feature most prominently in the family scenes throughout Ty senior's tomb. Figure 24 below, depicts a typical family scene from the tomb of Ty senior.

funerary procession of both men. As this is in a funerary setting one might argue these scenes are symbolic, however, Herodotus on discussing boats states, "These boats are incapable of sailing upriver without a strong blowing wind, instead they are towed along the bank" (cited in Waterfield, 1998: 131).

¹⁸⁰ See Épron and Daumas, 1939: Plate 44.

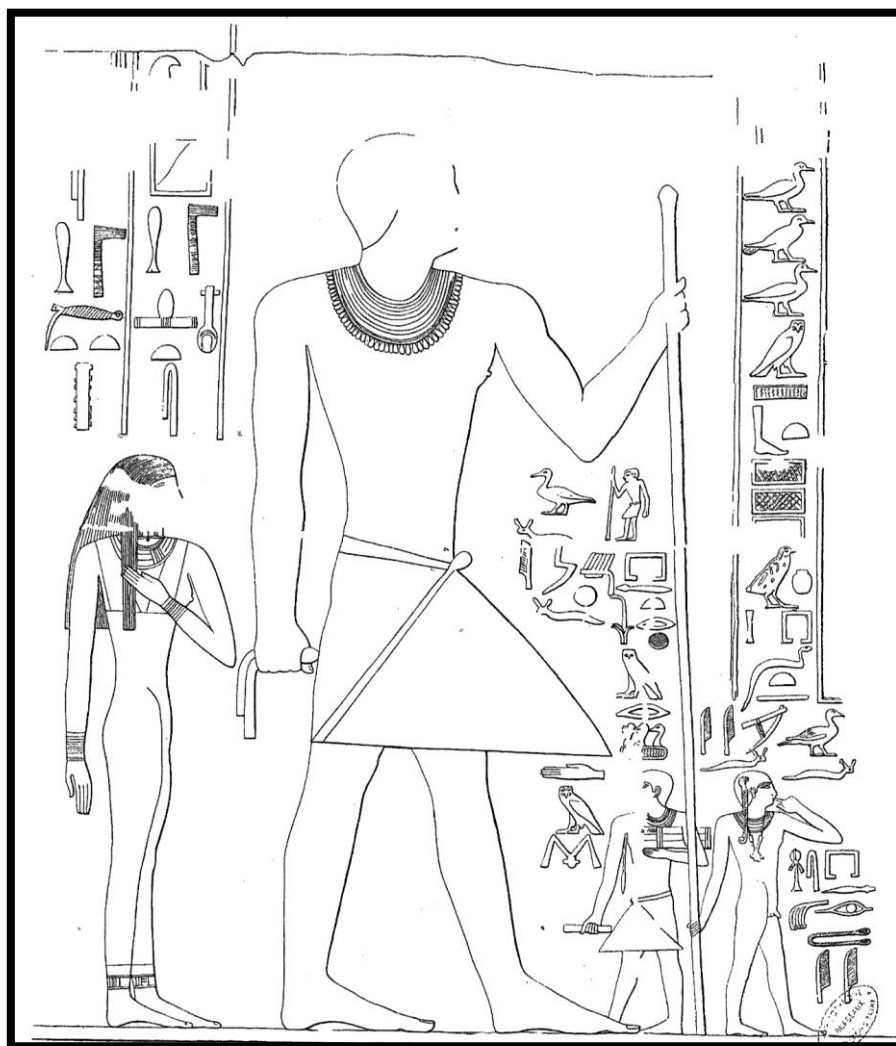


Figure 24: This scene shows Ty senior with his wife and two of his sons Ty junior and Demedji whose ages are differentiated through titles and iconography (Épron & Daumas, 1939: Plate 31).

Ty senior is drawn on the largest scale with his wife stood behind him. His son called Demedji is stood directly in front of Ty senior with their feet overlapping, wearing a kilt and collar, and clutching scrolls in both hands, an indicator that he has come of age and is actively involved in official business.¹⁸¹ Myśliwiec (2010: 305 - 336) argues that the overlapping feet of a father and son

¹⁸¹ See Bárta, 2020a: 1-28, Feucht, 1995: 199- 201, 259-266, & 422-424, Marshall. 2021: 26-27, McCorquordale, 2012a: 20 & 30, McCorquordale, 2012b: 83, McCorquordale, 2013: 96-97, and Myśliwiec 2010: 305-336 for discussions regarding the iconography, posture and the location of figures and how they can be employed to determine family relationships. See also Feucht, 1995:586-572 and Harper, 1987: 126-129

is an indicator of succession, in that the son is emerging from his father as his living *bꜣ* and heir. Demedji is captioned as *sꜣ smsw* – eldest son and has the titles *imy-r šš* – overseer of the pools and *ḥt nsw pr-ꜣ* – Royal acquaintance of the Great house, which are the most prominent titles that accompany him throughout the tomb.¹⁸² Ty junior is in front of his brother and has the archetypal iconography for a child – naked, side lock of youth, and hand to mouth.¹⁸³ Ty is captioned with his son and his beloved, which coupled with his appearance demonstrates that he is the younger son, although despite his young age, he has one frequent title which is hairdresser of the great house.¹⁸⁴

The circumstances in family dynamics appear to have changed at some point during the decorating of Ty senior's chapel, as Demedji is absent and Ty junior has taken on the mantle of *sꜣ smsw* – eldest son (see figure 25).

& 323-327 who include an index of tomb scenes that depict the tomb owner holding a staff while his son observes the work carried out in the tomb scenes.

¹⁸² For *imy-r šš*, see Jones, vol 1, no 767: page 205. For *ḥt nsw pr-ꜣ*, see Jones, vol 1, no 1211: page 329, it should be noted that he transliterates acquaintance of the Great house as *iry ḥt nsw pr-ꜣ*.

¹⁸³ For childhood iconography see chapter 1.2 and 1.7.

¹⁸⁴ For all of the scenes featuring *dmꜥ* and *ty*, with their father see Épron & Daumas, 1939: Plates 6, 17, 18, 19, 31, 45, and 60.

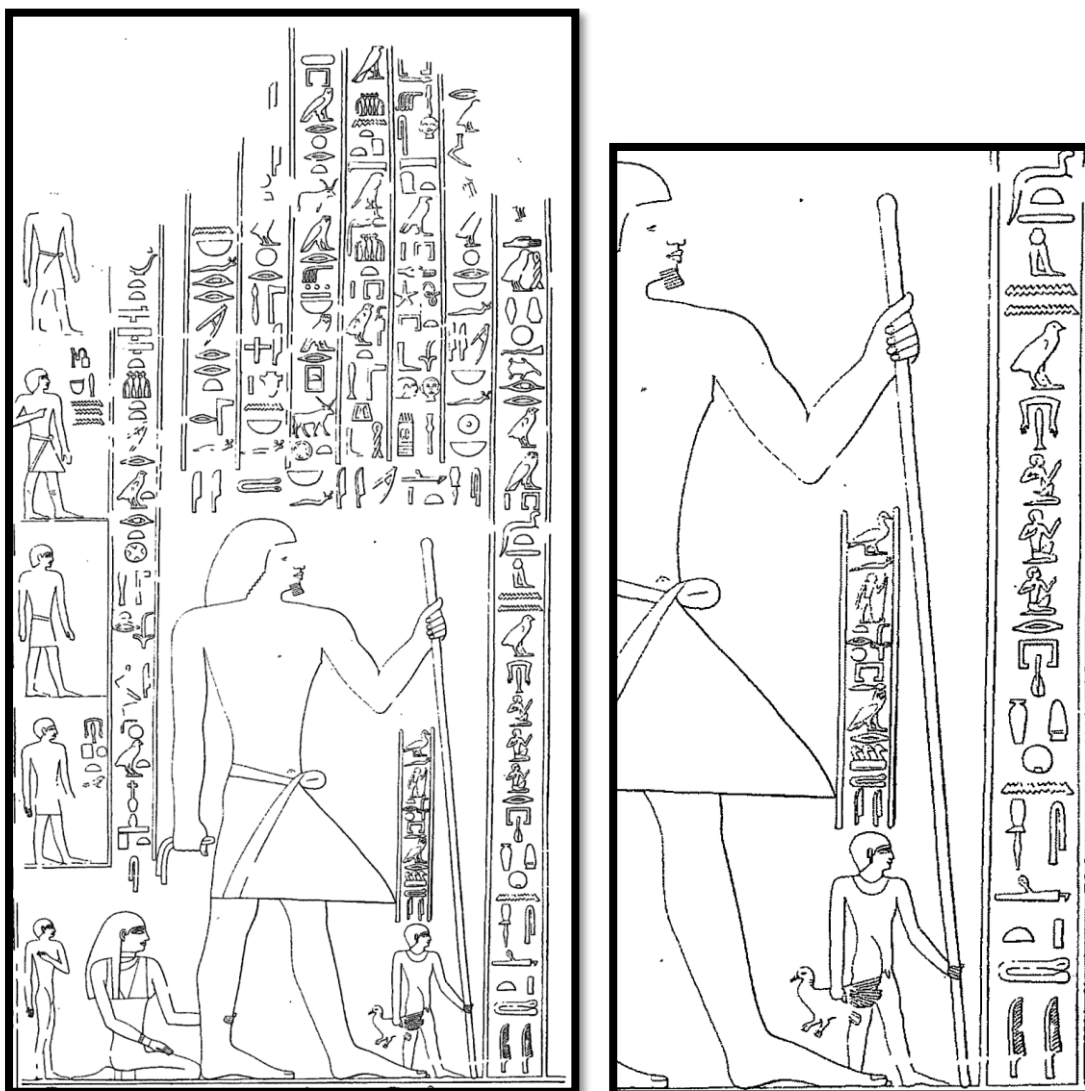


Figure 25: In the left scene, Ty senior is accompanied by his family, Demedji no longer appears, and Ty junior has taken his brother's place. The right scene is the relevant section from this family scene that has been enhanced to show Ty Junior's new titles and designation as eldest son (Épron & Dumas, 1939: plate 60).

The scene above (figure 25) depicts Ty junior who appears older now in comparison to the scene above (see figure 24), as he no longer has his side lock and is wearing a collar. Ty junior now bears the title of eldest son and has his brother's titles of king's acquaintance and overseer of the pools of the Palace, and like Demedji in the previous scenes, his father's foot is overlapping his, and he is now standing on the other side of the staff where Demedji originally stood. The likely scenario is that Demedji has died, and Ty junior has inherited his position in the family, his titles, and he is now Ty senior's successor. Overall, Ty's tomb demonstrates the hereditary nature of succession in the Old Kingdom. With the death of one son, the next son automatically assumes the role and titles of the

deceased, and it is such a natural progression that no fuss is made of this fact, tomb scenes were merely adapted to underline the new heir.¹⁸⁵

With the hereditary nature of appointment and the training required to build the necessary skillset for office holding backgrounded in favour for the motif of meritocracy, it is easy to misinterpret the evidence and base the promotion of office in the Old Kingdom on purely Royal favour and patronage to the King. The lack of attestations pertaining to a training regime in the Old Kingdom coupled with the predominant ideology surrounding meritocratic appointments presents a challenging task to determine the reality of promotions during this time. There are many factors that need consideration such as the type of training regimes in place, the balance between the hereditary and Royal authority in terms of how much influence did the King have when it came to promoting officials. Despite these complexities, the focus of this chapter is to establish the modes of training and the nature of appointments in the Old Kingdom.

¹⁸⁵ Rather than studying iconography to determine the hereditary aspect of promotion, Duliková and Mařík (2017: 63-83) carried out a social network analysis on tombs of the Old Kingdom, whereby they created a database of 2000 families inputting names, titles, and familial connections, finding many examples of the transmission of office from generation to generation, which the authors describe as a “nepotism system”.

2.1 Training regime at the Residence

The Old Kingdom biographies make a united claim that meritocracy and Royal patronage was at the forefront of promotions and purposely put any notion of the familial transference of office to the background. Practically, however, Royal favour and bloodline alone would not be sufficient to prepare for the responsibilities of office. Middle Kingdom biographies do express training at the Royal palace, albeit ambiguously, as a form of Royal favour;

Stele of Rediukhnum (CG 20543) – Dendera

“I grew up under her Majesty’s f[et] [in] my former youth (*nḥnt (=i) nt tp-ꜥ*), because she knew the excellent position of my arm and I would follow the pathway (*mḏd-i mṯn*) of the officials”

(Landgráfová, 2011: 74).¹⁸⁶

Stele of Intef (Louvre C168) - Abydos

“I came from the Palace in my youth as a scribe to make records (*irt šfdw*) in the Palace” (Landgráfová, 2011: 144).¹⁸⁷

Stele of Semti (BM EA574) – Abydos

“His Majesty placed me under his feet in my youth (*nḥn(=i)*”

(Landgráfová, 2011: 182).¹⁸⁸

Stele of Nebepusenusret (BM EA101) – Abydos

“He who grew (*ḥpr*) up under the feet of the King”

(Landgráfová, 2011: 216).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Landgráfová, 2011: 74-78 and Lichtheim, 1988: 42-46.

¹⁸⁷ Landgráfová, 2011: 144-146.

¹⁸⁸ Landgráfová, 2011: 182-184 and Lichtheim, 1988: 96-98.

¹⁸⁹ Landgráfová, 2011: 216-218 and Lichtheim, 1988:122-124.

Although still under the umbrella of Royal favour, the phraseology of growing up under the feet of a King or a Queen like in the case of Rediukhnum implies a childhood spent at the Residence and in addition, this led to an initial position at Court, like Intef.

As was the case in Middle Kingdom, there is rare evidence within the biographies of the Old Kingdom of a training regime in which the sons of officials were taken to the Residence for their education.¹⁹⁰ There are two biographies which allude to what happened between the *ts mdh* rite and appointment of office. Qar of Edfu states he was taken to Pepy to be taught (*kmz.tw=i*) amongst the children of chiefs (*m_{sw} hry-tp*), after which, he was given appointments at the Residence, followed by provincial based promotions.¹⁹¹ In the 5th Dynasty biography of Ptahshepses, the word *šd* - to bring up, is used to describe his experience as a youth at the Residence.¹⁹² In other instances, the autobiographies which refer to court appointments after the *ts mdh*, do not include any phraseology to describe their educational experience at the Residence, but they do follow a similar professional development to Qar, inferring a comparable training regime. The biography of Qar's father Isi demonstrates that both father and son had trod a similar pathway, with both men achieving both a court and provincial career;¹⁹³

Isi (Edfu)

“[I acted] as elder of the (robing room)¹⁹⁴ in the time of Isesi.
[The office] as ruler of the estate (*hkz-hwt*) was given to me in
the time of Unis. [The office] as Royal master builder (*mdh kd*)

¹⁹⁰ For an upbringing at the Royal Court, see Baines, 1983: 572- 599, Feucht, 1995: 229-236, Frood, 2010: 482, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 83-84, 99-101, 115-128, 148, 159-160, & 175, Kloth, 2002: 131-133, Kóthay, 2020: 270-271, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 112-113, Moreno Garcia, 2013c: 1035-1036, Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 63-78, and Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 96 & 269.

¹⁹¹ *Urk I*, 254, 1 – 5.

¹⁹² *Urk I*, 51, 12 - 17. *šd* is subject to a lexical study in chapter 1 and 2.2.

¹⁹³ For Qar and Isi, see chapter 2.3 which discusses the political reforms that led to officials permanently settling in the provinces.

¹⁹⁴ My restoration is based on Weni and his title *m_{sw} n dbzt* – elder of the robing room (*Urk I*, 98, 15).

nsw) scribe (*sš*), judge & administrator (*sšb ȝd mr*) and first of the King (*hry-tp nsw*) were given to me in the time of Tety. [I did all what] this God [loves]. The [office as *hȝty-ꜥ*, sole companion] and great chief (*hry-tp ꜥȝ*) [was given to me], [before the Majesty of this God, may he live forever because of my excellence and my value upon the heart of his Majesty more than] any official. [I was vigilant] concerning [all] works of the King, reckoned (*ipt*) [in this nome]”. (Kloth, 2002: 327 (line drawing), lines 5-9).¹⁹⁵

Weni, from Abydos, ties the *mdh*, then is awarded with titles that position him at the Residence.

Then later in his career, Weni is moved to the provinces, he states in his biography;

“I was in the great mansion as an official and sandal bearer.
The King of Upper and Lower Egypt Merenre, my Lord,
appointed me as a *hȝty-ꜥ*, overseer of the South (*imy-r šmꜥw*)...” (Urk I, 105, 11 - 12).

Qar, Isi and Weni have comparable careers that begin with appointments that were initially based at the Residence to build up their experience before they were eventually awarded a provincial office that saw them leave the Royal court and settle in their respective provinces. Overall, the inference is that Weni and Isi were also *kmȝt* – trained at the Residence during their youth to be moulded into a King’s official.

Given that the central theme of meritocracy was success via royal favour and close connection to the King, we would expect an upbringing at the Royal court to be presented more often as the epitome of prestige. The fact training at the Residence is not emphasised more in the 6th Dynasty biographies might lead to the false conclusion that Residential training was a rarity and awarded to only a few. However, the reason was the motif of appointment of office as a direct interaction with the King eclipsed the theme of training at the Royal court, which is more of a contextual matter. The highest titles and promotions were a testament to an official’s standing

¹⁹⁵ [] Kloth’s restorations. See Strudwick, 2005: 340-342 for translation.

with the King and his place in society, and not the education needed to fulfil these offices. The biographical examples above illustrate this, as it was imperative to list the appointments to denote Royal favour, rather than detailing the requirements and processes needed to obtain these offices.

Despite the lack of educational and training references in Old Kingdom tomb biographies, there are other sources of evidence in the form of titles, which imply that training at the Residence occurred more often in the Old Kingdom, than what is attested in the Old Kingdom tomb biographies. The title *sbꜣt nsw* – pupil of the King appears on several seals dating to the 4th - 6th Dynasty. One of the seals from the Mastaba of Djaty, from Giza, has the titles *hry-ḥbt sbꜣt nsw ir wꜣt.n=f* – the lector priest and pupil of the King who does what he orders.¹⁹⁶ The two other seals are only fragments with the title *sbꜣ nsw* – pupil of the King from the temple complex of Userkaf and the pyramid complex of Khentkaus.¹⁹⁷ Another title from the tomb façade of Iaib from el-Bersha, dating to the 5th Dynasty, bears the title *hrp sꜣt.ty nsw* – controller of the foster children of the King.¹⁹⁸ Here we have a different term *sꜣt* to describe a child brought up at the Residence. *sꜣt nsw* appears throughout the Old Kingdom and is common amongst the viziers.¹⁹⁹ Washptah, Mereruka, Tety, Babaef and Hotepenptah²⁰⁰ from the North and Bawi, Shemai and Idu from the provinces all include *sꜣt nsw* in their title strings.²⁰¹ These examples provide titles associated with education and

¹⁹⁶ See Junker, 1944: fig 96b and 235.

¹⁹⁷ For the seals from the temple of Userkaf, see Ricke, 1969: fig 26 and 95-96, and for the Khentkaus fragment see Verner, 1995: 99 & 104. See Verner, 1995: 130-132 for a discussion of their date, although these fragments have no indication of the date, others have been found with the date range of 4th - 6th Dynasty. For the title *sbꜣ-nsw*, see Jones vol I, no 3234: page 883.

¹⁹⁸ For the tomb façade of Iaib, de Mayer, 2011: 59.

¹⁹⁹ See Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 174 -175 and Strudwick, 1985: 327. Foster child of the King (*sꜣt nsw*) and pupil of the King (*sbꜣ nsw*) are explored more in chapter 2.2.

²⁰⁰ It should be noted that Hotepenptah only has the title Overseer of all works (*imy-r kꜣt nbt*). However, only a small fragment of door jamb (Cairo JE 15048) remains of his biography so some of his titles may be lost, see Strudwick, 1985: 119-120.

²⁰¹ For the title string of Washptah see *Urk I*, 40, 4 - 45, 9, Baer, 1960: 27-29 & 65, Strudwick 1985: 79-80 and for a full translation of his biography see Strudwick 2005: 318-320. For the title string of Mereruka see Baer,

upbringing at the Royal court and not just from the perspective of a pupil. We also have *laib*'s title – controller of the foster children of the King which points to a supervisory role over the children bought up at Court and that there was a degree of organisation surrounding training at the Residence, with men like *laib* to oversee it.

The examination of the Old Kingdom evidence in association with training at the Residence complicates matters rather than provide clarity on the subject. *Ptahshepses* employs the verb *šd* for his experience at the Royal court, whereas *Qar* uses the verb *kmz*.²⁰² There are also two different titles *sdt nsw* – foster child of the King and *sbz nsw* pupil of the King to mark time spent at the Residence as a youth. The variances in verbs, nouns, and titles regarding an individual's experience at the Residence suggests that pupils were treated differently in terms of how they were trained. Alternatively, *sdt* and *sbz* can be viewed as interchangeable in the biographies, meaning both terms have been used to describe the same shared experience. On this basis, it is necessary to examine the lexicon associated with training at the Residence before more evidence is introduced to elicit as much of the true meaning behind the translations and gain a better insight into training regimes in the Old Kingdom.

1960: 13-21 & 82 and Strudwick 1985: 100-101. For the title string of *Tety*, see Baer, 1960: 152 and Strudwick, 1985 and for his inscriptions, see Jéquier, 1940: 67-75. For *Babaeef*, see Junker, 1944: 151-155 and Strudwick 1985: 82-83, For *Hotepenptah*, see Strudwick, 1985: 119-120 and *Urk I*: 231. For the title string of *Bawi*, see Kanawati, 1992: 2 and Strudwick, 2005: 359-360. For the titles of *Shemai and Idu* see Goedicke, 1967: 165-171 & 214-225.

²⁰² For *Ptahshepses* see *Urk I*, 51, 12 -17, and for *Qar* *Urk I*, 254, 1.

2.2 A discussion of the Egyptian lexicon pertaining to training at the

Residence

The first issue to be addressed is the translation of *sḏt nsw* - foster child of the King.²⁰³

Foster child in a modern sense is a child who is brought up temporarily by someone other than a parent. Initially, this word appears quite satisfactory in Ptahshepses's case, he is brought up at the Residence with the Royal children.²⁰⁴ However, we would not label children who attend boarding school as foster children in today's society. The scenario is that we are dealing with children who were sent to the Residence by their parents, specifically for training, rather than the child's removal from the home due to the parent's inability to raise the child. For example, the introduction to the 12th Dynasty *Teaching of Khety* reads;

“The beginning of the teaching which the man of Sile made, his name was Duaf's son Khety for his son called Pepy, whilst sailing South to the Residence to place him in the writing school (*ʿt sbꜣ nt sšw*)²⁰⁵ in the midst of the children of the officials who are foremost of the Residence... (Helck, 1970: Ia- Ie.)²⁰⁶

The Introduction of the prose sees Khety taking his son Pepy to the Residence to be educated. As the primary purpose of sending a child to the Residence was for education, and not just an upbringing at the Royal court; the term foster child does not entirely provide a satisfying translation for *sḏt*. However, *sḏt* will continue to be translated as foster child, as finding an appropriate word to convey the true meaning of the Egyptian can often lead to assumption rather than accuracy with regards to producing a satisfactory translation.

²⁰³ Wb IV. 377. 11-12.

²⁰⁴ Urk I, 51, 12 - 17.

²⁰⁵ *ʿt sbꜣ nt sšw* - the chamber of the teaching of writings. Wb I. 160. 12 translates *ʿt sbꜣ* as 'school'. For the organisation of the training regime at Court, see chapter 2.6.

²⁰⁶ Foster, 1999: 121-128, Lichtheim, 1973: 184-192, Parkinson, 1997: 273-283, Parkinson, 2002: 273-283 & 317-318, Quirke, 2004b: 121-126, and Simpson, 2003: 431-437.

Qar's choice of word *kmꜣt* has already been evaluated in chapter one and was determined to give a connotation of a child being modelled into an official of the King.²⁰⁷ Ptahshepses employment of the word *šd* is also employed in the biography of Khety I of Siut (Tomb V) which dates to the First Intermediate period. Khety states;

“... Rulership (*ḥkꜣ*) was given to him as a person (*s*) of one cubit whose rank was advanced from amongst the *dꜣdꜣ*.²⁰⁸ Swimming lessons were given to him along with the King's children. I was one straight of character (*ꜥkꜣ bit*), one free from hostility to his Lord, who raised (*šd*) him as a child. Siut is content under my authority and Herakleopolis praises the God for me with the Upper and Lower land saying, he is a pupil of the King (*sbꜣ [nsw] is pw*)”²⁰⁹ (Griffith, 1889: Plate 15, line 21-24).²¹⁰

The various meanings of *šd* are interesting as each of the definitions can be linked to the process of training at the Residence. *šd*, when written with the striking man determinative (GG: A24) translates as separate/ extract.²¹¹ When determined with the breast determinative (GG: D27) it means to nourish, educate, bring up²¹², and finally with the man with hand to mouth determinative (GG: A2) the reading is to read or recite.²¹³ While it is not clear whether these derive from a single core root, the three semantic groups encapsulate the process of training envisaged from the sources cited above. The child was separated from the domestic context and placed at the Royal court. At the Residence, they were educated, taught to read, but also brought up in

²⁰⁷ See chapter 1.1.

²⁰⁸ Lichtheim (1988: 29) suggests the word ‘youth’ for the translation of *dꜣdꜣ*, based on the hair braid determinative (GG: D3) which may represent the side lock of youth. Also see *Wb* V.530. 9-13.

²⁰⁹ “He is a pupil of the King” (*sbꜣ [nsw] is pw*) – for the emendation of *nsw*, see Schenkel: 1965: 74, comment a.

²¹⁰ Lichtheim, 1988: 26-29 and Schenkel, 1967: 69-74.

²¹¹ *Wb* IV. 560.8-13 and 561. 1-16.

²¹² *Wb* IV. 564. 15 and 565. 8-9.

²¹³ *Wb* IV. 563.12.

terms of other physical pursuits such as the swimming lessons mentioned in the biography of Khety.²¹⁴ The writing of *šd* in the biographies of Ptahshepses and Khety are written without determinatives, which may have been a device to encompass all the meanings as their experiences at the Residence fell under the umbrella of all these definitions.

The two titles *sbꜣ nsw* and *sdꜣ nsw* that are connected to training at the Residence appear on the stela of Ikherneferet (Berlin 1204). Ikherneferet uses both *sbꜣt* and *sdꜣt* within the same text, which infers that there is a distinction between the two titles. Ikherneferet's stela dating to the reign of Senusret III, states he was trusted by the King to carry out works for the God Osiris at Abydos because;

“Since it was as a pupil (*sbꜣt*) of the Majesty that you were brought to the Residence (*ḏr-ntt inn=k is pw m sbꜣt ḥm*). Indeed, you came to be as a foster child of the Majesty (*iw ḥpr.n=k is m sdꜣt ḥm*), the one pupil (*sbꜣt*) of my Palace”
(Sethe, 1924: 70, 20-21).²¹⁵

When Ikherneferet was brought to the Residence, his status was initially a pupil (*sbꜣt*) of his Majesty, after which, he is referred to as a foster child (*sdꜣt*) of the King.²¹⁶ The construction *iw ḥpr.n=k is m sdꜣt ḥm* is interesting as a simple nominal AB sentence such as *ink sdꜣt ḥm* might be expected, translated as “I was a foster child of the Majesty”.²¹⁷ The use of *ḥpr.n=k m* – “you came to be as” before *sdꜣt* implies a position which has gradually grown into another state. Given this statement, it is tempting to say Ikherneferet gradually developed a close relationship to the King which went beyond the status of pupil of the Residence. In turn, this would mean *sdꜣt* was a child who became like one of the King's children. An alternative perspective is to view the titles of *sdꜣt nsw* and *sbꜣ* as

²¹⁴ For a discussion concerning physical training at the Residence, see Williams, 1972: 220.

²¹⁵ Landgráfová, 2011: 204-207, Lichtheim, 1973: 123-125, and Simpson, 2003: 425 – 427.

²¹⁶ See Feucht, 1995: 230-231 for the terms regarding Residential training in Ikherneferet's inscription.

²¹⁷ For nominal AB sentences, see Allen: 2000: 7.7.

two parts of the same experience. *sbꜣ* is the educational aspect of learning to read and write. *sdt* represents the socialisation aspect of his learning, where the boy learns the correct etiquette and behaviour according to his social class, as well as recreational pursuits such as swimming, as demonstrated in the case of Khety above.²¹⁸ The change in state described by Ikherneferet with regards to him becoming a foster child to the King can also serve to denote his shift from his home to his placement at the Residence rather than describing a personal relationship to the King in a literal sense. Ikherneferet is clearly keen to promote his favour with the King, going as far to say he was the one pupil of the King which comes across as hyperbole. This use of *sdt nsw* and *sbꜣ nsw* together furthers his cause by emphasising a close bond to the King.

²¹⁸ See chapter 2.8 for a discussion on the socialisation of children into adult life and the working world.

2.3 What made a child a candidate for a Court education?

The hereditary nature pertaining to office holding meant that those in line for promotion were not specifically chosen by the King.²¹⁹ A training regime at the Residence meant that the King retained some control over this process and had more influence with the new generation of upcoming officials, even if they were not his personal choice.²²⁰ On the subject of children trained at the Residence, Moreno Garcia states “ They were educated there in the company of Royal children and prepared to become the ruling elite of the Kingdom, forming a pool of well connected, high-ranking young men who would be the closest friends and colleagues of the King” (2020a:75). By educating the children of officials with Royal Princes, bonds were formed from an early age with the heir to the throne. This strategy is described in an account by Diodorus who writes about the 12th Dynasty, and although he provides an idealised account in which the detail has an air of fantasy, the underlying policy potentially has its root in reality. Diodorus states;

“Now at the birth of Sesostris, his father did a thing worthy of a great man and a King. Gathering together from all over Egypt, the male children who had been born on the same day and assigning to them nurses and guardians, he prescribed the same training and education for them all, on the theory that those who had been reared in the closest companionship and had enjoyed the same frank relationship would be the most loyal and as fellow combatants in the wars, the bravest. He amply provided for their every need and trained the youths by unremitting exercise and hardships; for no one of them was allowed to have anything to eat unless he had first run one hundred and eighty stades. Consequently, upon attaining to manhood, they were all veritable athletes of robustness of body, and in spirit qualified for leadership and endurance

²¹⁹ See chapter 2.9 for the King’s involvement with promotion.

²²⁰ For discussions on training regimes and education at the Residence, see chapter 2.1.

because of the training which they received in the most
excellent pursuits” (Diodorus 53,1)

The shared experience of learning culture and education at court led to a comradeship and the creation of a loyal inner circle for the King in later life. *The Teaching of Merikare* adds weight to the concept of ensuring loyal officials through having young men grow up at the Residence. Merikare advises;

Raise your youths (*dꜣmw=k*), so that the Residence loves you,
and make numerous your supporters (*šwt*). Look your town is
filled with new growth (*srd mꜣꜥ*). These 20 years, the youth
(*dꜣmw*) have been happy, following its heart, with the *šwt*²²¹
coming forth again (*hr-sn.nw.sy*)²²², and the enlisted enter
(*sꜥky hr sꜥk*)²²³ into it as children who flourish (*srd*).²²⁴ It is the
old ones (*isft*)²²⁵ who fight for us, I raised troops from them on
my succession (*hꜥt-i*). So, make great your great ones, promote
your fighters (*ꜥhꜣw=k*), increase (*imꜣ hꜣ-hr*)²²⁶ the youth of your

²²¹ The treatment and translation of *šwt* varies amongst scholars. Lichtheim (1973: 101) translates as “veterans return to their children”. Parkinson (1997: 220) translates “the veterans are now going forth once again”. Simpson (2003: 158) reads, “The military goes forth in strength”.

²²² For *hr-sn.nw.sy* -again, see GG: 263.

²²³ Ward (1982: No 628) treats *ꜥk* as a title and translates it as an ‘enterer’. Here we have the causative *sꜥky* – a made to enterer, giving the sense of a recruitment drive of youths into the Royal Court.

²²⁴ Parkinson (1997:221) encapsulates *srd* as the experience of children placed at the Residence for training and translates this line as the recruits are recruited into it as children raised up for service.

²²⁵ Papyrus Moscow 4658 reads *isft* with the herb determinative (GG: M2). *isft* translates as ‘evil’ or ‘chaos’ (Wb I. 129. 9-14), which makes no sense here within the context of *isft* fighting for the King, and it is usually accompanied by the sparrow determinative (GG: G37). Papyrus Petersburg 1116a has lacuna and so the *is* is missing at the beginning of the word, however, the last part reads *wt* with the herb determinative. *iswt* is the most likely reading here meaning ‘old’ or ‘ancient ones’ (Wb I. 128. 10-13). The overall meaning is the loyalty instilled in children from an early age is carried throughout life and produces men who will spend a lifetime supporting the King.

²²⁶ For *imꜣ hꜣ-hr* as an idiom for increase see CDME: 2000 & Wb I. 77. 2.

following, equip them with knowledge (*rht*)²²⁷, establish with fields, and endow with cattle (Helck, 1977: XXI – XXII).²²⁸

Merikare upholds the same principal as Diodorus, by raising children at the Residence and rewarding them in later life, a King will produce steadfast officials who will fight for their monarch for the duration of their lives.

Unfortunately, within Old Kingdom biographies, the Court educated officials do not state the reason that they were designated for the privilege to be trained in the Royal household, which is expected given that education is merely hinted at with an ambiguous reference or title. If loyalty was the motive behind the bestowing of a Court education, then in what instance was a child considered a candidate for an upbringing at the Residence.

By examining Old Kingdom biographies and the titles of the officials that refer to training at Court, the factors which led to these men being selected to train at the Residence and the King's motive to open his court up to educating his subjects is brought to light. The table below (table two) illustrate the Old Kingdom officials who refer to time spent at court via titles or as a part of their biographical narrative.

²²⁷ *rht* can also mean amounts (see *CDME*: 188), which is the context taken up by Lichtheim (1973: 101), Parkinson (1997: 221), and Simpson (2003: 158). However, given that training also took place at the Residence, a King advising his son to educate the youth in his retinue is also feasible.

²²⁸ Lichtheim, 1973: 97-107, Parkinson, 1997: 212-235, Parkinson, 2002: 248-257, and Simpson, 2003: 152-165.

Name	Education	Main Titles
Qar (Provincial official)	<i>kmꜣt</i> trained	great chief, overseer of the commissions of the King, overseer of the Upper Egypt, and overseer of Upper Egyptian barley.
Shemai (Provincial official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier, overseer of Upper Egypt
Idu (Provincial official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier, overseer of Upper Egypt
Washptah (Court official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier
Mereruka (Court official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier
Tety (Court official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier
Bawi (Provincial official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier
Babaef (Court official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	vizier
Hotepenptah (Court official)	<i>sdt-nsw</i> Foster child of the King	overseer of works

Ptahshepses (Court official)	<i>šd</i> at the Residence as a <i>ḥrd</i> and <i>id</i>	great craftsman of the King priestly titles marriage to a Royal Princess
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Table two: Names and titles of the Residential trainees of the Old Kingdom.

It is clear looking at table two above that the men who experienced a Court education all hold high office and/or were based in the provinces. Qar, Shemai, Bawi Idu are provincial officials who were brought up at the Residence as either *sdt-nsu* or to be *kmst* (created) into an official, with their careers culminating with positions in the provinces. Qar's father Isi states in his biography that he was initially a court based official under the last of the 5th dynasty Kings before he is appointed to great chief under Tety, the first King of the 6th Dynasty, and was sent to the provinces.²²⁹ Qar asserts, in his biography, that he was taken (*in.w*) to Pepy after his father had been relocated in the provinces, giving the impression that Qar was based at Edfu with his family, was initiated with the *ts mdh* rite, then sent to the Residence to be educated.²³⁰ This presents the concept that we are dealing with children from provincial families who were separated from their family, and indoctrinated into Court life, with the expectation that they would one day return to their nome to assume their father's position. The same circumstances surround Idu and his father Shemai of Coptos and Bawi of el -Hawawish. Shemai has the title *šdt nsu*, which signifies a Court education, and later in his career he was promoted to vizier and based in the provinces. This is implied in Coptos decrees M and O where father and son are informed by the King that Idu will be Shemai's successor (*wḥm=f* – his repeater) in the provinces.²³¹ Bawi dates to the later Old Kingdom (8th Dynasty) like Shemai and Idu and it is thought, due to the commonality of his name dating back to the 6th Dynasty, that he came from a long line of Bawi's who held the office of

²²⁹ Kloth, 2002: 327 (line drawing), lines 5-9 and chapter 2.1 for a translation of his biography.

²³⁰ *Urk I*, 254, 1.

²³¹ *Urk I*: 299-301. See 2.8 for a discussion on *wḥm=f* and how this relates to training.

vizier.²³² Qar and Idu had fathers who were in a position of authority as great chiefs and viziers, meaning one day, these men would assume these powerful positions in the provinces.

The importance of targeting the children of provincial families for a Court-based education is best demonstrated with the 12th Dynasty family of Khnumhotep II, who were based at Beni Hasan. Here we have a family, who were high-ranking, long established in the provinces, and arguably in a position to amass personal power and wealth, independently away from the King.²³³ The biography of Khnumhotep reveals three generations of overseers of the eastern desert along with Khnumhotep II's Grandfather - Khnumhotep I, being awarded the title great chief, the text reads;

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Khnumhotep II's appointments.

The Majesty of Horus, rej[oici]ng in [truth, the two Ladies rejoicing in truth, the golden Horus, [true of voice, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebkaure,] the son of [Re, Amenemhat, given life, stability and dominion] like [Re] forever, appointed me as [*iry-p^ct*, *h^zty-^c* and overseer] of the eastern desert (*imy-r smywt izbt*), stolist of Horus and Pakhet (*smz hr psh^t*) as the inheritance (*iw^ct*) [of the father of my mother] in [Menet-Khufu] (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 110 : Lines 13-20).²³⁵

²³² For a discussion of the family line of Bawi's at el-Hawawish, see Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2020. *Power and Regions in Ancient State*, Kanawati, 1992: 174-175, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 105-118, and Moreno Garcia, 2020b: 145-170.

²³³ For Discussions on Khnumhotep's family, powerful families in general, and their relationship with the King see Allen, 2008: 29-39, Bárta, 2013a: 172, Bárta, 2020a: 1-28, Kanawati, 2017: 267-288, Le Guilloux, 2005: 6-7, Lloyd, 1992: 26-28, and Papazian, 2015: 393-428.

²³⁴ The reconstructions in the three extracts from Khnumhotep's biography are taken from the earlier publication by Newberry (1893: plate 25) and are indicated by []. Kanawati leaves the lacuna blank in his line drawings but does include reconstructions in the transliteration of this text.

²³⁵ Kanawati, 2014: 31, Le Guilloux, 2005: 18 & 19, and Lloyd, 1992: 22, section 2a.

Grandfather's (Khnumhotep I) initial appointments

He (Amenemhat I) [established] [the southern stele] for [me] and established (*smnh.n=f*) the northern (stele) like heaven. He divided the great river through its middle (*psš.n=f itrw ʕz hr išt=f*) just like what was done for the father of my mother (his grandfather Khnumhotep II) by an utterance which had come from the mouth of the Majesty of Horus the repeater of [births, the two Ladies, the repeater of births, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Sehetepibre, son of Re], Amenemhat, given life, stability, and dominion like Re forever, appointing²³⁶ him to *iry-pʕt, hʕty-ʕ*, and overseer of the eastern desert (*imy-r smywt iʕbt*) in Menat-Khufu (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 110: Line 20-21).²³⁷

Grandfather's (Khnumhotep I) appointment to great chief

Then he (Amenemhat I) appointed him (Khnumhotep II) to *iry-pʕt, hʕty-ʕ*, gracious of arm, and great chief of the Oryx nome. He established the southern stele (*wḏw rsy*) with its boundary at the Hare nome and its North to the Jackal nome. He divided the river through its middle, its water (*mw=f*), its fields (*ʕhw(t)=f*), its tamarisks (*iʕr=f*), and its sand (*šʕ=f*)²³⁸ as far as

²³⁶ Here the text reads *mī rʕ dt f dīt=f*, as *rʕ dt* is a stock phrase and is never usually marked by a possessive pronoun, we can class the *f* after *dt* as a scribal error that should read *mī rʕ dt rdīt=f*, see Kanawati 2014: 32, comment 187 and Newberry, 1893: 59, comment 1. Breasted, 1906, vol. 1: 283 and Lloyd, 1992: 22 follow Newberry in their translation of *rdīt=f* and Le Guilloux, 2005: 20 & 21 acknowledges the *f* after *dt* in the line drawing but does not account for it in the transliteration or translation.

²³⁷ Kanawati, 2014: 32, Le Guilloux, 2005: 18 -21, and Lloyd, 1992: 22, section 2a-2b1.

²³⁸ Lloyd (1992: 32, comment 22) highlights that the determinative after *šʕ=f* is ambiguous and not the grain of sand/pellet (GG: N33) sign that usually accompanies *šʕ*. The sign is horizontal that tapers off into a narrow point at one end, Lloyd suggests that it could be the knife sign (GG: T30) making it the verb *šʕ* – ‘to cut’ and it is related to the cutting down of the tamarisk (*iʕr=f*). However, Lloyd also acknowledges that the sign could signify a tongue of land (GG: 20, 21 & 22) in which case, reading *šʕ* as ‘sand’ is perfectly acceptable.

Additionally, Lloyd (1992: 22, section 2b11) treats that pronoun *=f* as – ‘his’ rather than- ‘its’, translating this

the eastern desert (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 110-111: Lines 46-53).²³⁹

Grandfather's eldest son Nakht is appointed

He appointed his eldest son Nakht, true of voice [possessor of *imꜣḥw* to rule] his [inheri]tance [in] Menat-Khufu [as a great favour from the King] by what is decreed, coming from the mouth of the Majesty of Horus, life of births, two Ladies, life of birth, the [golden Horus, life of birth, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt] Kheperkare [son of Re, Senusret, given life, stability and dominion like Re forever (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 111: Lines 54-62)].²⁴⁰

The inherited titles come from the maternal side of the Khnumhotep family, and both Khnumhotep and his father Nehri hold the titles pertaining to a Court education.²⁴¹ Figure 26 below shows the breakdown of the family's titles –

section as his water, his fields, his tamarisks, and his sand. This rendering comes from the notion that everything in Egypt belonged to the King and these things were his to apportion. I have chosen to translate the possessive pronoun *ꜣf* as its, being that the Oryx nome had two administration regions – West of the river was governed by the great chief of the Oryx nome and East of the river was under the authority of the overseer of the eastern desert. Therefore, Khnumhotep is referring to the commodities split between the two boundaries of the same nome. See Lloyd, 1992: 32 comment 13 and Kanawati, 2014: 24-25 for the administrative division in the Oryx nome.

²³⁹ Kanawati, 2014: 32, Le Guilloux, 2005: 22 -25, and Lloyd, 1992: 22, section 2bII.

²⁴⁰ Kanawati, 2014: 32, Le Guilloux, 2005: 24 -27, and Lloyd, 1992: 22, section 2bIII for a translation.

²⁴¹ For the titles and a brief family history of Khnumhotep II, see Kanawati, 2014: 15-25 and Willems, 2013b: 377-378. For the full translation of the Khnumhotep's biography, family history, transliteration, line drawings, and commentary, see Le Guilloux, 2005. *La Biographie de Khnoumhotep II Prince de Beni Hassan*. For a translation, commentary, and discussion on the style and structure of the text, see Lloyd, 1992: 21-36.

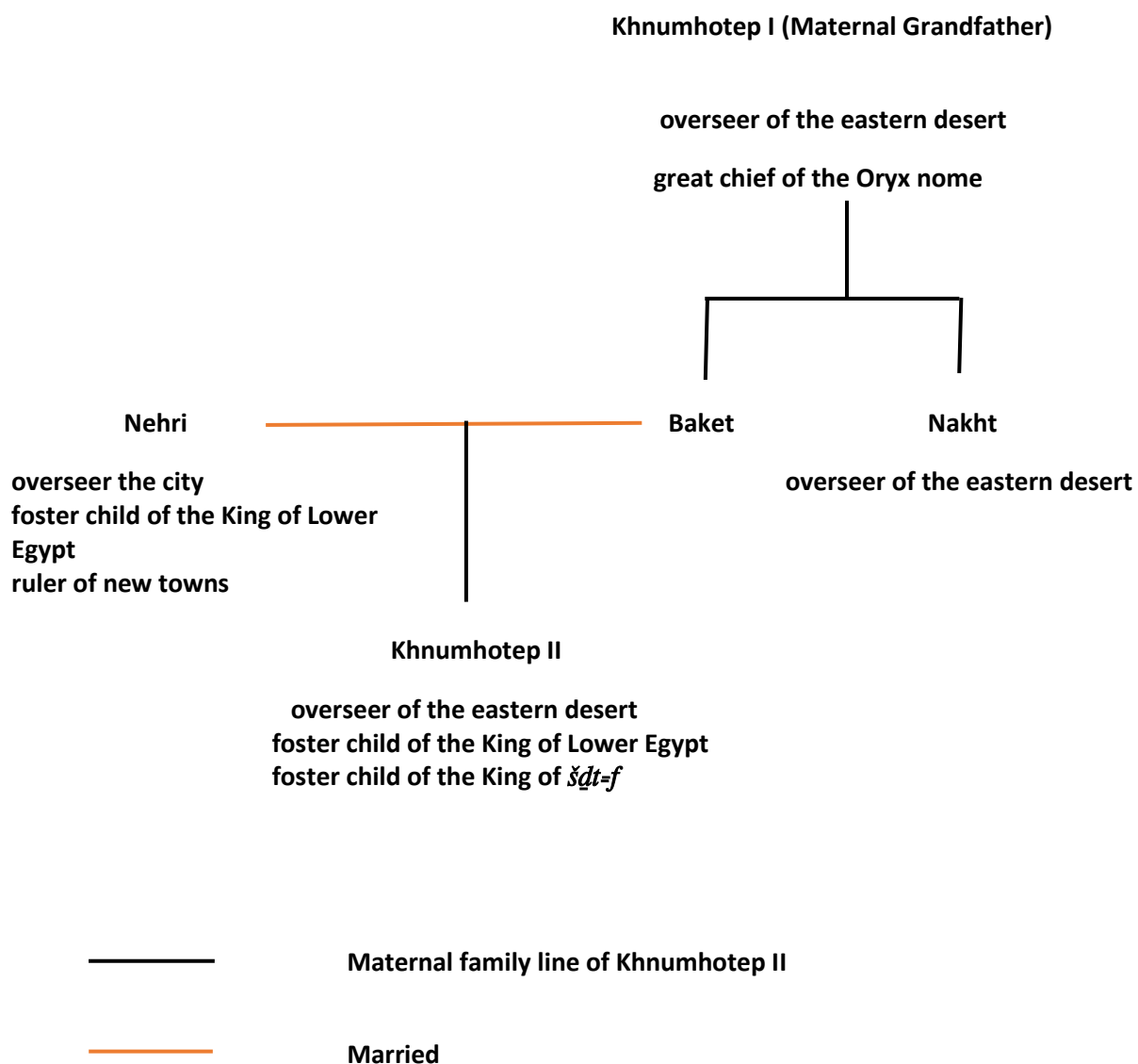


Figure 26: The maternal family line of Khnumhotep II in accordance with the titles from his biography.

Figure 26 illustrates three generations of Overseers of the eastern desert in this family, with Khnumhotep I also holding the title of great chief of the Oryx nome. It was the maternal side of the family who held the higher-ranking appointments as Khnumhotep II inherits from his mother Baket's family, rather than his father Nehri. The promotions and inheritances span from the reign of two Kings, from the reign of Amenemhat I to Senusret I, meaning the family had time to establish a reputation in the nome, to build up their autonomy from the Crown, and amass personal wealth. The growing power base surrounding a family with an extensive line of inheriting

high powered positions was recognised by Senusret I who ensured that Nakht only inherited the position of overseer of the eastern desert and not great chief of the Oryx nome like his father Khnumhotep I who held both titles. This strategy would have reduced a degree of authority away from the family. One might argue that this may be evidence of Nakht being awarded a staff of old age and sharing some of the responsibilities of his father's office by dividing the authority of the regions between them, rather than diminished title holding. However, Khnumhotep II never undertook both offices and his two eldest sons did not inherit either office, with one son Nakht awarded ruler of the Jackal nome (*ḥkꜣ inpw*) and Khnumhotep III promoted to keeper of the gateway of the foreign lands (*iry ꜥꜣ ḥꜣswt*), overall showing a diminishing authority for this family in the provinces.²⁴² An additional ploy of the King to attempt to dilute some of the power amassed by this family was to employ the tactic of a Residential education. Khnumhotep II, his son Khnumhotep III and his father Nehri hold different titles that refer to training at the Residence. Khnumhotep II describes himself as *sdt n bity* -foster child of the King of Lower Egypt and *sdt nsw n sdt=f* - foster child of the King of his proclamation. Nehri has *imnty- bity* – foster child of the King.²⁴³ A stele belonging to Khnumhotep III, from Wadi Gasus, states he was;

“The sole one of the King, who was made (*ḥpr*) in the Palace, educated one (*sbꜣ*) of Horus, Lord of the two lands” (Franke, 1991: fig 1b).²⁴⁴

There appears to be a strategic push to integrate this family into the realm of Court officials. Nehri, kick-started this tradition and his marriage to Khnumhotep II's mother - Baket can be viewed as a strategy to infiltrate this provincial family with King's men.²⁴⁵ Additionally, by removing Khnumhotep II and later, his son from the family environment, and placing him in the King's

²⁴² For a discussion on Khnumhotep's sons see Franke, 1991: 51-67 and Kanawati, 2014: 34 and for the nomarchs in the Middle Kingdom, see Kemp, 1983: 96-112, Willems, 2013b: 341-392, and Willems, 2014: 4-48.

²⁴³ For *imnty- bity* see CDME: 18.

²⁴⁴ See Franke, 1991: 59-60 and Nibbi, 1976: 45-56 for a translation and discussion of this stele.

²⁴⁵ For marriages between Royalty and the families of officials see chapter 2.3.1.

domain, a level of separation was created that was focused less on family and more targeted to forming a connection and bond to the King. The goal would be that the child would take this loyalty back to the provinces when they were grown and inherited the family titles. This policy appears to have been effective in this case, given there is a tomb in the Middle Kingdom cemetery at Dahshur, which is thought to belong to Khnumhotep III, illustrating his preference to be buried in the vicinity of his King rather than with his family in the provinces.²⁴⁶

The policy of Court education and targeting the children of provincial officials begins in the Old Kingdom and was linked to the changes in governmental structure during the end of 5th – 6th Dynasty. We begin to see new titles such as *imy-r šmꜥw* - overseer of the South and *ḥry-tp ꜥꜣ n/m spꜣt* – great chief of/in the district, with the emergence of officials who are now based in the provinces rather than in Memphis at the Royal court, which was due to the expansion of Royal authority in the provinces.²⁴⁷ The provincial based officials had to act as intermediates on behalf of the Residence in the provinces. This is reflected best in these extended extracts from the biographies of Qar and Weni;

²⁴⁶ See Allen, 2008: 29-39 and Franke, 1991: 51-67.

²⁴⁷ For changes in government structure, the infiltration of officials into the provinces and provincial administration, see Assmann, 2003: 46-52, Bárta, 2005: 117-119, Bárta, 2013: 269-278, Bárta, 2015: 1-17, Bárta, 2020a: 1-28, Bárta, 2020b: 317-396, Bussmann, 2020, 459-530, Eyre, 2000:15-34, Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022. *Power and Regions in Ancient States*, Jasnow, 2003: 101-105, Kanawati, 1980a. *Governmental Reforms in the Old Kingdom*, Kanawati, 1992:47-82, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018, *Egypt in the Sixth Dynasty: Challenges and Responses*, Lashien, 2017: 1-6 & 104-134, Martinet, 2011. *Le Nomarque sous l'Ancien Empire* (discusses reforms in government in relation to office of nomarch), Martinet, 2019. *L'Administration Provinciale sous l'Ancien Empire Egyptian* (2 vols), Martinet, 2021: 45-70, Moreno Garcia, 1998: 151-160, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 95-128, Moreno Garcia, 2013: 85-151, Moreno Garcia, 2017: 87-132, Moreno Garcia, 2020, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, Papazian, 2012: 54-57, Papazian, 2013: 47-49, and Warden, 2015: 470-495. For the title *imy-r šmꜥw*, see Jones Vol I, no 896: pages 246-245 and for *ḥry-tp ꜥꜣ n/m spꜣt* see Jones Vol II, no 2393: page 656.

Weni

I acted for him (the King Merenre) as overseer of the South, effectively (*r hrt*), so that never did a man attack his peer in it. All work was done, reckoning (*ip*) everything which (needed) reckoning (*ipt*) for the Residence in this Upper Egypt twice, and every duty (*wnnw*), which (needed) reckoning for the Residence in this Upper Egypt, twice. My duties were done making my reputation (*kd-(i)*) in this South (*Urk I*, 106, 4 – 9).²⁴⁸

Qar

“Then the Majesty of Merenre had me sail South to Edfu as a sole companion, chief of the district (*hry-tp n spzt*), overseer of Upper Egyptian barley (*imy-r šm^c*) and overseer of priests (*imy-r hm-ntr*) because of my excellence and my worth before the heart of my Majesty. I came to govern (*idn*) as Lord in front of every chief of the district in every respect. I was the one who judged (*wpw*) for Egypt in every respect. I caused the cattle of this nome were more numerous of cattle than in the stables in the foremost of Upper Egypt in every respect. This is a fact not found in the arm of a chief who was in this nome previously²⁴⁹, because of my vigilance, because of my

²⁴⁸ Lichtheim, 1973: 18-23, Piacentini, 1990, *L'Autobiografia di Uni, Principe e Governatore dell'Alto Egitto*. Simpson, 2003: 402-407, and Strudwick, 2005: 252-257.

²⁴⁹ *n gm.t(w) =Ø n is pw m-^c hry-tp wn m spzt tn tp(y)-^c.w(y)* – It is found but not in the arm of a chief who was in this nome previously is a grammatically complex sentence. *n gm.t(w)=Ø n is pw* is a negative, passive nominal *sdm.n.tw=f* verbal construction. The subject is omitted but is represented by *pw* which is not normally required in a negative *n...is* construction. The *n...is* is employed here to negate the nominal predicate with *wn* as a past participle making up part of the predicate. For discussions of nominal sentences see Allen, 2000, 369: 383 and for negative *n...is* see Doret, 1986: 40, comment 349 and GG: 134 & 247. Alternatively, Doret translates as “This is not something which I had found (done) by (any) nomarch who was in the nome before me” (1946: 40). El-Khadragy (2002:211) translates this line as “This is not indeed what I found accomplished by the overlord who was in this province previously” and Stauder-Porchet (2020b: 200) translates “This is not something that I found at the hands of any chief who had been in the district before”.

excellence (in) controlling (*hrp*) matters for the Residence”

(*Urk I*, 254, 3 - 11).²⁵⁰

Qar was trained at the Residence and based there for the foundation years of his career before being relocated back at Edfu. Weni’s experience mirrors that of Qar in that his initial duties are at Court before he is sent to the South of Egypt. Weni reckons things (*ip*) and Qar controls (*hrp*) the affairs of the Residence in their nomes. From these extracts, the affairs of the Residence included overseeing the workforce in the nomes, collection of taxes, and dealing with livestock. Edfu and Abydos were also important, not just for agriculture or animal husbandry, but also due to their geographical position. Edfu had trade routes leading to the red sea, the Kharga oasis, and Nubia that were crucial for trade.²⁵¹ Similarly, Abydos is midway between the more fertile lands of Middle Egypt and Southern Egypt with trade routes leading through the desert oasis.²⁵² Given the geographical and economical importance of Edfu and Abydos, it would be in the best interest for the Residence to appoint a person who was well known to the Royal court.

The provincial officials were representatives of the King and a symbol of Royal authority in the nomes. This did not mean that Egypt was a highly structured bureaucracy with the King as an omnipresent force at the centre of all business.²⁵³ Given the terrain of Egypt, it would not be viable to run every decision by the King, so a degree of independence, trust, and authority would have to be handed over to the provincial official.²⁵⁴ Strategies such as patronage was a way for the King to

²⁵⁰ For a translation of Qar’s biography, see El-Khadragy, 2002: 209-211, Moreno Garcia, 1998: 11-160, Simpson, 2003: 412-413, and Strudwick 2005: 342-344.

²⁵¹ See Bárta, 2020b: 368, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 46-49, and Moreno Garcia, 1998: 151-160.

²⁵² See Eyre, 1994a: 118 and Goedicke, 1981: 1-20.

²⁵³ Campagno, 2016: 9-22, Eyre, 1997: 369-372, Eyre, 2000: 15-39, Eyre, 2011: 701-711, Moreno Garcia, 2013b: 85-151, Papazian, 2013: 41-83, and Warden, 2015: 470-495.

²⁵⁴ For the geography of Egypt and its impact on communication see, Bunbury & Rowe, 2021. *The Nile: Mobility and Management*, Eyre, 1987: 11, Eyre, 2000: 16, Lashien, 2017: 2, Moreno Garcia, 2013a: 3, and Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 17.

ensure on-going loyalty in the guise of Royal favour that included the granting of land, burial equipment, and precious goods.²⁵⁵ However, this did not deter informal networks of power arising amongst provincial families. Not only did officials have authority over trade and commodities and all things secular in their nomes, but they also held religious authority by way of the local temple.²⁵⁶

An example of informal networks of power in both the secular and religious worlds was evident with Pepyankhheryib from Meir who had authority as vizier and overseer of priests of Hathor. Pepyankhheryib describes his devotion towards the two sectors of his career, stating;

I spent all my lifetime having acted in service (*wnwḏw*) (as) an
official... (*Urk I, 222, 8*)

I spent a great part²⁵⁷ of this life of mine (*ir.n=i bw ʕ3 n*
ḥʕw(=i) pn) as an overseer of the priests of Hathor, Lady of
Kis, where I entered before Hathor, Lady of Kis, seeing her,
doing for her the rituals with my own arms (*Urk I, 222, 1 - 2*).

Pepyankhheryib's family were also heavily invested in the temple of Hathor with his wife, sons, mother, father, and brother-in-law all holding titles associated with priest/priestess hood, making the temple a family business with all the benefits of the job held in reserve for one family.²⁵⁸ Examining the decrees and offering lists issued by various Kings of the Old Kingdom, reveal the assets accumulated by a temple such as land, people livestock, precious metals and stone, cloth, and

²⁵⁵ For patronage, see Campagno, 2014: 1-33, Campagno, 2016: 9-22, Eyre, 1987: 5-47, Eyre, 2000: 15-39, Eyre, 2011: 701-711, Eyre, 2016: 163-179, Martinet, 2021: 45-70, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 95-125, Moreno Garcia, 2013a: 1-18 & 1029-1065, and Moreno Garcia, 2016: 491-512.

²⁵⁶ See Eyre 2000: 31, Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022: 22, 38-39 & 62, Lashien, 2017: 95-104, Martinet, 2015: 299-325, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 95-128, Moreno Garcia, 2013b: 108-109, and Moreno Garcia, 2016: 505 for local temples under the control of provincial families.

²⁵⁷ *bw ʕ3* reads 'a great place.'

²⁵⁸ For Pepyankhheryib's family, titles, and religious duties see Baines, 2015a: 19-43, Kanawati, 2010: 11-24, and Lashien, 2017: 38-50.

wood.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, Martinet (2020:74-83) examined all the individuals and their titles in Pepyankhheryib's tomb to map his social network and determined that he had connections to the Palace, central administration, and agents to the King. With his own high-ranking titles and important connections, Pepyankhheryib was a dominant and wealthy force in his own right.

Given the economic benefits, power, and independence open to the provincial officials, their children could not be educated exclusively by the family, with little contact with the King. There would be a degree of objectivity towards the Residence, which in turn, moderated any loyalty to the King. The result would be the provincial officials taking advantage of the distance from the Royal court and exploiting their positions.

Despite the strategy of Court education, loyalty was not guaranteed. There was an awareness from the King that corruption did take place and this behaviour had to be curbed.²⁶⁰ The fact that these decrees were written to protect the removal of goods, people, animals from the temple, and to stop the temple lands being worked for personal gain demonstrated that officials did take advantage.²⁶¹ Some of these decrees specifically mention the titles of the men who were using these temples for personal gain. For example, Coptos decree A (6th Dynasty) was issued to protect the Ka chapel of the Royal Mother Iput and states;

My Majesty does not allow that the followers of Horus shall be
a burden (*sb*) (to the chapel) (Goedicke, 1967: Abb 4: line 7-8).

²⁵⁹ For the decrees, see the Dahshur decree of Pepi I – Goedicke, 1967: 55-67, Strudwick, 2005: 103-105, and *Urk I*, 209, 6 – 213, 17. Coptos decree A (Pepi I) – Goedicke, 1967: 410-54, Strudwick, 2005: 105-106, and *Urk I*, 214. Decree of Pepy II from the Valley temple of Menkaure at Giza – Goedicke, 1967: 148- 154, Strudwick, 2005: 106-107, and *Urk I*, 277 – 278, 13. Coptos decree B (Pepi II) – Goedicke, 1967: 87-116, Strudwick, 2005: 107-109, and *Urk I*, 280, 7 - 283. Coptos decree C (Pepi II) – Goedicke, 1967: 117: 127, Strudwick, 2005: 109: 111, and *Urk I*, 284 – 288, 1. Coptos decree D – Goedicke, 1967: 134-147, Strudwick, 2005: 112-113, and *Urk I*, 288, 3 - 292, and for the Cult list of offerings – Strudwick, 2005: 124-125.

²⁶⁰ See Bárta (2020a: 1-28) for his discussion on the workings and ramifications of hereditary succession and his theory that nepotism was a factor to the fall of the Old Kingdom due to the amassing of power and wealth by private individuals. Chapter 4.3 discusses the King's right to remove office as punishment.

The decree of Pepy II from the valley temple of Menkaure at Giza records;

[My Majesty has not given] the authority in allowing that this troop of men go to the Pyramid of Neferkare and Merenre to take away any property of these pyramid cities (Goedicke, 1967: Abb 12, Line 14-15).

Coptos B, C, and D list the titles of officials to whom the restrictions are aimed at. For example, Coptos B is targeted at;

imy - r šm^c – overseer of the South

hry -tp – chief

wr mdw šm^c – great one of the tens of Upper Egypt

imy - r sz(w) šm^c – overseer of the phyles of Upper Egypt

imy-r wpt – overseer of missions

rht nsw – acquaintances of the King

imy -r dbz – overseer of payments

imy-r [...] nsw - overseer of [...] (Goedicke, 1967, Abb 8: line 9-16) ²⁶²

These decrees were not a general warning in case corruption happened, they would not be so specific in listing particular office holders, rather the decrees were issued to counteract untoward behaviour. ²⁶³ This is further evident with the use of evocative language in the decrees with regards to the King's feelings towards anyone who might capitalise on the crown's wealth. The King's reaction to the wrongdoers is taken personally as a crime against him, rather than the temple. For example, Coptos decree C states that acting against the decree "is what the King hates" and Coptos

²⁶² See also Coptos decree C – Goedicke, 1967: Abb 9, line 6-7 and Coptos D – Goedicke, 1967: Abb 11, fragment A.

²⁶³ For decrees, see Hays, 2000: 63-77, Jasnow, 2003: 94-96 & 102-103, Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 111-116, and Vernus, 2013: 259-340.

B declares “It is treachery (*sbi*).”²⁶⁴ Thus, the emotive language was no doubt engineered to remind any potential offenders that any crimes against the temple is a crime against their King. Therefore, preventive measures were needed to best secure officials who would adhere to the word of the King. Residential training is a pre-emptive method designed to curb the behaviours that the decrees above prohibit.

The other officials in table two above, namely Washptah, Tety, Babaef, Mereruka and Hotepenptah were all based at the Residence and held high titles of either vizier or overseer of works.²⁶⁵ Again we have high ranking officials, who although were in close proximity to the King and Court, had a great deal of authority. Figure 27 below presents a breakdown of the administrative sectors and responsibilities belonging to a vizier. From this diagram, we can see the vizier engaged in every aspect of central administration, in charge of granaries, taxes, expeditions, building works, and jurisdiction.²⁶⁶

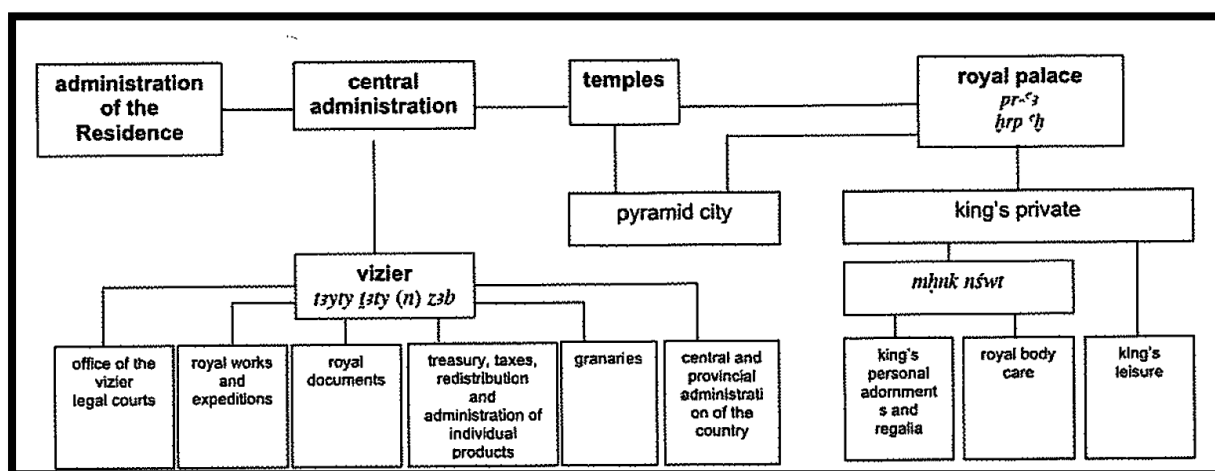


Figure 27: Simplified model demonstrating the responsibilities of the vizier in the Old Kingdom (prepared by Duliková, in Bárta, 2020b: figure 5.2.

²⁶⁴ For *sbi*, see Wb IV. 87. 8-14. For Coptos B example, see Goedicke, 1967: Abb 8, line 20 and for C see Goedicke, 1967: Abb 9, line 11.

²⁶⁵ Only Hotepenptah held the position of overseer of works, the rest of these men were viziers.

²⁶⁶ Bárta, 2013a: 153-175, Martinet, 2019: 91-134, Strudwick, 1985: 300-334, and Van den Boorn, 1988: 310-331 for a discussion about the duties of a vizier. See chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion regarding the role of vizier.

Given that viziers held such prominent positions and were the central cog across the broad spectrum of administration and assets, a controlled education was a forward-thinking strategy. The children who were pre-determined to take on high level positions such as vizier or great chief were separated from their families and placed under the influence of the King from an early age. The incentive behind training the future viziers and provincial officials had the same motivation – to increase loyalty and minimise the chance of corruptive behaviour when these offices came into fruition.

2.3.1 Marriage and close service to the King and his family

Other criteria that determined that a child should have a Court education is if they would one day be working in close proximity to the King and his family. Ptahshepses of the 5th Dynasty, who asserts he was *sdt* – brought up and educated at the Residence, holds the title great craftsman along with priestly titles, and also lists his duties within his biography.²⁶⁷ He states that he carried out guard duty (*stp -s3*) and entered on the pathways of the southern Palace during festivals which suggests that a part of his guard duty was for the King during festivals, when the King was on route.²⁶⁸ He infers he knew the secret tasks which the King wanted done, meaning he had the King's confidence in matters. We also know that he was married to a Royal Princess after his upbringing at Court. He proved himself to be a loyal official to the point where he was welcomed into the Royal family through marriage.²⁶⁹ It can be considered that this marriage was arranged when he was a child, and this was influential in his Court education amongst the Royal children where he could be refined and trained to be a Royal member of the family. Equally, a marriage between Royalty and private individuals can be viewed as a strategic ploy to infiltrate powerful families to ensure they remained loyal to the King.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ See chapter 1.1, and for the titles not present in the biography of Ptahshepses, see Dorman, 2002: 95-110

²⁶⁸ *Urk I*, 53, 6 - 8.

²⁶⁹ *Urk I*, 52, 1 - 3.

²⁷⁰ For marriages between Royalty and the families of officials, see Bárta, 2013b: 272-276, Bárta, 2020b: 351-364, Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022: 12, Kanawati, 2017: 267-288, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 189-190, Kóthay, 2020: 271-272, Papazian, 2015: 393-428, and Vymazalová, 2019: 69-71. The family of Djau from Abydos is a good example of marriage as a strategy. Djau had two sisters who both married Pepy I. Djau is a vizier, a title also very unusually carried by his mother Nebet, although this was most likely an honorary title (*Urk I*, 117, 8 – 119, 13 and Strudwick, 2005: 357-358 & 395). Here we have a powerful provincial family whose sisters were given in marriage to the King to integrate the families and no doubt inspire loyalty.

A close working relationship with the Royal family was an incentive in the New Kingdom for an upbringing at Court. The term *hrd n kꜣp* denoted a childhood spent at the Royal Court.²⁷¹ There are two holders of this title, who like Ptahshepses, had close connection to the King or the Royal family. Hekarneheh worked in a close capacity to the Royal family via his position as tutor to a son of the King. According to a scene in Hekarneheh's tomb, his father Hekareshu also had the same position as Royal tutor. In one scene, his father Hekareshu sits holding a young Thutmose IV on his knee and the accompanying caption states;

Follower of the King in all places, praised one of the one who is
in the Palace, father of the God, who raises (*šd*) the God,
beloved of the Sovereign. The tutor/guardian (*mnꜣy*) of the
King's son, the eldest of his body, Thutmose, glory of Diadems
Hekareshu (Newberry, 1928: Plate 12).²⁷²

As the father Hekareshu was a Royal tutor, Hekarneheh's career as a tutor was predetermined due to the hereditary nature of office succession.²⁷³ Due to this, we can see the benefits of an upbringing at the Residence as two-fold for Hekarneheh. Firstly, as a future Royal tutor in the making, being raised at the Royal court would have ensured the highest level of education, and practical for training under his father as his successor. Secondly, the position of tutor to the Royal children can be considered one of the most intimate roles within the Palace which required an elevated level of trust and confidentiality, due to the influence they would have in the lives of these future Kings. It makes sense that this might require a person well known to the Palace and whose fidelity to the King and his children was entrenched from an early age. Another early New Kingdom official called Aahmose, who was a child of the nursery, has the title chief of secrets of the house of the morning which

²⁷¹ *hrd n kꜣp* is attested from the Middle Kingdom onwards, for discussions of this term see, Feucht, 1985: 38-40, Feucht, 1995: 266-271, Mathieu, 2000: 41-48, and Quirke, 2004a: 26-30.

²⁷² See Newberry, 1928: 273-275 and *Urk* IV: 1572, 12-15.

²⁷³ See Feucht, 1995: 301.

entailed duties that required close personal contact to the King.²⁷⁴ According to Strudwick, the duties surrounding this title involved a personal service to the King and his lands, rather than administrative, and the title was given to “Court men favoured by the King” (1985: 287 & 312). Shorter (1930:59-60) elaborates further on this title by stating it involved ceremonies performed on the King in his toilet chamber. Again, this is another example of a deeply intimate role pertaining to the King in terms of viewing him in such an intimate and human position not usually associated with a divine monarch.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ See Shorter, 1930: 54-62.

²⁷⁵ Duliková & Mařík, 2017: 71-73 discusses families of the Old Kingdom who have roles such as manicurist or hairdresser of the King and how they are a display of the King’s trust and confidence in that person due to the personal nature of their duties.

2.4 An ominous motive for training children at the Residence.

Educating and training children at the Residence had other advantages for the King that went beyond shaping children into model officials. A secondary and more sinister motive behind training children at the Royal Court was to maintain control over officials via their children. The King having influence over a child of an official, particularly one that was an heir and the continuation of the family line, meant that the King could use his control over the child as leverage, if the father overstepped any boundaries. During the New Kingdom, sending a child to the Residence was employed as a strategy to ensure loyalty from foreign vassal states. The children of foreign chiefs were taken from their homeland and installed at the Royal court and Egyptianised. This tactic meant by the time they were adults and returned to their country of origin, a fidelity to Egypt would be instilled in them.²⁷⁶

This tactic is demonstrated in Amarna letter EA 296, which is written by a man called Yahtiru, who states;

“... I am the loyal servant of the King.... When I was small, he (the Egyptian commissioner) brought me to Egypt, and I was stationed in the gate of the King, my Lord” (Amarna letter EA 296 (translated by Moran, 1992: 338-339).

And in the Annals of Thutmose III with this account –

“Now the children of chiefs and their brothers were brought to be hostages (*r wnn nht*)²⁷⁷ in Egypt. Now as for any who die

²⁷⁶ For discussions on the topic of the children of chiefs in Egypt, see Redford, 1992: 198-100 & 270 and Redford, 2006: 232-233. For more examples of the strategy regarding Egyptianising foreign children, see Redford, 2003: 37, 41, 109, 121 & 131.

²⁷⁷ There is debate on how to translate the word *nht*, which is accompanied with the forearm with stick determinative (GG:D40) in this example. The root meaning of *nht* is strength or victory, see CDME: 139 and Wb. II 317, 4. Breasted (1906, vol 3: 198, footnote D) argues that *nht* in this case should be translated as stronghold and that foreign children were kept in a special place of confinement, therefore, rendering the translation – children of chiefs were bought to strongholds in Egypt. Redford (1992: 198) suggests the

from these chiefs (the chiefs in the foreign lands), his Majesty
had his son proceed to stand in his place" (*Urk IV*, 690, 1-5).

As demonstrated in Amarna letter EA 296, the installation of foreign children at the Residence was successful with regards to instilling loyalty to the Egyptian King. Yahtiru describes the King as my Lord and refers to himself as a loyal servant of the King. Equally, Thutmosis' ploy of taking the children of chiefs to bring them up in Egypt, then allowing them to return to their homeland, and into a position of power, safeguarded that any future foreign relations would be in the best interests of the Crown. Additionally, Redford (2003: 71) suggests that Thutmosis also took the chief's brothers back to Egypt, to retain all the eligible heirs, so that it was imperative for a chief to comply with the King of Egypt for the security of their successional line.

There is inference to this practice from the Old Kingdom in an account of a military expedition in Nubia conducted by Aswan official Pepynakht in the 6th Dynasty. Pepynakht recalls;

The Majesty of my Lord sent me to hack up the banks (*wḏb*)²⁷⁸
of Wawat and Iretjet. I acted until my Lord favoured (me) (*iw*
ir.n (=i) r ḥst [-wi] nb (=i)).²⁷⁹ I killed a great number there;

translation – to be hostages in Egypt. Ordinarily, if *nḥt* is employed as stronghold, fortress, or hostages it is determined with the house determinative (GG: O1), see *Wb II*. 317. 11 - 12. *CDME*: 139 also suggests hostages when *nḥt* is determined with the forearm with stick but only cites the example used in the annals above. Given that *nḥt* follows the preposition *r* and the infinitive *wnn*, which translates as 'to be,' *nḥt* appears to be referring to the brothers and children of chiefs rather than a place as one would expect *r int* to be brought or *r šsp* – to be taken if *nḥt* was referring to a prison or fortress.

²⁷⁸ *wḏb* (*Wb* I.409. 203) is the reconstruction suggested by Edel (2008: 683). Sethe reconstructs the land sign (GG: N17) and the sandy hills sign (GG: N25) in the lacuna but is uncertain and includes a question mark .

²⁷⁹ *iw ir.n (=i) r ḥst nb (=i)* grammatically is not without complication. Here it has been translated as a *r sdm=f* construction with *-wi/me* added (indicated with [] in the translation above) as the object of *ḥst*. Strudwick (2005: 334) translates this as "I did what pleased my Lord" but this does not account for the preposition *r*, furthermore, *ḥsi* – 'to favour' is what the king usually does to the official, we would expect "I did what my Lord loves (*mrrt*)". Edel (2008: 685) translates "I acted so that my Lord praised me". Grammatically Edel's interpretation is a past *sdm.n=f* followed by a future *sdm=f* in a propositional clause, followed by the inclusion of the me (*-wi*). If we are dealing with a future *sdm=f*, then *ḥsi* would be written *ḥsy*. Doret (1986: 94,

Rulers, children and an overseer of excellent Nubian troops (*imy-r šnwt ikr*)²⁸⁰ and I brought back a large number to the Residence as living captives because I was at the front of the numerous and powerful army as one who was strong-hearted.

Now the Majesty of my Lord sent me to settle (*štp*) these foreign lands.²⁸¹ I acted until my Lord favoured me more excellently, more than anything. I brought the two rulers of these foreign lands to the Residence with gifts of cattle, goats and living ones with them, who were beneficial to the Residence, as well as the ruler's children and the two overseers of Nubian troops who were with them (*Urk I, 133, 9 - 134, 10*).²⁸²

Pepynakht mentions children twice in his account, which is significant when compared to the New Kingdom material above. Pepynakht suggests that his first mission was to quash a rebellion and do away with the opposition, including their offspring. His next mission is more diplomatic, he settles (*štp*) relations in Nubia, which included placing loyal Nubians in positions of power as rulers and escorting them and their children to the Residence for a diplomatic visit. Although educating the Nubian children at the Residence is not specifically mentioned by Pepynakht, they are a part of the gifts that are brought from Nubia rather than the text stating the two rulers and their children. Overall, the implication is the previous ruler were killed for disloyalty, this subjugation also included the destruction of their heirs. The new rulers travelled with Pepynakht to see the King, bringing offerings to no doubt show loyalty and cement peaceful relations. The children of these rulers were a part of the gifts and were potentially a part of the strategy to educate foreign children at Court to ensure loyalty.

comment 1170) reads “ I did what my Lord would praise” and treats *hst nb(=i)* as a prospective relative form but again the *r* is not accounted for (See Allen, 2000: 24.2 for the prospective relative form).

²⁸⁰ For the title *imy-r šnwt*, see Jones, vol 1, no 914: page 252.

²⁸¹ See chapter 4.1 for a discussion concerning *štp* in the context of expeditions in foreign lands.

²⁸² Edel, 2008: 685-689 and Strudwick, 2005: 333-335.

This strategy was favoured in ancient Rome where children were taken as essentially hostages or *obses* – the word employed to describe a hostage provided voluntarily and not through violent means (Thijs, 2016: 199-200).²⁸³ For example, Tacitus (56-120 AD), describes the policy of his father-in-law and governor of Britain under Domitian;

“Then he began to give the sons of the chieftains a liberal education and was to express a natural talent of the Britons against the Gauls, with the result that as a nation who had lately rejected the Roman language were now eager to learn eloquence. Next, even our manner of dress became a distinction, and the toga frequently to be seen, gradually they turned aside to things, which make vice seductive, porticos and baths. This was called by them the simple refinement when it was merely a part of their slavery” (Tacitus 20.2 -21.1).

A description by Plutarch describes the strategy used by Sertorius (123-72 BCE) on his campaign in Iberia (North - Eastern Spain) and the negative consequences, which could befall a hostage;

“But most of all were captivated by what he (Sertorius) did with their boys. Those of highest birth, namely, he collected together from various peoples, at Osca, and set them teachers of Greek and Roman learning, thus in reality he made hostages of them, while ostensibly he was educating them, with the assurance that when they became men, he would give them a share in administration and authority. So, the fathers were wonderfully pleased to see their sons in purple, bordered togas. Very decorously going to school and Sertorius paying their fees for them, holding frequent examinations, distributing prizes to the deserving, and presenting them with golden necklaces, which the Romans called ‘Bullia’” (Sertorius 14.2)

²⁸³For hostages in Rome see, Allen, 2006: 149: 177 and Walker, 2005: 28-79.

Then after a revolt against Sertorius by the Iberians;

“... Sertorius laid aside his former clemency and mildness and wrought an injustice against the sons of the Iberians who were being educated as Osca, killing some and selling others into slavery” (Sertorius 25.4).

Although the examples from the Old and New Kingdom in Egypt, and ancient Rome pertain to the children of foreigners, the same incentives for this practice can be applied to motives behind training children at the Residence in the Old Kingdom. The boys were sent to Court for an education and placed under the influence of the King. This created a disconnect between the child and his family and allowed a new set of values to be instilled that focused on a work ethic and principles that revolved around loyalty to the King. The Tacitus example above describes how foreign children training under the Romans became prestigious for the fathers of these children, even though these children were hostages. No doubt it was the same for the Old Kingdom officials in that it could be viewed as Royal favour to have a child selected for Court based training. The reality was the King has a stronghold over his officials via their children with the consequences of any misdemeanour against the King being held against the child and how they were treated at Court. Sertorius demonstrates a more severe attitude towards the children who were taken from their homeland and educated Roman style. When the father of these children rebel against the Romans, Sertorius, despite investing in these boys in terms of education and upbringing, kills and sells these children into slavery to punish the crimes of the fathers. The children of Old Kingdom officials were not described as hostages, however, the influence that the King had over the children of officials must have been a powerful incentive for officials to toe the line. Furthermore, the families of the children were no doubt aware of the King’s policy to indoctrinate their sons into children of court, however, the prestige of having a son trained at the Residence outweighed the separation from their child. There is no evidence that a King in ancient Egypt went as far as murdering the offspring of his officials, but any misdemeanour on the part of the father would

surely result in his son's removal from court, which no doubt would have a negative impact on the family's reputation among their contemporaries, leaving them disgraced within society.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁴ See chapter 4.3 for the King's right to remove office.

2.5 Were all children of officials educated at the Residence?

There are some officials of the Old Kingdom that make no reference to time spent at the Residence during their childhood nor are there titles such as *sdt nsw* – foster child of the King or *sbꜣt nsw* – pupil of the King included in their tomb inscriptions. This suggests that not all officials were required to partake in a Court based education. An argument can be made that the exclusion of Residential training in a biography was due to stylistic preferences of the tomb owner. It was prestigious to record promotions as a show of Royal favour, rather than how the officials trained for these offices. Yet, given that Royal favour and close connection to the King was paramount for any official to express in their tomb inscriptions, one would expect some reference to time spent near the King and Court, even if it is only the inclusion of a title pertaining to Residential training such as *sdt nsw*. Consequently, the absence of any reference to training at Court can be viewed as an indication that it was not a prerequisite for every official.

A good case study for this is the officials at Aswan who make no reference to a childhood at the Residence, or have titles related to a Court education such as *sbꜣ-nsw* or *sdt-nsw*.²⁸⁵ One would expect if these officials were trained at the Residence, then it would be highlighted in their biographies or title strings in some form. Officials based in the North could demonstrate their Royal favour via their tombs built in the Royal cemeteries.²⁸⁶ In contrast, the officials who were buried in their nomes had to be inventive when expressing Royal favour. Harkhuf includes a full letter written to him from Pepy II.²⁸⁷ Sabni describes retrieving goods from Nubia that his father had collected before his death, and delivering them to the Residence, which in turn, sees him

²⁸⁵ See Martinet, 2019: 210-212 for a discussion regarding the titles held by the Aswan officials. For a quick reference to the titles of the Aswan officials, see Vischak, 2015: 239-286. For a translation of the Aswan biographies, see Strudwick, 2005: 327-340.

²⁸⁶ For tombs as Royal favour, see Allen, 2006: 13-15, Baines & Lacovara, 2002: 5-36, Chauvet, 2007: 313- 321, Eyre, 1999: 38-40, and Frood, 2010: 477.

²⁸⁷ *Urk I*, 128 – 131, 7 and Wente, 1990: 20-21.

rewarded by the King with commodities for his father's funeral.²⁸⁸ Therefore, it stands to reason that any title or experience that connected an official to Residence would be included in the tomb inscriptions. The answer to the lack of attestations with regards to a Court-based education, may lie in the geographical nature of Aswan, which had an impact on the type of titles and the duties of the officials that were situated there. The uniqueness of Aswan was based on two factors, Aswan bordered Nubia and was the seat of expeditions into Nubia and it has a distinct lack of agricultural land.²⁸⁹ There is no evidence of a great chief of the nome / *hry-tp ʿz n spꜣt* being based at Aswan and the biographies lack the motif of the responsibilities to control order amongst the people and the overseeing of economic activity within Aswan in comparison to the duties of Qar at Edfu and Weni at Abydos.²⁹⁰ The most frequently occurring titles that we see belonging to tomb owners are a reflection of the distinctive circumstances and duties of the Aswan officials. The main titles are;

imy-r iʿꜣw – overseer of foreigners²⁹¹

imy-r hꜣswt – overseer of foreign lands²⁹²

²⁸⁸ *Urk I*, 137, 7 - 138: 9. See chapter 4 for discussions on Sabni burying his father.

²⁸⁹ See Vischak: 2015: 19- 37 who discusses how the nature of Aswan in terms of the lack of agricultural land and it being a border town to Nubia shaped the community, and how this impacted on the titles of the officials situated there.

²⁹⁰ See Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: Band 1-4 for a full survey of the Aswan tombs. See Vischak, 2015: 239-286 for a full list of the titles and inscriptions of the Aswan officials, Strudwick, 2005: 327 -340 for a translation of the tomb biographies, and *Urk I*, 120 -140, 11 for the hieroglyphic transcription of the more intact biographies of the officials at Aswan. See chapter 2.3 for a discussion regarding the administrative duties of Qar and Weni.

It should be noted that the inscription of Sabni II (Vischak 2015: 268-286), and a large pot from the tomb of Setka (tomb 98), dating to the end of the 6th dynasty, both feature the title *hry tp ʿz nsw* – great chief of the King. It has been debated that Sabni II and Setka were not true great chiefs, rather the title reflects Aswan's connection to the Residence (see Brovarski, 2018: 467, Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: 1328-1329, Fischer, 1968: 69, comment 279, Jones, Vol 1, no 2390: page 654, Lashien, 2017: 132-133, and Vischak, 2015: 249-250.

²⁹¹ For *imy-r iʿꜣw*, see Jones, Vol 2, no 327: pages 73-74. For discussion, see Vischak, 2015: 25-26, and O'Connor, 1986: 44.

²⁹² For *imy-r hꜣswt*, see Jones, Vol 1, no 694: page 184.

htmty-ntr – expedition leader ²⁹³

inn hrt h3swt nb=f – He who brings back the produce of the foreign lands to his Lord ²⁹⁴

dd nrw m hr h3swt – He who places the fear of Horus in the foreign lands ²⁹⁵

These titles correspond to the themes found in the biographical material. The three most intact biographies of Harkhuf, Sabni, and Pepynakht- Hekaib include themes regarding trade, bringing back goods from Nubia to the Residence, and military expeditions in foreign lands.²⁹⁶

There are references to appointments at and near the Residence, which suggest some of the officials began their career at Court, which in turn may indicate a Court education.²⁹⁷ The following officials have titles connected to the pyramid complexes of various Old Kingdom Kings –

Table 3: Titles of the Aswan officials connected to Memphis.

Name	Title
Khwin-Khnum	<i>shd hm(w) ntr mn-nh nfr-k3-r</i> – inspector of priests of the pyramid of Neferkare.
Khunes	<i>shd hm(w)- k3 [...fw]</i> - inspector of the ka priests of the pyramid of [name lost].
Pepynakht-Hekaib	<i>imy-r mn-nfr</i> – overseer of the pyramid of Mennefer <i>hnty-s s3 n s3 mn-nh nfr k3 r</i> – <i>hnty-s</i> and scribe of the phyle of the pyramid of Neferkare. <i>nty m s3 h3i -nfr mr-m-r</i> - controller of the phyle of the pyramid of Merenre.
Pepynakht-Hekaib II	<i>shd hm(w)-ntr mn-nfr</i> – inspector of the priests of the pyramid of Mennefer.

²⁹³ For *htmty-ntr*, see Jones, Vol 2, no 2791: page 767. For a discussion of this title see Eichler, 1993: 234-237 and Quirke, 2004a: 76-77.

²⁹⁴ For *inn ht h3swt n nb=f*, see Jones, Vol 1, no 1116: page 306.

²⁹⁵ For *dd nrw m hr h3swt*, see Jones Vol 2, no 3739: page 1009.

²⁹⁶ Harkhuf (*Urk I*, 120 – 131, 7), Sabni (*Urk I*, 135, 9 – 140, 11), and Pepynakht-Hekaib (*Urk I*, 131, 9 - 135, 7). For the biographical translations, see Strudwick 2005: 328-339.

²⁹⁷ Chapter 2.3.

	<i>shꜣ hm(w)-ntr hꜣi-nfr mr-rn-rꜥ</i> – inspector of priests of the pyramid of Merenre.
Sabni	<i>shꜣ hm(w)-ntr hꜣi nfr mr-rn-rꜥ</i> – inspector of the priests of the pyramid of Merenre.

The titles listed above suggest that these men from Aswan spent time actively working near the Residence in their various roles, within the pyramid complexes in the North. However, there is uncertainty as to whether these offices were functional offices with real duties, or if they were sinecures, engineered as a manner to bestow Royal favour on these officials. For Instance, Sabni states in his biography that once he had returned from retrieving his father’s body from Nubia, along with the goods from his father’s expedition, and delivered them to the Residence, the King rewarded him.²⁹⁸ He states;

“30 aroura (*stꜣt*) in the northern and southern land were given to me as a *hnty-š* of the pyramid of Neferkare” (*Urk I*, 140, 9 - 10).²⁹⁹

Sabni was given land for his services to the King under the guise of an office holding connected to a pyramid of a Neferkare. As an expedition leader based at Aswan, it appears unlikely that he was able to perform his duties in Nubia and in Neferkare’s pyramid complex on a regular basis.³⁰⁰ These titles were mutually beneficial to the King and the official who held them. The official could show a connection to the King via these titles and get the benefits, which came from holding this office. In

²⁹⁸ The introduction to chapter 4 discusses Sabni and his father.

²⁹⁹ For areas of land in ancient Egypt, see GG: 266.

³⁰⁰ Feinman & Moreno Garcia (2022: 50), Martinet (2019: 182), and Moreno Garcia, 2013c: 1045 suggest that holders of titles in the pyramid complexes of the Kings were able to perform the duties pertaining to these offices for a limited time when they were visiting the Residence.

turn, the King could reward these officials for services as an incentive to motivate loyalty in the provincial officials, plus the added benefit of the continuation of the Royal mortuary cult.³⁰¹

Khui does hold the title *imy-r hnw* – overseer of the Residence, suggesting that he spent some time at Court, but if he is including this title in his tomb then surely, he would include titles pertaining to a court-based education within his tomb inscriptions. Martinet (2019: 176-177) suggests that he was a dispatch manager and given charge of expeditions and was given the title overseer of the Residence on returning to Court. Sabni, Sabni II, and Harkhuf all carry the title *imy-r smz* – overseer of the South.³⁰² Unlike Weni and Qar, they do not mention that the initial stage of their career was situated at Court or refer to an education at the Residence.³⁰³ Nor do the Aswan officials refer to administrative duties in their nome, with expeditions being the main narrative in their biographies. The Residence is referenced but this in the context of delivering the items collected on expeditions to the Court. Qar and Weni in their roles as overseers of the South stress the administrative duties. Qar controls (*hrp*) matters for the Residence, and Weni reckons (*ipt*) everything that needed reckoning in Upper Egypt.³⁰⁴ The lack of agricultural areas at Aswan coupled with no inference to the administrative organisation of the nome or indeed the South, suggests that these titles were honorific, bestowed in receipt for guarding the boundary between Egypt and Nubia

The Aswan officials do employ either titles or include Royal favour as a part of their biographical narrative to bridge the gap to their distance from the Residence. Based on this, we would expect that any time spent at the Residence would be included in the tomb inscriptions. This adds weight to the argument that not all provincial officials were required to send their children to

³⁰¹ For discussions on the granting of land and wealth by the king in the context of Royal favour and private wealth, see Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022: 22, 38-39 & 53-62 and Moreno Garcia 2016: 491-512.

³⁰² For a list of the titles that appear in the tomb of Sabni I, see Vischak, 2015: 239-248, for Sabni II, Vischak, 2015: 278-286, and for Harkhuf, Vischak, 2015: 259-265.

³⁰³ See chapter 2.3.

³⁰⁴ For Qar *Urk I*, 245, 3 – 12 and Weni *Urk I*, 106, 7 - 8.

the Residence for training. The evidence from the officials who refer to a Court education from the Old Kingdom are viziers and great chiefs who are in high positions of authority and in charge of administration, people, and economic affairs. Baines (1983: 584) suggests that there were several levels of literacy possible in Ancient Egypt; ³⁰⁵

- Reading and narrow composition ability
- Reading and full ability to compose texts
- Carving signs with limited reading ability (relief sculptors)

A determining factor for a Court education was based on the type of office that the child would assume during adulthood, and the level of fluency needed in reading and the composition skills to efficiently carry out their office. The level of education acquired at the Residence was not deemed necessary for expedition leaders at Aswan, who did not have to deal with administering their province, rather they were focused on trade and military operations, rather than a high level scribal/administrative position.

The evidence suggests that the most formal education based at Court was not a prerequisite for every official experience. The higher level of literacy and learning imparted at the Residence was reserved for higher ranking officials who needed a higher standard of education, decorum, and etiquette. Baines (2009/2010: 134) uses the term sub elite to describe men in lower-level offices who were intermediates between men in higher ranking offices and the wider populace. The Aswan officials such as Sabni and Harkhuf were high-ranking within their nome, but in comparison to great chief and viziers, they were considered lower-level officials, and their standard of education was determined by this.

³⁰⁵ For full discussion on literacy in Ancient Egypt, see Baines, 1983: 572-599.

2.6 Organisation of the training regime at the Residence

The lexical study in chapter 2.2 presents two distinct aspects with regards to training at the Residence – the educational side *sb3* and the social side *sd*, which required officials to oversee both these areas of training. Mersuankh, from Giza, holds the title *imy-r n hnw* – overseer of the *id* of the Residence and the 5th Dynasty official from el Bersha, Iaib, holds the office of *hrp sdt.ty nsw* – controller of the foster children of the King.³⁰⁶ Ptahshepses makes references to separate groupings, in which he begins his Residential training as a *hrd* – child, then describes the next stage of his education occurring at the *id* - youth phase.³⁰⁷ The fact that Ptahshepses differentiates between the two phases of his education suggests that trainees were separated into groups according to their development with men like Mersuankh to supervise the youths in his role as overseer of the *id* of the Residence. Iaib's position as controller of the foster children of the King suggests he had a supervisory role over all the children based at the Residence and not specifically the *id* like Mersuankh. The titles and narrative from the Old Kingdom biographies gives the impression that Court education was an organisation in its own right, with officials attached to the various levels of training and groups.

As well as groupings according to development, there is evidence to suggest there were sub-branches of training regimes that targeted the specific areas of administration that the child was pre-determined to enter. Qar states he was taught with the children of other chiefs (*msw n hry-tp*), whereas Ptahshepses elaborates that he was brought up (*šd*) with the Royal children.³⁰⁸ The different experiences cited by Qar and Ptahshepses may reflect that various training regimes co-existed at the Residence. Children could be trained with their contemporaries like Qar or with the children of the King. Qar was grouped together with children in accordance with his father's

³⁰⁶ For Mersuankh, see Hassan, 1932: 110, plate LXVIII, Strudwick, 2005: 296-297, *Urk I*: 234, and chapter 1.9. For Iaib, see De Mayer, 2011: 59.

³⁰⁷ *Urk I*, 51, 12 - 17.

³⁰⁸ See chapter 1.1 and 2.1.

profession which was great chief of the nome – *ḥry-tp ʿz n spꜣt*. As we are dealing with a society where the acquisition of office was achieved through the filial bloodline, the professional pathway of the Residential trainee would be known prior to their education. The idea of different branches of training that were streamlined towards the role the child will eventually assume does make sense as different levels of competence would be required depending on their position.³⁰⁹ In addition, the *Teaching of Khety* refers to Khety's son being taught with the children of officials who are foremost of the Residence.³¹⁰ Like Qar, no mention is made of an upbringing with the Royal children which adds weight to the theory that separate educational groups existed within the Residence.

Another aspect to examine is where in the Royal Palace the training took place. Qar does not state the location for his training, only that he was sent to Pepy.³¹¹ Equally, the titles connected to a training regime at the Royal court – *sbꜣ nsw* and *sdꜣ nsw* are linked to the King, and not to any institutions within the Palace. Ptahshepses presents more information by stating he was *šd* – brought up at the King's Palace (*pr-ʿz*) in the Royal harem (*ḥpt-nsw*).³¹² The harem being the private quarters of the King, Royal women, and children.³¹³ However, there are references to an area in the Palace specifically for learning. The introduction to *The Teaching of Khety* states that Khety is placing his son in the writing school (*ʿt sbꜣ nt sšw*).³¹⁴ A similar example comes from the tomb façade of Khety II from the Siut. In his appeal to the living, Khety includes amongst the addressees -the one who entered into the chamber of teaching (*ʿk r ʿt sbꜣ*).³¹⁵ There is a term included in a title string

³⁰⁹ Chapter 2.5 discusses various levels of learning in accordance with the occupation of the boy.

³¹⁰ Helck, 1970: Ia-Ie and chapter 1.2.

³¹¹ *Urk I*, 245, 1.

³¹² *Urk I*, 51, 13 - 16.

³¹³ See Feucht, 1985: 38, Quirke, 1990: 39-40, and Quirke, 2004a: 26-30.

³¹⁴ Chapter 2.2.

³¹⁵ Griffith, 1889: Plate 14, Line 67. For *ʿk r ʿt sbꜣ*, see Frood, 2010: 428, Marshall, 2021: 90-91, and Williams, 1972: 215-216.

associated with the word *kꜣp* – nursery. The title *ihms n ꜥt kꜣp* appears in the Middle Kingdom and translates as attendant of the chamber of the kap.³¹⁶ The biography of Khety and the introduction to *The Teaching of Khety* infers to the idea that the writing chamber was the learning sector of Court, which was separate from the living quarters with the terms Royal harem (*ipt nsw*) or nursery (*kꜣp*) employed to describe the Residential aspect.

In addition to separate areas devoted to bringing up and training children, there are different titles connected to the Royal nursery which emerge during the Middle and New Kingdom. For example, Keki who appears in an accounts papyrus (Boulaq 18), dating to the 13th Dynasty, is an *imy –r ꜥhnwty n kꜣp* – overseer of the innermost of the kap.³¹⁷ Additionally, in a section of the accounts where the distribution of rations is recorded, Keki is associated with the Royal family and the people of the learning house (*pr mnꜥt*). Papyrus Boulaq 18 illustrates the two sectors of the Residence related to children, the living and educational quarters. Furthermore, Amenhotep son of Hapu states he is a *sdm mdwt n kꜣp šꜥtꜣ* – one who hears the words of the secret kap (*Urk IV, 1815, 5*). Amenhotep and Keki's titles suggest the two men had duties which included a level of confidentiality in the Royal nurse, due to the proximity to the King and his family. The different titles infer that training at the Residence was an organisation in its own right. An institution which had living and learning quarters, and different offices to administer its organisation and was allotted its own supplies.

³¹⁶ See Feucht, 1985: 38. For the holders of these titles see Lange & Schäfer, 1902: No 20391, Lange & Schäfer, 1908: No 20563 and 20598.

³¹⁷ For papyrus Boulaq 18, see Grajetzki, 2013: 237-238 & 243, Griffith, 1891: 102 – 116, Ilin- Tomich, 2021: 159-179, and Kóthay, 2013: 493.

2.7 Evidence for filial training and on the job training

Grajetzki (2012: 147) argues for the practice of filial training in ancient Egypt, whereby, a younger male is trained under the guidance of an older male relative. However, Grajetzki (2012: 147) is sceptical that a family-based training regime can be proven for the Old Kingdom by stating, “For the Old Kingdom it has been assumed that a famulus system was in operation. This means a father or family member tutoring a son or a student with the criteria needed to continue with the family profession. However, the Old Kingdom evidence for this system comes only from works of literature, ‘the teaching.’ More recent research has shown that these works date from the Middle Kingdom and therefore, evidence tells us more about the situation in the Middle Kingdom than the Old Kingdom.” According to Grajetzki, family-based training is difficult to establish in the Old Kingdom with the only sources coming from teachings that were based in the Old Kingdom but composed during the Middle Kingdom. Therefore, the teachings represent the norm for Middle Kingdom filial tuition rather than what occurred during the Old Kingdom. Marshall (2021: 103-104) agrees with Grajetzki, by stating “we have no information about family education since the only available sources are allusions drawn from sayings with propaganda value” (meaning wisdom literature) and “we know nothing in the way filial instruction was conducted”. This greatly devalues the Egyptian material as there is enough scope in the Old Kingdom biographies to determine some approaches to filial training.

There is present in several of the biographies, inferences to learning under the guidance of an older male within the family. Neferseshemre and Khentika whose tombs are both located at Saqqara, state in their biographies;

“I respected my father, I was kind to my mother, and I brought
up (*šd*) their children.”³¹⁸

³¹⁸ For Neferseshemre, see Kanawati, 1998: Plate 58, middle jamb of the false door, line 3, and for full translation of the false door, see pages 31-37, Lichtheim, 1973: 17, and Strudwick, 2005: 300-303. For

Additionally, after Henqu talks about his good reputation in his nome (Deir el Gebrawi), he states;

“As for the ones who will be too young (*nḥn.t(y)=f(y)*) amongst you concerning these words, ask (*nmꜥ*) your father, he is the one who will tell you” (*Urk I*, 78, 1 - 3).³¹⁹

Nekhabu from Giza also employs this theme in his biography, his text reads;

“You should say to your children (on) the day when I have passed (*s (w)ꜥ. n(-i)*) there, the words of the voice-offering for me” (*Urk I*, 218, 3 - 4).

Neferseshemre and Khentika both had a hand in rearing their siblings.³²⁰ *šd* is also used to describe Ptahshepses training at the Residence when he was both an *hrd* and an *id*.³²¹ Therefore, *šd* in a domestic context suggests a similar educational regime on a less formal level by an older male. The extracts of Khentika and Neferseshemre demonstrate that the task of instructing the younger members of the family did not fall solely onto the father. The evidence cited above infers that the guidance of younger siblings was also an expected responsibility for an older son. Henqu’s statement instructs anyone who cannot comprehend the words of his biography to go and ask their father to explain it.³²² This implies that it was a duty of the father to share his knowledge and explain the ways of the world to his children. Family based learning is made more explicit in the New Kingdom. Nefersekeru from Zawyet Sultan states in his biography;

Khentika, see James, 1953: Plate 6, Text D, line 6 and for full translation see pages 36-41 and Strudwick, 2005: 288-291.

³¹⁹ Davies, 1902 (vol 2), 30: plate 24-25, Kanawati 2005: 71-73, plate 66-67, Lichtheim, 1988: 23-24, Schenkel, 1965: 41-44, and Strudwick 2005: 367-368.

³²⁰ See Kloth, 2002: 75-76 for behaviour towards siblings.

³²¹ *Urk I*, 51, 12 - 17. See chapter 2.2 for a discussion concerning *šd*.

³²² It is worth noting that Henqu does not advise the children to ask their mother nor are the young ones referred to as being feminine as *nḥn* only has the masculine suffix pronoun *=f*.

“I was a silent one since leaving (*h3*)³²³ the womb, who also came as a good-natured (*k(zi nfr)*) child. [I spent my youth]³²⁴ of ten years, when I was a child before my father, and I was taught to write³²⁵” (Osing, 1992: plate 35, figure 3, line 6-7).³²⁶

Nefersekeru’s statement is clear, he spends 10 years under the tutelage of his father before he was appointed in his offices. Although, the examples recorded by Neferseshemre, Khentika, and Henqu are written with more ambiguity, we can surmise that the teaching regimes of young males also fell to the older males in the family during the Old Kingdom as well.

Harkhuf, from Aswan, alludes to a training regime under his father, he recalls during his first mission;

“His Majesty of Merenre, my Lord, sent me with my father, the sole Companion and lector priest Iry to Yam to open (*wb3*) the pathway to this foreign land. I did it in seven months...”

(*Urk* I, 124, 8 - 13).

On his second mission, he declares –

“His Majesty sent me a second time, alone (*w^c.kw*)”

(*Urk* I, 124, 17).³²⁷

Harkhuf spends seven months on an expedition with his father and then conducts the second mission alone, suggesting that the first trip abroad was under the guidance of his father.

³²³ Literally reads as, since descending from the womb.

³²⁴ *ir.n-i nhrw=i n* – reconstructed by Osing, 1992: 46.

³²⁵ ‘I was taught to write’ is written *sb3.n=i tw r sš* in the hieroglyphic text, however treating the *-tw* as a dependent pronoun makes no sense within the context of the text with the reading ‘I was taught you before my father’. Therefore, it has been treated as a passive past *sdm.n.tw=f* (see Osing, 1992: 49, comment K).

³²⁶ For full translation of Nefersekeru’s biography see Frood, 2007: 143-147. For translation, transliteration, and commentary, see Osing, 1992: 46-54.

³²⁷ Lichtheim, 1973: 23-27, Simpson, 2003: 402-407, Stauder-Porchet, 2020b: 197-222, Strudwick, 2005: 328-333, and Wente, 1990: 20-21.

There is a more detailed example of an apprenticeship under the guidance of a family member in the biography of Nekhabu from Giza, which dates to the Sixth Dynasty. He begins describing his career in the conventional manner to maintain the expected ideology of meritocracy. He states;

“His Majesty found me as a common builder (*m ḳd n ʿššt*).³²⁸

His Majesty appointed to me (the office of) inspector of builders (*šhd ḳd*) and controller of the phyle. His Majesty appointed to me (the office of) Royal builder (*mdḥ ḳd nsw*), first of the King (*ḥry-tp nsw*) and Royal builder (*mdḥ ḳd nsw*). [His Majesty appointed to me] (The office of) sole companion (*smr wʿt*) and Royal builder in the two houses (*mdḥ ḳd nsw n pr.wy*). His Majesty acted entirely because of the greatness of his Majesty’s praising me [more than anything]” (*Urk I*, 216, 1 - 5).³²⁹

Although this is within the realms of the meritocracy expressed in Weni, it does differ slightly. Weni’s tactic is to illustrate his Royal favour by showing he worked closely to the King, gaining a trustworthy and hardworking reputation, and as a result, climbed his way to the top of the career ladder.³³⁰ Contrastingly, the king’s role in Nekhabu is more like a talent scout. The King recognises

³²⁸ *m ḳd n ʿššt* – translates as a builder of many.

³²⁹ Strudwick, 2005: 265- 269 and Dunham, 1938: pp 1-8. The grammar in this passage is problematic as it begins with a straightforward nominal *sdm.n=f* sentence which emphasises the predicate *m ḳd n ʿššt* and a dependent pronoun as the object, with ‘his Majesty found me’ (*gm.n wi ḥm=f*). The subsequent lines follow the pattern of *nd.n ḥm=f* [title]. If we treat this as a *sdm.n=f* like the first sentence, then this would need the reconstruction of both the first-person dependent pronoun *-wi* and the preposition *m*, which would give us *nd.n (-wi) ḥm=f (m)* [title] – ‘His Majesty appointed me as [title]’. These constructions could also be treated as a series of sequential sentences employed to narratively run through Nekhabu’s various appointments. The construction would then be *nd n(=i) ḥm=f* [title] – ‘His Majesty appointed to me [title]’. The passage above is translated with the sequential constructions with ‘the office of’ placed in brackets to render a better English translation.

³³⁰ See introduction to chapter 2.

Nekhabu's unique skill and plucks him from the obscurity of being an average builder by promoting him.

Nekhabu's biography then takes a contradictory turn, displaying content that is quite unique compared to other 6th Dynasty self-presentations. He states;

I was a praised one of his brothers. Now when I was assistant to my brother the overseer of work (*imy-r k3t*), I used to write ((*w*)*n=i hr šs*) and I carried his palette (*wn=i hr s^c=f*). When inspector of builders (*šhd kd*) was appointed to him, I used to carry his measuring rod (*wn=i hr m3^c=f*). When overseer of builders (*imy-r kd*) was appointed to him, I was his companion (*wn=i m hmt=f*).³³¹ When Royal master builder (*mdh kd nsw*) was appointed to him, I used to rule the village for him (*wn(=i)hr hk3*) I did everything for him in it, efficiently. When sole companion (*smr w^ct*) was appointed to him and Royal master builder in the two houses (*mdh kd nsw n pr.wy*), I used to reckon all his property for him (*wn=i hr ip n=f i[š]wt=f nb*)³³² and things were greater in his house than the house of any noble. When overseer of works (*imy-r k3t*) was appointed to him, I repeated him ((*w*)*n=i hr whm=f*) in all affairs there, according to what he praises on account of it (*Urk I*, 216, 8 - 217, 2).

Nekhabu describes a training regime under the guidance of his older brother. In every instance that his brother was promoted, Nekhabu is tasked with another responsibility. He describes working directly with his brother, carrying work tools, and writing for him. By placing the titles belonging to

³³¹ For the discussion of *hmt* used in this context, see Sethe, 1916: 120.

³³² [] Sethe's reconstruction. This passage employs a series of adverbial or *hr* + infinitive sentences with *wn* which places the action of the verb or predicate in the past. Doret (1986: 112-113) describes these *wn=i hr sdm* constructions as a compound verb form employed to convey a past, habitual action.

Nekhabu and his brother side by side, we can observe that Nekhabu followed in his brother's footsteps -

<u>Nekhabu</u>	<u>Brother</u>
builder - <i>ꜥd</i>	inspector of builders - <i>šꜥd ꜥd</i>
inspector of builders - <i>šꜥd ꜥd</i>	overseer of builders – <i>imy-r ꜥd</i>
Royal master builder – <i>mdꜥ ꜥd nsw</i>	Royal master builder - <i>mdꜥ ꜥd nsw</i>
overseer of builders - <i>imy-r ꜥd</i>	sole companion – <i>smr wꜥt</i>
controller of the phyle – <i>hrꜥ sꜥ</i>	Royal builder in the two Royal houses –
sole companion - <i>smr wꜥt</i>	<i>mdꜥ ꜥd nsw n pr.wy</i>
Royal builder in the two Royal houses -	overseer of all the works of the king –
<i>mdꜥ ꜥd nsw n pr.wy</i>	<i>imy-r kꜣt nbt nt nsw</i>
overseer of all the works of the King-	
<i>imy-r kꜣt nbt nt nsw</i> ³³³	

Table 4: A comparison of Nekhabu and his brother's titles.

According to the section of Nekhabu's biography where he describes his role as Royal master builder, he is required to work in various areas in the North of Egypt.³³⁴ Presumably, Nekhabu's brother, working as Royal builder, would have been taken away from his household and village, meaning Nekhabu had the sole responsibility of taking care of his brother's affairs whilst he was away.³³⁵ Nekhabu was trained by his brother not only to function in office but also on a more domestic level in the running of his household and village.

³³³ This title is not included in the biography but is present on another fragmented block from Nekhabu's tomb (Dunham, 1938: 7).

³³⁴ *Urk I*, 215, 9 - 17 and 219: 9 – 221, 10.

³³⁵ See chapter 2.3 for a discussion on what Nekhabu's on the job training entailed.

2.8 The practice of *wḥm*: A method of on the job training

On working with his brother, Nekhabu states “I repeated him ((*w*)*n=i* ḥ*r* *wḥm=f*) in all his affairs there (his brother’s estate).”³³⁶ He then goes on to list his duties;

“(I) used to rule (*ḥkz*) the town (*nḥwt*) [for] him...”
(*Urk* I, 216, 13).

Indeed, I reck[oned] (*[i]p*) matters for him in his *pr-dt* estate for a time of more than 20 years. Never did I strike any man there, so it happened that he fell through my fingers. Never did I enslave any person there. As for any man there with whom I used to dispute (negotiate). I was the one who used to content (*shṭp*) them. Never did I sleep angry with any person. I was one who gave [clothes] to all the naked and bread to all the hungry (*Urk* I, 217, 1 - 9).³³⁷

According to Nekhabu’s biography, his role in the absence of his brother, was to maintain social and economic order, and the management of people in the town. This is reminiscent of the Hekanakht, a funerary priest of the Middle Kingdom who leaves his estate in the hands of his eldest son Merisu, and writes a letter home with directions regarding agricultural decisions, private matters of the household, and rationing.³³⁸ In the instance of Nekhabu, to *wḥm* is the transmission of skills and responsibility from the head of the household to the successor, whilst the eldest male is still alive. That is not to say that to *wḥm* was referring to a staff of old age, this may be an indication of a step in the process before that, in that the eldest male was still very much capable of office holding, it was just his job to ensure the next in line was fully prepared.³³⁹

³³⁶ *Urk* I, 217, 2.

³³⁷ Dunham, 1938: 1-8 and Strudwick, 2005: 265- 269.

³³⁸ Allen, 2002. *The Hekanakht Papyri*, Eyre, 1997: 381-383, Eyre, 1999: 46-47, Eyre 2005: 171-174, Moreno Garcia, 2016: 499-500, and Parkinson, 1991: 101-107.

³³⁹ See chapter 2.9 and the introduction to chapter 3 for a discussion regarding the staff of old age.

wḥm is also used in Coptos decree M and O, which are sister decrees addressed to a father and son Shemai and Idu, and are orders from the King to confirm the transmission of responsibilities from Shemai to his son Idu. The decrees read;

Coptos decree O – addressed to Idu

“Now the *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, overseer of the priests, the rulers of towns and those who are there are under your authority as the repeater of your father (*m wḥm it=k*)” (*Urk I*, 299, 8 - 9).³⁴⁰

Coptos decree M -addressed to Shemai

“My Majesty commanded that he should act as an official so that he makes a reputation in these districts according to what you command. He should act as your repeater (*ir=f m wḥm=k*)” (*Urk I*, 301, 3 - 5).³⁴¹

wḥm is typically employed as a title that bears the meaning herald or repeater of orders.³⁴²

An example from the Old Kingdom is demonstrated in a boat scene, on the north wall of the burial chamber belonging to Kaemankh at Giza (G4561).

³⁴⁰ Coptos decree O is addressed to Idu and is a shorter version of Coptos M, see Goedicke, 1967:178-182, Abb 19, Strudwick, 2005: 122, and *Urk I*, 299, 2 – 11.

³⁴¹ For Coptos M, see Goedicke, 1967: 184-189, Abb 20, Strudwick, 2005:121, *Urk I*, 300, 11 – 301, 11, and Wente, 1990: 21.

³⁴² For *wḥm* as a title see Doret (1986: 49) who translates *wḥm=k* as your agent, Jones, 1988: 75 and Jones, vol 1, no 1488: page 405 who translates the title *wḥm* as a transmitter of orders in both publications, Ward, 1982: No 741 who translates herald, and *Wb I*. 344. 7-13 with the definition transmitter of orders from the King, vizier or person of authority.

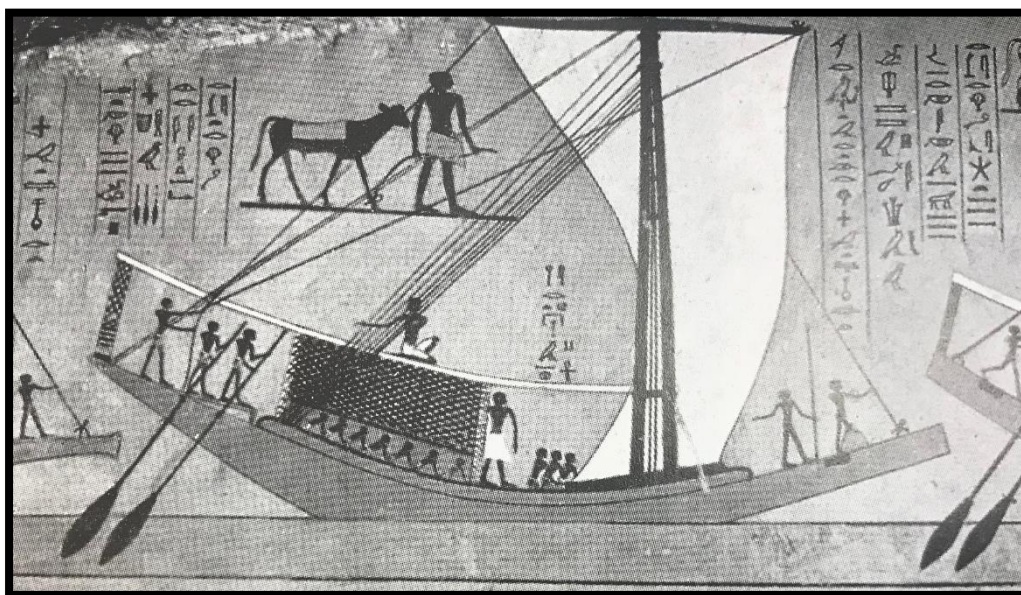


Figure 28: Boat scene from the north wall of the burial chamber in Kaemankh's tomb at Giza (Junker, 1940: plate 7).

The scene illustrates a procession of boats journeying to the West (see figure 28 above). The caption at the front of the boat reads;

Watch out (*rsi*) for the rope master of the water (*sb3-mw*).³⁴³
 Guide yourself (*m3^c r-k*). You are belonging to the river (*i(w)=k*
m n hnw).³⁴⁴ It is a good wind; it is behind the repeater (*i(w)=f*
h3 whm). The great canal of the West, steer (*ir hr*) West, the
 beautiful way (Junker, 1940: Plate 7).³⁴⁵

³⁴³ For the title *sb3 mw*, see *Wb* IV. 884. 3237 that suggests 'pilot'. Junker (1940: 57), Kanawati (2001: 41) translates as 'master of the water', and Seidlmayer & Ziermann (1992: 168) suggest 'steer man of the water'.

³⁴⁴ For *hnw*, see *Wb* III. 373. 408.

³⁴⁵ For translations of this scene, see Junker, 1940, 57, Kanawati, 2001: 41, and Strudwick, 2005: 417. For a comparable boat scene that also employs the title *whm*, see the tomb of Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum (Moussa and Altenmüller, 1977: 86, plate 10).

The man crouched on top of the cabin is the repeater (*wḥm*).³⁴⁶ He takes orders from the captain, who is situated at the front of the boat, and repeats them to the helmsmen, who do not have a view of the course due to their position at the stern of the boat.³⁴⁷ The function of the title *wḥm* in this boat scene is to convey the orders from the authority figure (the captain) to other members of the crew, meaning herald or transmitter of orders is apt.

In the case of Nekhabu and Idu, an essence of the function of the title *wḥm* relates to their position as a repeater. They take their orders from their father/brother and convey them to the people under their authority. However, their responsibilities as a *wḥm* have a much broader function than the transmission of orders, they are representatives for business on behalf of the male head of the family. The action of *wḥm*/ to repeat, when used in the context of the transfer of responsibilities, demonstrates that the succeeding male was expected to reiterate the practises of the current office holder in the family.

Repetition learning is seen in modern cultures. This type of learning is referred to as a “chore curriculum,” whereby, learning extends outside of a classroom and children observe the older members of the community to learn skills and ready them for the workplace (Lancy, 2008: 235). This chore curriculum is seen, for instance in tribes such as the Kuba of the Congo where the child is taken from the home and his female caretakers and taken to areas where the men work on craft production. The child observes blacksmiths, metal work and weaving. However, the child is not formally trained and is expected to learn by observation.³⁴⁸ The same mode of learning is employed

³⁴⁶ Jones, vol I, no 1488: page 405 translates *wḥm* as transmitter of orders but includes a question mark due to his uncertainty. Junker (1940: 57) translates ‘Befehlsübermitter’ – command transmitter. Kanawati (2001: 41) translates ‘captain’ and Strudwick (2005: 417) suggests ‘messenger’.

³⁴⁷ For a description of the boating scene (figure 28), see Junker, 1940: 54 & 61-63, Seidlmayer and Ziermann, 1992: 168, and Strudwick (2005:422). Kanawati argues that the man on the cabin is conveying the orders of the captain but translates *wḥm* as ‘captain’, and states *wḥm* is referring to the man holding the stick at the front of the boat, rather than the man on the cabin.

³⁴⁸ See Lancy, 2008: 241.

by the Tapirapé tribe in Brazil, again the boy is taken from the family dwelling to the Takana – place where men work, and is expected to learn craft production skills by watching the other men at work with no formal training involved.³⁴⁹ Lave & Wenger in their publication *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991) refer to this type of observation learning as legitimate peripheral participation, whereby a child observes, takes on small tasks with the aim to gradually build up the necessary skill set to fully participate in a trade. In other words, the child starts off as a back-ground figure in the workplace, starting with small tasks, and moving slowly towards full participation in his profession. Lave & Wenger (1991: 95) expand on another aspect of observation learning that ensured the boy was also taught the appropriate social behaviour pertaining to his community. The boy learns how to talk and behave appropriately, and what was respected and disliked by his peers.³⁵⁰ Greenfield & Lave (1982: 183) sum up the different facets to legitimate peripheral participation as ³⁵¹ -

- Embedded in everyday activities
- Learner is responsible for obtaining knowledge and skill
- Personal: relatives are appropriate teachers
- Little or no explicit pedagogy or curriculum
- Maintenance of continuity and tradition are valued
- Learning by observation and imitation
- Teaching by demonstration

³⁴⁹ See Lancy, 2008: 242.

³⁵⁰ For the socialisation of children in ancient Egypt see Eyre, 2011: 179-187, Feucht, 1995: 199-201 & 309-330, Frood, 2010: 481-486, and Hinson, 2018: 10-23.

³⁵¹ Greenfield & Lave refer to legitimate peripheral participation as informal education and discuss the differences between this and formal education (1982: 181-208).

- Motivated by social contribution of novices and their participation in the adult sphere

The strategy with regards to legitimate peripheral participation was twofold, to learn a trade, and the socialisation into the adult world.

There are further cases of observation learning or *whm* learning in ancient Egypt that is depicted in the Old Kingdom tombs of Pepyankh-Kem at Meir and Hetepherakhty at Saqqara. There is a kitchen scene in the tomb of Pepyankh-Kem, which shows a man roasting a duck, with a second man to the left who says to a young boy (see figure 29 below) –

“Get it done!³⁵² You are to summon (*nīs=k*) the young men (*nfrw*) to eat bread”
and the boy replies
“I will”



Figure 29: Roasting duck scene from the tomb of Pepyankh-Kem at Meir, from Blackman, 1953: plate 30.³⁵³

³⁵² *imi hpr* grammatically is the imperative followed by the subjunctive *sdm=f* but with the subject omitted, see Gunn, 1926: 126. *Wb* III. 264. 10 describes *imi hpr* as a call to education or training and suggests translating as Do it / finish it. See also *CDME*: 189.

³⁵³ See Blackman, 1953: page 38 for a description of the scene.

Hetepherakhty has three scenes that illustrate boys on the periphery of the working world (see figures 30, 31 & 32 below).

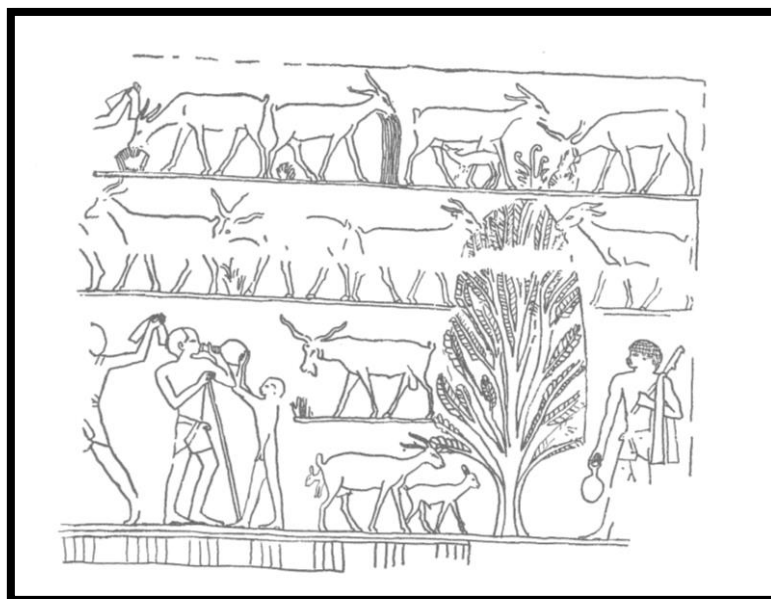


Figure 30: Goat herding scene from the tomb of Hetepherakhty (Mohr, 1943: fig 21).

Figure 30 illustrates three registers of a goat herding scene; the bottom left register shows a young boy helping an older man drink from a vessel.

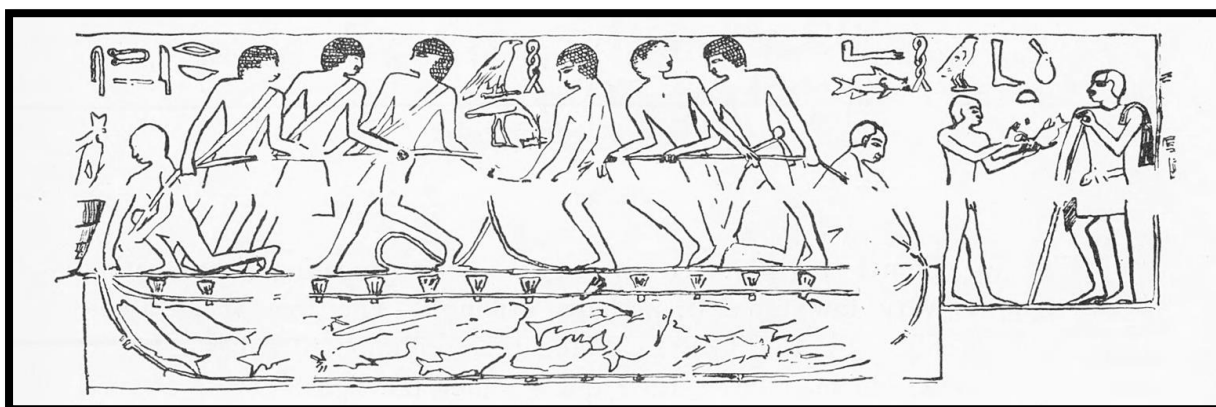


Figure 31: Fishing scene from the tomb of Hetepherakhty (Mohr, 1943: 29).

The fishing scene in figure 31 depicts a large group of males catching fish with a net, and to the right side of the scene is a young boy showing a fish to the overseer.

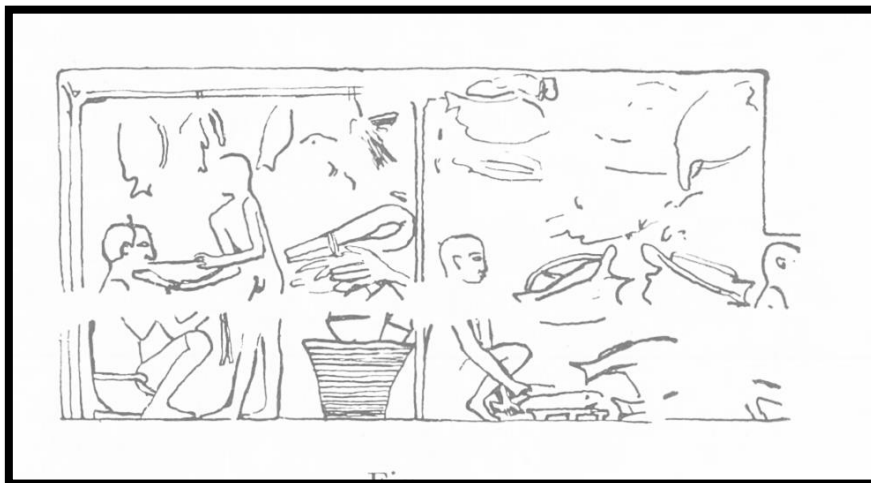


Figure 32: Fish preparation scene from the tomb of Hetepherakhty (Mohr, 1943: fig 30).

This third scene (figure 32) shows men preparing fish, to the left, a young boy offers a kneeling man a drink from a bowl.³⁵⁴

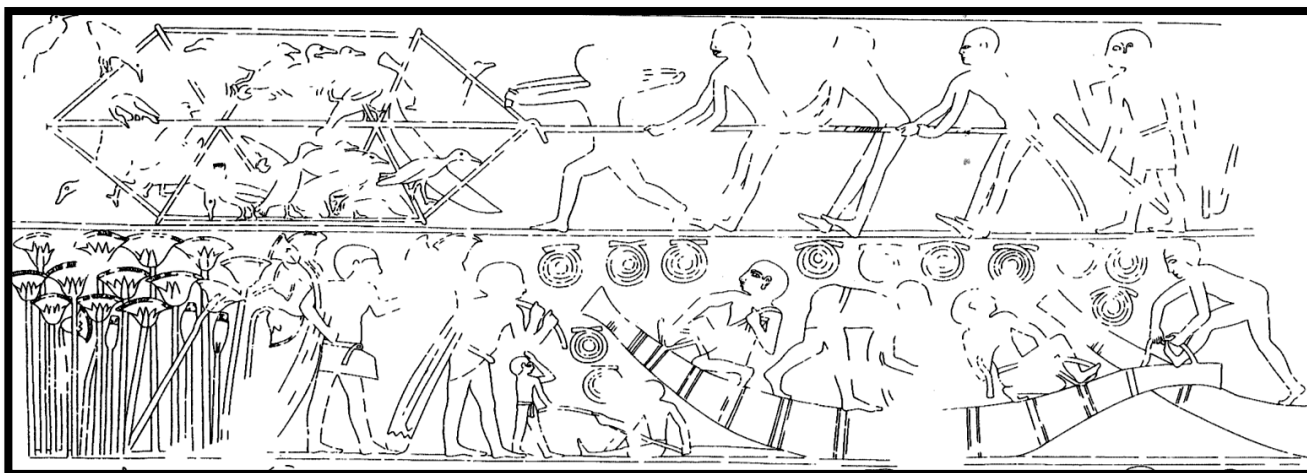


Figure 33: A rope making scene from the tomb of Inti, located at Deshasha. Two young boys sit at the water's edge and are charged with making coils of rope (Kanawati, 1993: Plate 33).

Figure 33 demonstrates another example of children learning on the job. On the bottom register and in the centre of the scene, we see two young boys, drawn on a much smaller scale, and holding papyrus stems ready for the older males to make rope.

³⁵⁴ For the descriptions of these scenes, see Mohr, 1943: 51 & 59 - 60.

Additionally, textual evidence from the New Kingdom firms up the principle of *wḥm* learning in ancient Egypt;

O. Dem 306

Regnal year 1, month 3 of Akhet: day of assigning the *ḥdd* with wood, vegetables, fish, and water (Černý, 1939: plate 19).³⁵⁵

O. Dem 412

Month 4 of Shemu, day 19: The bringing of the *ḥdd* in the charge of Ken, in order to have them feed the cattle (Černý, 1951: plate 18).³⁵⁶

O. Dem 306 and O. Dem 412 are textual counterparts to the tomb scenes above in that they describe the boys (*ḥdd*) being given small tasks in a working environment, such as collecting wood or feeding animals.³⁵⁷

The evidence presented above regards children from a craft production context learning through observation, the training of officials as part of a scribal education is effectively that of a craft education. There are examples from men who held office that support the undertaking of a chore curriculum/ legitimate peripheral participation in the Old Kingdom. Harkhuf from Aswan describes his various expeditions into Nubia in his biography. Harkhuf was sent with his father on his first mission to Nubia, spending seven months together on a joint expedition. Harkhuf makes a point of emphasising that his second mission was conducted alone with no mention of his father.³⁵⁸ We can consider Harkhuf's first mission as a training expedition under the guidance of his father Iry, likened

³⁵⁵ See Černý, 1939:17 for a description of O. Dem 306.

³⁵⁶ See Černý, 1951: 12 for a description of O. Dem 412.

³⁵⁷ Chapter 1.9 discusses the initiation process of the *ḥdd* into work.

³⁵⁸ *Urk I*, 124, 8 – 127, chapter 2.7, and 4.1 for translations of Harkhuf's biography pertaining to his expeditions. For discussions on the locations visited by Harkhuf on his expeditions, see Dixon, 1958: 40-55, Goedicke, 1981: 1-20, Kadish, 1966: 23-33, and O'Connor, 1986: 27-50.

to Nekhabu and his brother.³⁵⁹ The Middle Kingdom Stele of Sahathor (BM EA 5695) gives us an insight into the kind of tasks Harkhuf conducted under the guidance of his father. Sahathor was also charged with missions into Nubia and describes a career of retrieving produce from Nubia for the King. The introduction to his career reads;

“I carried out a mining expedition in my youth, where I
ordered chiefs to wash gold

(ir.n=i bīz m nhnt(=i) dzīr=i wrw r w^cbt nbt)”

(Landgráfová, 2011: 194).³⁶⁰

By the end of his biography, Sahathor refers to himself as a *hrp* – leader of the expedition. Breaking this information down, Sahathor was given small tasks during his youth, this enabled him to gain experience but also observe the logistics of running an expedition, something that he was in line to do later in life.

Nekhabu and Henqu are both mentored by their elder brothers. Nekhabu states;

“Now when I was assistant to my brother the overseer of work

(imy-r kzt), I used to write *((w)n=i hr šs)* and I carried his

palette *(wn=i hr s^c=f)*” (*Urk I*, 216, 9 - 10).

A scene in the Old Kingdom tomb of Kaemerhu from Saqqara depicts a child holding the palette of a scribe (see figure 34 below).

³⁵⁹ Chapter 2.7 for Nekhabu and his brother.

³⁶⁰ Landgráfová, 2011: 194-196 and Parkinson, 1991: 137-138.

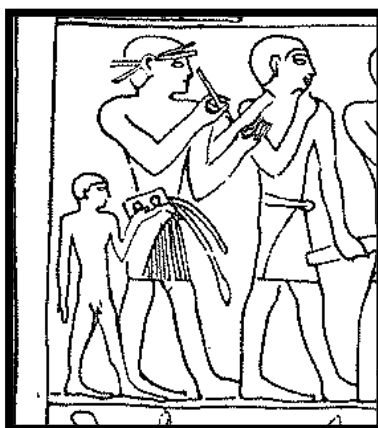


Figure 34: Scene from the tomb of Kaemerhu, located at Saqqara and dated to the 5th Dynasty
(Wreszinski, 1923: Plate 402).

The full image records a taxation scene, where men, most likely *ḥkꜣ*, are dragged before scribes due to a deficit in tax (see figure 35).³⁶¹



Figure 35: Taxation scene from the tomb Kaemerhu (Wreszinski, 1923: 403).

Nekhabu shadowing his brother and holding his palette exposed him to the business that he would one day assume from his brother.

Henqu makes a similar reference to filial training. His inscription reads;

“Indeed, I rose (*ḥꜥ*) as ruler (*ḥkꜣ*) in *dꜣwf* with my brother the
Imakhu, sole companion and lector priest, Hemre, the
imakhu” (*Urk I*, 78, 13 - 14).³⁶²

³⁶¹ See chapter 2.10 for a discussion concerning the role of *ḥkꜣ* and figure 37 for a scene from the tomb of Mereruka depicting a similar scene of taxation.

³⁶² Kanawati, 2005: 71-73 Lichtheim, 1988: 23-24, Schenkel, 1965: 41-44, and Strudwick 2005: 366-368.

From the evidence in their father's tomb (also called Henqu), we know Hemre was the eldest brother because he was drawn on a larger scale than Henqu (Kanawati, 2005: 22). This is another instance where the father is deceased, the eldest male has succeeded as heir, and is preparing the next in line. Although Henqu does not go into any sort of detail of his experience training under his older brother, it can be envisaged that it was a similar experience to Nekhabu.

*The teaching of Khet*y not only refers to training, but also the behavioural expectations of a pupil who was given tasks outside of the classroom. The relevant material reads;

“A day in school (*ʿt sbꜣ*) is beneficial to you”

(Helck, 1970: 122, XX11e).

“If a great one sends you on a mission, then say it just like he said it. Do not omit or expand on it (*m iꜥt m rdꜥt hr st*)³⁶³”

(Helck, 1970: 135, XXV11a-c).³⁶⁴

Khet)y will be in school or the chamber of learning and be sent on missions (*wꜣt*), in this case passing on messages from one official to the other. As well as a formal scribal education, there was an element of observational learning, akin to the boys from a craft production family. The sons of officials were given small tasks that would place them on the periphery of their profession meaning the boys would gain experience in both business and etiquette. A formal education and legitimate peripheral participation were not mutually exclusive. The integration into adult society was multifaceted in terms of learning a profession but also social skills and this is apparent in the lexicon connected to Residential training in that *sbꜣ* denotes the educational side of learning, and

³⁶³ *m iꜥt m rdꜥt hr st* – reads do not take and do not give.

³⁶⁴ Foster, 1999: 121-128, Lichtheim, 1973: 184-192, Parkinson, 1997: 273-283, Parkinson, 2002: 273-283 & 317-318, Quirke, 2004b: 121-126, and Simpson, 2003: 431-437.

šd to mark the acquisition of knowledge concerning the correct etiquette and behaviour according to their class.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ See chapter 2.2.

2.9 How involved was the King in the process of appointment?

The hereditary nature of appointment has been determined within this chapter, but this did not mean that the King was completely absent from the process of promotion. Regarding promotion in the Old Kingdom, Vernus states “Beyond the custom of hereditary transmission by the male primogeniture, appointment to office ultimately depended on Pharaoh’s will expressed through a Royal command” (2013: 318).³⁶⁶ The textual evidence from ancient Egypt does add weight to the fact that the approval of the Monarch was an element in the transmission of office. *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* infers promotion was a joint venture of filial connection and King’s approval. Ptahhotep is an aged vizier under the 5th dynasty king Isesi, and he wishes to teach his son the various aspects of officialdom in order that his son become the model Egyptian.³⁶⁷ The teaching begins with;

“Sovereign my Lord, agedness has come to pass (*hpr*), old age has descended...” (Žaba, 1956: 4.1).

“May the servant be appointed a staff of old age (*mdw-izw*) be appointed...” (Žaba, 1956: 5.2).

The Teaching of Ptahhotep illustrates that the successor has already been chosen – Ptahhotep’s son, meaning the King does not personally select the person for the role; this part of the process is hereditary. The King’s part is to consent to the transition/staff of old age to take place.

³⁶⁶ For discussions concerning the nature and issue of Royal decrees, see Eyre, 1999: 45-46, Eyre, 2013: 274-275, Hays, 2000: 63-77, Jasnow, 2003: 94-96 & 102-103, Moreno Garcia, 2013b: 107-109 & 126-127, Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 111-116, Vernus, 2013: 259: 340, and Warden, 2015: 479-488.

³⁶⁷ See Allen, 2015: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, Simpson, 2003: 129-148, and Žaba, 1956, *Les Maxims de Ptahhotep*. For other examples of teachings see Parkinson, 2002: 235-277. See the introduction of chapter 3 for the full translation of the introduction to *The Teaching of Ptahhotep*.

Hereditary and King sanctioned promotion is visible in the textual record during the 12th Dynasty. The Biography of Khnumhotep II from Beni Hassan provides us with a history of appointments within his family. For example, Khnumhotep II states regarding his promotion;

The Majesty of Horus, rej[oici]ng in [truth, the two ladies rejoicing in truth, the golden Horus, [true of voice, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebkaure,] the son of [Re, Amenemhat, given life, stability and dominion] like [Re] forever, appointed me as [*iry-p^ct, hzty-^c* and overseer] of the eastern desert (*imy-r smywt izbt*), stolist of Horus and Pakhet (*smz hr pzh^t*) as the inheritance (*iw^ct*) [of the father of my mother] in [Menet-Khufu] (Kanawati, 2014: Plate 110 : Lines 13-20).³⁶⁸

The biography of Khnumhotep presents to us three generations of men in one family, from the reigns of Amenemhat I to Senusret I, who served as overseer of the eastern desert.³⁶⁹ The titles are passed down the maternal family line, starting with Khnumhotep's grandfather, then his uncle, before culminating with Khnumhotep himself. The King is also included in the process as his role in this statement is bringing the inheritance into fruition. This is a comparable situation to *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* whereby the successors to office are passed through the male family line, but the King sanctions the transitions to go ahead.

Although both Khnumhotep and *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* date to the 12th Dynasty, there are decrees from the Old Kingdom biographies, which infer that appointment was a process of filial connection, but the King had to give his approval of the transition. Coptos decree M reads;

Horus Netcherbau: A Royal decree to the beloved one of the God, the *iry-p^ct*, overseer of the pyramid city, he of the curtain, judge, and vizier, the overseer of Upper Egypt,

³⁶⁸ See Kanawati, 2014: 31, Le Guilloux, 2005: 18 - 19, and Lloyd, 1992: 22, section 2a.

³⁶⁹ See section 2.3 for a discussion on family history and career.

overseer of priests and stolist of Min, Shemai. Your son, the *hꜣty-ꜥ*, and overseer of priests Idi, he is a *hꜣty-ꜥ*,³⁷⁰ seal bearer of the king, overseer of the South, and overseer of priests from Ta-Sety to the North of Bat and the *hꜣty-ꜥs*, seal bearers of the King, the sole companions, overseers of priests, chiefs, the rulers of the cities, and those who are there should act under his authority (*hr tp=f*). My Majesty commanded that he should act as an official,³⁷¹ so that he makes a reputation (*ir=f* *ꜣd m spꜣwt ptn*) in these districts according to what you command as your repeater (*ir=f m whm=k*). No man shall have a claim (*ꜥy*) against it.³⁷² My Majesty has caused that you know of these nomes [...] are their names – Ta sety, Wetjes-Hor, Nekhen, Thebes, Coptos, Iker, and Bat.³⁷³ He shall act with [you by working (as) one]. I had [the sole companion Intef son of Hemi come concerning it]. [Sealed at the side of the] King himself [on month 2 of peret, day 20] (*Urk I*, 300, 11 – 301, 11).³⁷⁴

Coptos Decree M is comparative with *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* in that Idi is passing on some of his responsibilities to his son Shemai, and the King is sanctioning this transition to go ahead. Coptos

³⁷⁰ *iw=f m hꜣty-ꜥ* - he is a *hꜣty-ꜥ*.... The *iw=f* is written out as *i(w)f* in the decree with the flesh determinative (GG: F51) which translates as meat. As this appears to be an adverbial sentence, *iw=f* is what we should expect and is reconstructed here. Additionally, this writing for *iw=f* is not an isolated case; there are other instances of this (see Goedicke, 1967: 185).

³⁷¹ *iw wd.n hm(=i) srr=f* - *sr* is used as a verb here to denote the action of acting like an official. *HwB* (no 28910: page 786) treats it as a third weak verb – *sri*, therefore, as it geminates in this text, we are dealing with a nominal *sdm=f* which is the object of *wd.n hm(=i)*.

³⁷² *ꜥy* – ‘to claim’ (*HwB*, no 4579: page 135).

³⁷³ wetjes-hor – *HwB*, no 41321: page 1134, Nekhen – *HwB*, no 41864: page 1108, Thebes – *HwB*, no 41222: page 1129, Gbtyw/Coptos *HwB*, no 42760: page 1199, and Iker – *HwB*, no 41019: page 1120.

³⁷⁴ [] Sethe’s reconstructions. For Coptos M, see Goedicke, 1967: 184-189, Abb 20, Strudwick, 2005:121, and Wente, 1990: 21. See also Coptos decree O which is addressed to Idu and is a shorter version of Coptos M, see, Goedicke, 1967:178-182, Abb 19, Strudwick, 2005: 122, and *Urk I*, 299, 2 – 11.

decree Q is also connected to the Shemai family in that it is aimed at the promotion of a younger brother of Idi. The decree reads;

[Horus Netcherbau]³⁷⁵

[A Royal decree to] [...]

[you are] [...] Sole companion, and celebrant (*iszhbw*)³⁷⁶ in the temple [Min of Coptos] under the authority (*hr hr n*)³⁷⁷ of your brother, the *hsty-c*, the overseer of the South, and [over seer of priests] Idi. No man shall claim against it. [Just like what you were (*mi wnt=k*)]³⁷⁸ under the authority (*hr hr n*) of your father (*Urk I, 300, 1 - 6*).³⁷⁹

The brother, whose name is not preserved here, has been placed under the authority of his older brother Idu. Whether his titles are newly appointed, or if this decree is just marking the change of authority over the younger brother transitioning from Shemai to Idi, is not clear. What this decree does ascertain is that a new development in the family structure, in terms of career, warranted a decree from the King to recognise this development. Coupled with Coptos decree M, the father Shemai creates a staff of old age to incorporate Idi into his offices, and then the unknown younger brother is placed under the authority of his older brother with the title sole companion and some sort of function at the temple of Min with his title *iszbht*. The *wd-nsw* was a Royal authorisation to confirm that the King accepted the heir to continue in the office of his father.

³⁷⁵ The reconstructions in this translation have been taken from Sethe, *Urk I, 300, 1 – 6*.

³⁷⁶ Hayes (1946: 19, comment 2) suggests translating *iszhbw* as celebrant based on its similarity in spelling to *ihb* – dancers and *ihbw*- ritual dancing (for both definitions see CDME: 28), and so *iszhbw* most likely pertains to a ritualistic role in the temple of Min.

³⁷⁷ *hr hr n* – literally reads ‘under the face of’.

³⁷⁸ *mi wnt=k* – Sethe reconstructs this (*Urk I: 300: line 6*), Hayes (1946: 19, comment 3) suggests that the reconstruction could be *mi wnt=f* with the translation just like he was, meaning he has taken over the responsibilities of his brother. Strudwick, (2005: 123) does not follow Sethe and treats this section of text as lacuna.

³⁷⁹ Goedicke, 1967: 190-192, Abb 21, Hayes, 1946: 18-19, and Strudwick, 2005: 123.

The Coptos decrees are not the only instances where the King is recorded authorising titles and responsibilities to an individual. Djau from Deir el Gebrawi and Sabni from Aswan each recorded receiving a decree from the Residence that awarded each of their fathers titles posthumously. Djau specifically asks for a decree from the King, which demonstrates that decrees regarding office holding could be requested by officials, meaning there was a reason Djau felt the need to have his father's titles in writing from the King.³⁸⁰

Djau requests a decree which confirms the office of his father, stating;

“I have requested (*dbḥ.n=i*) [from his Majesty to confer (*nd*)] the office of *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* (*iꜣt nt ḥꜣty-ꜥ*) to this Djau (his father). His Majesty caused that decree be made for making him as *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* as an offering which the King gives (*ḥtp di nsw*)” (*Urk I*, 147, 13 - 16).

According to Sabni, the decree arrived with an official from the Residence with no mention of it being requested. Sabni's order of events in his biography sees that he automatically assumes his father's position by retrieving the goods from Nubia, previously collected by his father before he died. This occurs before the decree had been issued from the Residence. Sabni says;³⁸¹

“I descended into Wetjek of Wawa[t] and I [sent]³⁸² the Royal nobleman Iry together with two *mrt* people of my [*pr-*] *ḏt* estate as messengers? (*šwnrw*)³⁸³ carrying incense [...] one 3-

³⁸⁰ See chapter 4 for problematic succession.

³⁸¹ Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler (2008: plate 9 and 50-51) has been employed to translate the biography of Sabni as the restorations (indicated with []) are more comprehensive than *Urk I*, 135, 8 – 140, 11.

³⁸² Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: 50, line 27 restores *šbi* here, *Urk I*, 137, 8 restores *sk*.

³⁸³ *šwnrw* is an ambiguous title only attested in the biography of Sabni and refers to the task given to the Royal nobleman Iry and the two *mrt* people of Sabni's *pr-ḏt* estate. Jones (vol 2. no 3231: page 882) suggests the title 'herald/ forerunners. *Wb IV*. 70.1 only provides the entry 'title' with no suggestions to what it entailed. *šwnrw*. Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler (2008: page 51, line 28) transliterates *srw* and translates as 'messenger' and Strudwick (2005: 336) translates as 'advanced party'. In the next part of the narrative, Sabni buries his father at Aswan and Iry comes back from the Residence with a decree (Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008:

cubit long elephant tusk (*nhdt*) to let it be known that a 6/7-cubit lion skin (*imm*) was that which this father of mine had brought [with] all the produce (*inw*) [which he brought] from these foreign lands..." (Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, lines 26-33).³⁸⁴

"I went down to place this father of mine [in his tomb] in the district, and [th]is Iry came from the Residence having brought a decree (*wḏ*) to confer (*nd*) a *hꜣty-ꜥ*, seal bearer of the King, sole companion, and lector priest to this Mekhu (Sabni's father)"

(Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, lines 34-36).³⁸⁵

"...I buried this father of mine in his tomb of the necropolis. [Never] had [any] of his peers been buried [like him]. I [sailed] Northward to Memphis carrying the tribute (*inw*) of the foreign lands which this *hꜣty-ꜥ* brought, after I had collected all the tribute (*inw*) which this father of mine [Mekhu]³⁸⁶ had collected [with] that previous expedition of mine consisting of Nubians and my own troop" (Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, lines 50-55).³⁸⁷

The transfer of duties from father to son occurs, although the decree had not yet been issued from the King. Like Djau the decree affirms the offices of Sabni's father rather than himself, suggesting Sabni's succession is upheld by the King via the sanctioning of his father's titles. The issue raised

50, line 34-36 and *Urk I*, 137, 14 - 17. This infers that Iry and the *mrt* people took some of the produce accumulated by Sabni's father and whilst Sabni was burying his father, they went ahead to the Residence to deliver some of the goods to the King. Given the context, advanced party or messengers are apt translations.

³⁸⁴ *Urk I*, 137, 7 - 13.

³⁸⁵ *Urk I*, 137, 14 - 138, 1.

³⁸⁶ *Urk I* 139, 6 does not include Mekhu in the restoration.

³⁸⁷ *Urk I*, 139, 1 - 7. For the translation of the biography of Sabni, see Edel, Seyfried, & Vieler, 2008: 51-52, and Strudwick, 2005: 335-338.

from Sabni's example and indeed the other examples of Royal decrees written to confirm the transfer of office is how much authority did these decrees hold? In an ideology where the King was the ultimate authority, anything outside of his control would contradict this ideology, so a process which occurred naturally, such as hereditary succession, would need some inclusion of Royal influence to affirm the King's power. The Royal decrees readdress the balance between family succession and the King's involvement in this process. The King did not control who the successor was, but he could maintain some influence with the issuing of a decree to confirm that he approved of the transfer of office. In Sabni's case, the succession happened before the decree had even been issued, suggesting the transfer of office happened regardless of the Royal missive and the decree was a formality. Whether the lack of a decree had any impact on a succession is hard to determine. We are hardly likely to see an ancient Egyptian record that he lost out on the office of his father because the King did not approve of the succession.

2.10 Keeping it in the family versus social mobility

Titles and appointments can be considered as a family business, whereby, the transmission of the functional skills that enabled a man to conduct the role efficiently were restricted to family members. The King did have some sway on the transmission of office, in terms of allowing the succession to take place, but the consequence of filial training meant that the mobility of promotions was restricted within one family. The 12th Dynasty stele of Irtisen (Louvre C14) encapsulates this strategy, in that, when he is describing his knowledge of male and female proportions and his ability to carve and incise, he finishes with the statement;

“There is no one who has come along to possess it belonging
to any place, except for me alone together with my eldest son,
of my body” (Landgráfová, 2011:80, line 13).³⁸⁸

Irtisen is a clear example of the oldest son under the tutelage of his father and learning craft techniques that are a household secret. A family held in high esteem for their unique talent, coupled with limiting the training to family members only, meant promotions were extremely restrictive.

There is evidence from quarrying inscriptions from Wadi Hammamat, dating to the Old Kingdom, which highlight family occupations. According to Sweeney “These inscriptions were probably initiated to highlight family connections that these individuals valued, which had mostly been omitted from the expedition inscriptions” (2014: 282). This is something that the Old Kingdom biographies lack, family connections are disregarded in favour of meritocracy.³⁸⁹ The three inscriptions below not only illustrate the titles of the father and his successor, but also the career pathways of the other sons belonging to the household. The inscriptions read;

³⁸⁸ Landgráfová, 2011: 80-82.

³⁸⁹ For the theme of meritocracy backgrounding family connections see Chapter 2 introduction.

Inscription 34

The overseer of craftsmen (*imy-r hmt*) Idu (the father).
 His son, the overseer of craftsmen of the Palace (*imy-r hmt pr-^ε3*), Idu. His son the assistant craftsman of the Palace (*m-ht hmt pr-^ε3*), the Royal noble, Khuenhor Meryre. His son the assistant craftsman of the Palace (*m-ht hmt pr-^ε3*) Sheshi (Couyat & Montet, 1912: Plate X).

Inscription 85

Assistant of craftsman (*m-ht hmt*) Ptahshepses (the father). His son the assistant craftsman of the Palace (*m-ht hmt pr-^ε3*), the Royal nobleman Qar. His son the assistant craftsman of the Palace (*m-ht hmt pr-^ε3*), Impy (Couyat & Montet, 1912: Plate XIX).

Inscription 101³⁹⁰

The overseer of the craftsmen of the Palace (*imy-r hmt pr-^ε3*, Wedja (the father). His son the assistant craftsman (*m-ht hmt*), Khuenptah. His son the assistant craftsman the Palace (*m-ht hmt pr-^ε3*) Sankhptah. His son the assistant of craftsman (*m-ht hmt*) Kauptah. His son the assistant of craftsman (*m-ht hmt*) Khuenptah (Couyat & Montet, 1912: Page 71).³⁹¹

In Inscription 34, Idu, who is the father of the family, holds the title of overseer of craftsmen, and his three sons are also craftsmen by trade, but at various levels. The son Idu is an overseer of craftsmen at the Palace, and his brothers Khuenhor and Sheshi are assistant craftsmen of the Palace. There is a clear distinction of career level here which suggests that appointments can branch out into what we would consider to be a family business. The father as head of the

³⁹⁰ There is no plate for this inscription and so the line drawing has been referenced.

³⁹¹ For the translations and discussion regarding these three inscriptions, see Sweeney, 2014: 275-292.

family has the highest title as overseer of the craftsman. Idu the son is also an overseer but of only one sector at the Palace, whereas his father's title suggests he oversees the craftsman across the board. The two younger sons appear to collaborate with their eldest brother Idu at the Palace under the title assistant craftsman. Inscription 85 sees the father Ptahshepses as an assistant craftsman and his two sons Qar and Impy as assistant craftsman of the Palace. Again, it may well be that Ptahshepses as the head of the family has the highest position as assistant Craftsman in general and his sons are assistant craftsman of only one specific sector i.e., the Palace. In inscription 101, the father of the family Wedja has the highest title as an overseer in the Palace whereas his four sons are assistant overseers, one in the Palace and two just general assistants. The reality of whether these sons were simply working as assistants to their father's practice, or they were an assistant as a formal, structural appointment is unclear.

In the Wadi Hammamat inscriptions, the father passed down his skills of the trade to all his sons who were then awarded titles according to their position in the family. It makes sense that if appointments were hereditary, then a family would strive to ensure that a title and function remained within their household, therefore, an appointment becomes like a family business, where all the males are prepared and ready to take on the responsibilities of the family titles. These inscriptions also illustrate what position a son takes when he is old enough to work but his father is still alive. Inscription 34, Idu the father is an overseer and his son, also called Idu, is the overseer of the Palace. Idu the younger is carrying out the same role as his father just on a smaller scale in one sector. We can presume that when the older Idu passed away, the younger Idu took on his role as overseer of the craftsman and one of his brothers moved up to the rank into Idu's previous office.

The passing on of the skills of the family business does not only include the work of manual craftsmen but also extends to the administrative career-based families. The family of Nekhabu and their appointments, when explored in a broader context, is a good example of a family who dominate certain areas of administration and titles. Nekhabu's filial relationship with the Senedjemib

Inti family has been established by Nekhabu having a tomb in the family complex of Senedjemib and sharing the same building works titles as the members of this family (Brovarski, 2000: 31-32). The genealogy of the Senedjemib Inti family and their associated titles are expressed below (see figure 36).

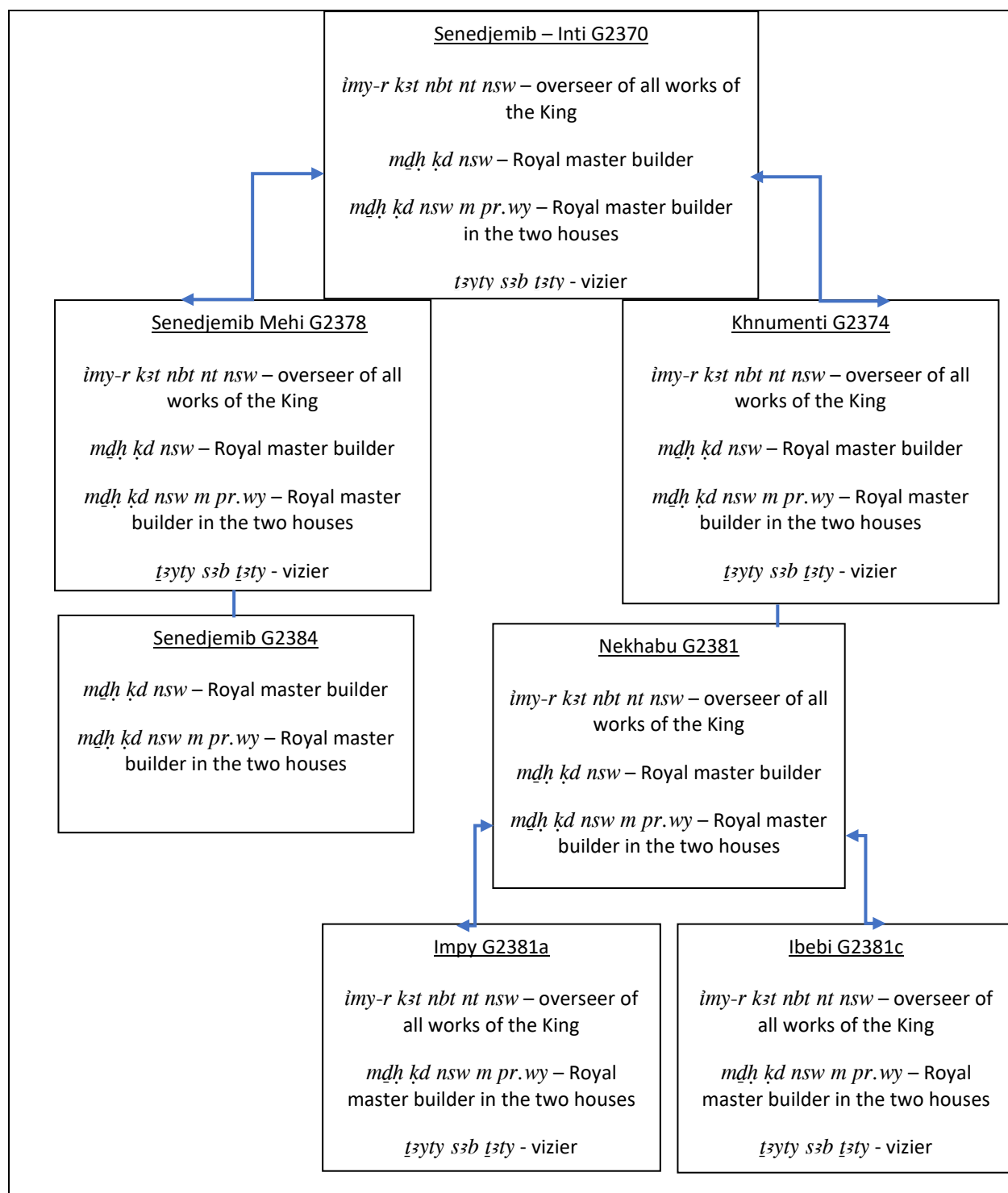


Figure 36: Four generations of the Senedjemib family with their highest titles.

The titles shared by this family spans four generations of Royal builders and viziers, with titles passed down from son to son, brother to brother.³⁹² Although Nekhabu does not hold the title of vizier, his two sons are viziers. The implicit is then, that either they inherited the office of vizier from their grandfather or that a person not from the family line came in between. As truly little survives of Nekhabu's tomb complex, it is possible that he achieved the status of vizier, and it was written in a section of his tomb that did not survive. Another scenario is that he simply passed away before the person holding the office of vizier, meaning the promotion bypassed him, but not his sons (Brovarski, 2000: 34). Given life expectancy in the ancient world was short by today's standards, the practicality of training all eligible males within the family within the same field of the highest achievable titles is clear. Treating titles and duties like a family business provided a safety net that ensured there would be at least one person primed and ready to take on a role should the natural successor die.

With the restrictive nature of training, it is questionable as to whether there was any scope for social mobility earned through patronage and reward alone.³⁹³ The point at issue is who the King selects when someone is ousted from office.³⁹⁴ The banishment from office did not just include the holder, but also his family, with the hereditary line of succession severed as further punishment. This multi-generational penalty is seen in the Coptos decree of Nebukheperre where the King threatens anyone who helps the criminal Tety with;

Have him removed from his office temple from son to son

(*sꜣ n sꜣ*), heir to heir (*iwꜥ n iwꜥ*).³⁹⁵

³⁹² See Duliková and Mařík (2017: 63-83) for a social network analysis study regarding nepotism in the Old Kingdom.

³⁹³ For social mobility, see Bárta, 2020: 1-20, Eyre, 1987: 38, Eyre, 2019: 15-16, Feucht, 1995: 73-78, Froot, 2010: 478-481, Kóthay, 2020: 269-292, and Martinet, 2020: 71-95.

³⁹⁴ See chapter 4.3 for removal of office.

³⁹⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of this text, see chapter 4.3. For a full translation and further discussions of the Coptos decree of Nebukheperre, see Goebis, 2003: 27-37, Morschauer, 1991, 172-176, Lorton, 1977:18-23, Uljas, 2013: 357-364, and Wentz, 1990: 25-26.

This brings to the fore from what circle would the King identify a replacement? Establishing an answer to this question is made more complex due to the evidence for social mobility in the Old Kingdom being extremely difficult to determine. The prominent theme of meritocracy would have us believe that the status of every high official was the product of social mobility. For example, Weni and Kagemni recount that they worked their way up the career ladder until they received the highest-ranking title of vizier.³⁹⁶ In reality, these men were always predetermined for the viziership through their paternal bloodline. Consequently, it would be difficult to differentiate if we are dealing with examples of actual social mobility, or the theme of meritocracy. There are examples of social mobility in New Kingdom biographies. In the tomb inscription of Ahmose son of Ibana, he recalls that his father was a soldier like him;

My father was a soldier (*wꜥw*) of the King of Upper and
Lower Egypt (*Urk IV, 2, 10*).

Ahmose came from a military background rather than that of high official, however during his service to the King, he amasses, wealth, people (servants) and land, which in turn elevated his status. Ahmose starts his biography with –

Ship commander (*ḥry-ḥnt*) Ahmose son of Ibana the justified,
he says “I speak to you, all people. I will have you know the
favours that happened to me, with me being rewarded
(*iwꜥ.kw*) with gold 7 times before the entire land, and with
male and female slaves likewise and I was endowed (*sꜣḥ.kw*)
with very many fields” (*Urk IV, 1, 1 - 2, 4*).³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ See the introduction to chapter 2 and chapter 3.

³⁹⁷ Lichtheim, 1976: 12-15.

The patronage from the King raised Ahmose from soldier to a person of substantial wealth and assets, to the point where Ahmose could construct his own tomb, a privilege usually reserved for high-ranking officials.³⁹⁸

The Middle Kingdom text *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* also refers to social mobility, as it includes a maxim with an instruction regarding how to treat a successful man, who has come from a humble background. The maxim reads;

If you are humble (*hs=k*), then follow a successful (*ikr*) man,

let all your conduct be good before the God.

When you have known a little man (*nds*) previously,

you should not be arrogant (*z-ib=k*) concerning him,

because you have learned thereof him before.

Respect him according to what has happened to him,

things do not come of their own accord (*n iy is ht ds*),

it is the law of the God for whomever they desire.

As for the wealth, he has collected (it) himself (*ir ttf iw s3k.n=f ds*)³⁹⁹,

³⁹⁸ See Alexanian, 2006: 1-8, Allen, 2006: 9-19, Baines & Lacovara, 2002: 5-36, Chauvet, 2007: 313-321, and Eyre, 1999: 38-40.

³⁹⁹ *ttf* translates as 'excess' or 'mounts' (*Wb* V. 411: 13-14), giving the notion of the accumulation of wealth. *s3k* usually holds the meaning to 'pull together' (*Wb* IV. 24.14) again within the context of this maxim, the successful man has started from humble origins and has amassed or pulled together wealth. Grammatically, this sentence - *ir ttf iw s3k.n=f ds* appears to be set up for emphasis. The *iw* before *s3k.n=f* complicates matters in that in exceptional cases in the Middle Kingdom, *iw* can mark circumstantial but this makes no sense here (see GG: 468 for the exceptional uses of *iw*). I am suggesting that the use of *iw* here is for emphasis to create a pause between 'As for the wealth' and 'he has collected it himself'. The *iw* creates a natural pause and if this was being read out, as intended, then the emphasis is placed on the fact the humble man has independently made his own wealth. Allen suggests *s3k* is a passive *sdw=f* with an omitted subject, with the translation it has come together for him itself (2015: 183).

it is the God who makes his success,
defending him while he sleeps (*hsf=f hr=f iw=f sdr. w*).⁴⁰⁰
(Žaba, 1956: 7.7-7.9).⁴⁰¹

There are two suggestions in this maxim, that it was both the Gods blessing and the humble man's arduous work that were responsible for his success. Ptahhotep advises that the man should not be treated in a derogatory manner due to his past, he should be respected because he has risen to a higher standard through his own devices.

There is material from the Old Kingdom to suggest that social mobility did occur due to patronage, but this happened on more of a local level of authority. The biography of Henqu from Deir el Gebrawi Henqu reads;

“...one who released your [free ones] (*nmhw*) of the
ro[pes] (*k[ʒs]*),
which you dragged on the canal. Look, you grew old in the
[hall] (*sh*) of the officials” (*Urk I*, 77, 1 - 3).

“I renewed (*grg.n-i*) the towns that were in decline (*bʒgbt*)⁴⁰²
in this nome, with people of other nomes. Those previously

⁴⁰⁰ For the idiom *hsf=f hr=f*, see *CDME*: 197. The phrase reads – he punishes on his behalf. Grammatically, *hsf=f* is a present circumstantial sentence, followed by a circumstantial stative - *iw=f sdr. w*.

⁴⁰¹ Allen, 2015: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, Simpson, 2003: 129- 148, and Žaba, 1956, *Les Maxims de Ptahhotep*.

⁴⁰² Lichtheim (1988:25) and Kanawati (2005:73) translate *bʒgb* as ‘enfeebled’. Fischer (1968: 148) translates *bʒgb* as ‘weary’, using the base meaning of *bʒg* (*CDME*: 79), and suggest the *b* at the end of the verb is a half reduplication. Reduplication denotes a continuous or repeated action and the reduplication of the first two consonants in bilateral/trilateral verbs occur to denote this (see *GG*: 274). The example from Henqu only half duplicates with only the first constant repeated. The translation says towns that were weary and so towns in decline is an apt translation.

Furthermore, there is an *r* written after *bʒgb*, Fischer suggests this may represent a *t* (1968: 148). There is similar example in this text, occurring in line 26a (*Urk I*, 79, 4) with the word *nīwt* spelt with the village with crossroads sign (*GG*: O48) and *r* is written after instead of the expected *t* sign. A *t* makes sense, as *bʒgb* is a

belonging to the *mrt* amongst them, their offices were made
(*ir*) as officials” (*Urk I*, 78, 4 - 7).⁴⁰³

Henqu claims to have promoted *mrt* people from manual labour to officials. The status of *mrt* people is unclear but the best interpretation is an English serf or dependant.⁴⁰⁴ The evidence regarding the *mrt* people suggests that they were a group of workers attached to an estate or a person, who could be employed for various tasks. In the Royal decrees of the Old Kingdom, the *mrt* were linked to the agricultural land and work, and had protected status, meaning they could not be removed from a temple or be diverted from their assigned work. The decree of Neferirkare from Abydos states that it is forbidden;

...to take away any *mrt* who are on any God’s field
(Goedicke, 1967: Abb 2, line 17).⁴⁰⁵

mrt were also attached to the estates of private individuals and deployed for building work or expeditions. The biography of Khentykauepy from the Dakhla Oasis describes the construction of his tomb, it reads;

“I made this tomb [...] in three months, setting up its walls in
[1 ?] month with the *mrt* of my *pr-dt* estate
(Osing, 1982: plate 60, line 3).⁴⁰⁶

participle and one would expect a feminine *t* ending in agreement with the antecedent – *niwwt* is feminine. Schenkel translates as ‘weary of mouth’ providing the meaning that the nome was lacking people to fill it with noise (1965: 43). However, the issue of the feminine *t* ending after the participle *bzgb* is unresolved with Schenkel’s suggestion and the text would still need emending.

⁴⁰³ For a translation see Kanawati, 2005: 71-73, Lichtheim, 1988: 23-24, Schenkel, 1965: 41-44, and Strudwick, 2005: 366-368. For discussion of this passage see Lashien, 2017: 120-121 and Papazian, 2012: 95.

⁴⁰⁴ For *mrt* people, see Allam, 2004: 123-155, Allam 2010b: 41-46 (the study of *mrt* in this paper is based mainly on New Kingdom examples and *mrt* in the context of weaving), Eyre, 1987: 35-36, Eyre, 1997: 379, Eyre, 1999: 40, Eyre, 2004: 179, Kóthay, 2013: 494-496, Moreno Garcia: 1998: 71-83, and Papazian, 2012: 87-96. Jones, vol 1, no 1656: pages 443-444 gives the entry ‘meret servants’ for this title.

⁴⁰⁵ For the translation of Neferirkare’s decree, see Goedicke, 1967: 22-36 and Strudwick, 2005: 99-101. For the other decrees that protect the *mrt* people see Goedicke, 1967: 55-147 and Strudwick, 2005: 103- 116.

⁴⁰⁶ For translation see Strudwick 2005: 375.

In Addition, Sabni recounts retrieving his father’s body from Nubia and sending a party to the Residence ahead of his expedition, he states;

“... and I [sent] (*sbi*).*kw*) the Royal nobleman Iry together with two *mrt* people of my *pr-dt* estate as messengers (*swnrw*)
“(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler 2008: plate 9: line 27-28).⁴⁰⁷

Henqu promoted the *mrt* from their dependent state and elevated them to *srw* – albeit a low-ranking status and authority on a local level.

The Old Kingdom was a period of rural development, which created new communities through colonisation.⁴⁰⁸ Eyre (2001: 161) states that variations in the patterns of the Nile height can change the landscape, meaning that any given areas could have cycles of depopulation and resettlement. Therefore, the weary towns mentioned in Henqu’s biography could refer to land affected by a low Nile and the inundation unable to reach the areas of cultivation.⁴⁰⁹ Henqu is stating that he reclaimed these lands at Deir el Gebrawi, and conscripted people from other nomes for his workforce.⁴¹⁰ This new workforce needed some form of authority figure, and this was the newly promoted *srw*.

⁴⁰⁷ Also see *Urk I*, 137, 8 – 9, and for translation Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: 51-52 and Strudwick, 2005: 336-338.

⁴⁰⁸ For new towns see Bussmann, 2020: 494-496. Eyre, 1999: 34, Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022: 10-12 & 19-21, Jasnow, 2003: 105, Martinet, 2011: 155-157, Moreno Garcia, 2013b: 126, and Papazian, 2012: 54-57.

⁴⁰⁹For a discussion of the ecology, agriculture, and land reclamation in ancient Egypt, see Bunbury & Rowe, 2021: *The Nile: Mobility and Management*, Butzer, 1976. *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt*, Eyre, 2001: 161-163, Feinman & Moreno Garcia, 2022: *Power and Regions in Ancient States*, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018:161-164, Lehner, 2000: 275-353, and Moreno Garcia, 2020b: 145-170.

⁴¹⁰ Conscription and the organisation of people is a task given to another provincial official Weni (see chapter 3.1.2). Weni is sent on a military campaign and brings together an army consisting of *hsty*-^c s, overseers of priests, seal bearers of the King, rulers of the estate, and men holding a variety of other titles (*Urk I*, 102, 1 - 8).

The title of *ḥkꜣ* is a viable candidate for the promotions that were bestowed on *mrt* workers. In the biography of Harkhuf, there is a letter from Pepy II, who is organising supplies for Harkhuf's expedition. The King states;

“A decree has been issued to the rulers (*ḥkꜣ*) of new towns (*nīwt mꜣꜥ*),⁴¹¹ the sole companions and overseers of priests, to order that supplies be taken from his charge, from every estate storehouse, from every temple estate, I did not make exemptions thereof” (*Urk I*, 131, 1 - 7).⁴¹²

The *nīwt mꜣꜥ* of new towns illustrate the expansion of lands in the Old Kingdom, and those who have authority in them, namely the *ḥkꜣ*. From the example in Harkhuf's letter, we can see that the *ḥkꜣ* functioned as intermediaries between the people of the town and the higher-level officials such as Henqu. The *ḥkꜣ* carried out the orders from Royal decrees and they were accountable for the completion of the commands.⁴¹³ Furthermore, to the benefit of the great chief, the *ḥkꜣ* were also the scapegoat for any punishment in their areas of authority with regards to any sort of deficit

⁴¹¹ For overseer of new towns see Jones, vol I: no 582: page 150 and for ruler of new towns see Jones, vol II: no 2445: page 668.

⁴¹² Strudwick, 2005: 331-333 and Wente, 1990: 20-21.

⁴¹³ For local authority and the nature of *ḥkꜣ*, see Campagno, 2016: 11-13, Eyre, 1987: 34-36, Eyre, 1997: 367-390, Eyre, 1999: 33-60, Eyre, 2000: 15-39, Eyre, 2001: 175, Eyre, 2015: 162-165 & 195-196, Jasnow, R. 2003: 93-140, Kóthay, 2013: 479-520, Moreno Garcia, 2005: 126-127, Moreno Garcia, 2013:85-151, Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 61-85 & 130-132, and Willems, 2013b: 341-392. Also see Frood, 2010: 474-475, Lehner, 2000: 286-295, Martinet, 2020: 72, and Olabarria, 2020: 154-158 for a discussion on household, town, and village structure. The Gebelein papyrus also provides an insight into the labour organisation at a provincial level. The papyri date to the 4th Dynasty and records the labour, occupations, and material resources belonging to two towns (*nīwt*) – *īnr.t īnpw* and *īꜣrw*. There are records of three *ḥkꜣ* belonging to the towns that were no doubt a part of resource management across the two towns. For the recordings of *ḥkꜣ*, who were called Nunetcher, Nedjemib, and Idi, see Posener- Kriéger, 2004: Geb I, rto A, 23, Geb I, rto A, 43, Geb I, rto A, 56, Geb I, rto B,12, Geb I, rto C, Geb I, rto D1, 1, Geb I, rto D1, 35, Geb II, rto 8, Geb IV, rto. 1, and Geb V, rto 90. See Posener- kriéger, 2004. *I Papiri di Gebelein* for publication of the Papyri and for discussion, see Moreno Garcia, 2013b: 98-99 and Papazian, 2021: 201-212.

of taxes or shortcomings (see figure 37 below).

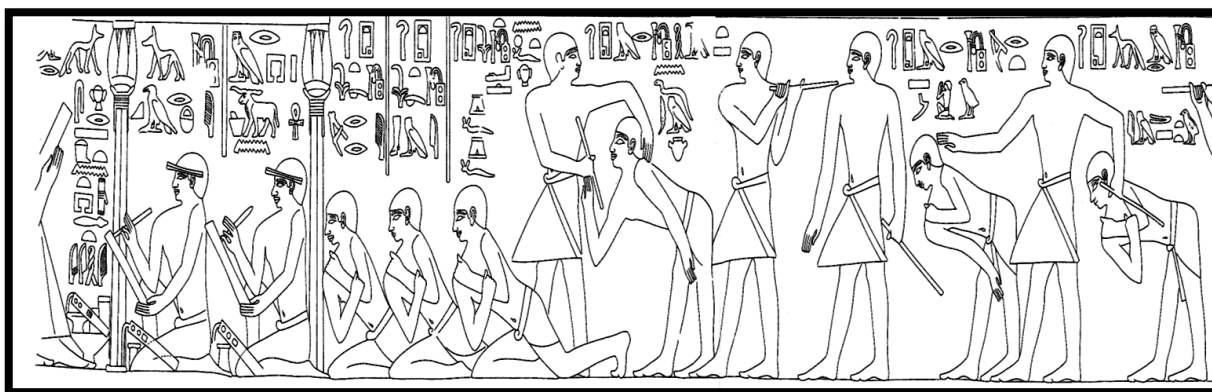


Figure 37: The *ḥkꜣ* receiving punishment for a short fall in tax collection in a columned hall before scribes, who are recording the event (Kanawati, 2010: Plate 74).⁴¹⁴

This scene from the tomb of Mereruka, at Saqqara, illustrates various *ḥkꜣ* of estates (*ḥwt*) being dragged through a columned hall by men holding sticks and being placed before scribes, who are recording the shortfall.

A comparison to the structure of social organisation of Egyptian villages during the 16th- 18th century AD facilitates an understanding of the workings of village life in ancient Egypt. The Sultan owned the land, which could be ‘bought’ by deputies called Multazims who were responsible for maintaining, irrigating, cultivating the land, and were representatives of the state (Cuno, 1992: 34). Although, the Multazims could purchase the land, they did not actually own it, as the land belonged to the Sultan, they owned the usufruct to land, meaning they could work and benefit from the land, but not actually possess it (Cuno, 1992: 34). As Multazims could purchase land anywhere, they could place Shaykhs as village headman to work on their behalf, and the Multazims had the prerogative to appoint the Shaykhs (Cuno, 1992: 35). This is comparable to the great chiefs like Henqu, who reclaimed new land in their nomes and appointed lower-level officials to maintain the organisation of these lands. Cuno refers to the Shaykhs as rural notables and states their role was to ensure social order, mediate between villagers and authorities, carrying out the assessment, and collection of

⁴¹⁴ This is a section of a larger scene, see Kanawati, 2010: plates 23-24 and 74.

taxes (1992: 85). Eyre (2000:25) infers that the *ḥkꜣ* of ancient Egypt are on the same standing as Cuno's rural notables and we can consider them as village headmen who do not belong to the official class and were the lowest level of authority.

By considering the ancient and pre- reform organisation of Egypt, the role of the great chief and Multazims are similar. Henqu has the authority to appoint people into a higher status than the labouring class, and into the role of *ḥkꜣ*. Although they were low ranking, and not really a part of officialdom, they were a local authority. These *ḥkꜣ* were intermediates between the town's people and the great chief, just as the great chief acted on behalf of the Residence, mediating between the King and the town. These circumstances mirror the situation with the Multazims, in that the Sultan is the ultimate owner of the land but the Multazims can appoint people to represent him in his territories, and delegate his duties to the Shaykh. From a practical point of view, it makes sense that the great chief appointed the *ḥkꜣ* for his nome, as local authority makes sense, when dealing with local business.

Henqu is the only example of an official of the Old Kingdom who explicitly states that he promoted people to a higher status. This demonstrates that social mobility occurred at least for lower ranking titles. With regards to the high positions of office, the reality of social mobility cannot be differentiated between the motifs of meritocracy. We do have a reference in *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* to a humble man becoming successful, so it may well be the case that it did occur, it was just not the subject of tomb inscriptions outside the usual displays of a self-made men.

2.11 Conclusion

The picture painted by the Old Kingdom tomb biographies, with regards to the appointment of office, is that it was a system of promotion based on Royal favour, self-application, and unique abilities which singled an official out for being the only man for the job. The notion of self-made men, social mobility, and advancing into higher titles from humble origins via the King is a motif engineered to express Royal favour. In reality, advancement in office depended on familial connection. That is not to say that the King was completely absent from the process of hereditary based office holding. The King had strategies in place to accrue some level of control over the hereditary factor involved in office succession. The establishment of a training regime at the Residence meant that the children of officials were no longer under the influence of their families and could be shaped into King's men. Additionally, officials with children at the Residence would have to be careful not to overstep any boundaries given that the King was in charge and had total control over their child's education and upbringing. The King authorised the succession of office from father to son by issuing decrees stating not who the successor would be, that was already established by lineage, but to confirm that the transmission of office could take place. How much weight these decrees held or if they were issued to every office transference is not certain, but this allowed the King to maintain the ideology that he was in control and to harness some authority within an area in which he does not entirely govern.

There was a degree of formal education whereby a child learned to read and write, but the curriculum also extended to learning the social skills and etiquette that was appropriate to class. On the job training was integral to a child's development whether their future lay in administration or trade. *whm* – to repeat involved a method of learning where a child was initially set small tasks within the arena of their chosen profession, slowly building up to larger tasks, until they were entirely proficient at their work.

Henqu had the authority to promote lower ranking men to *srw*. Henqu is the only instance whereby an official openly states he promoted men. This completely breaks with the ideology that

Egypt in the Old Kingdom was a meritocracy based on Royal favour. This also demonstrates that social mobility was possible for the lower echelons of the labouring class, even if the promotion was low ranking. Social mobility for high status officials in the Old Kingdom is difficult to ascertain. The theme of meritocracy suggests that every official achieved their career through diligence and arduous work before reaching the higher-ranking positions.

CHAPTER THREE

Early Appointments as Training Regimes for the ‘Family Profession.’

The teaching (sbꜣt) of the overseer of the city, the vizier, Ptahhotep before the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Isesi, living forever and to eternity. The overseer of the city, the vizier, Ptahhotep, he says: “Sovereign, my Lord, decrepitude (tni) has come to pass with old age (iꜣw) descending, feebleness has arrived with weakness renewing (ihw hr mꜣw)⁴¹⁵, sleep for him becomes childlike every day (sꜥr n=f hrd(.w) rꜥ nb)⁴¹⁶, and the eyes have become dim and the ears deaf, with strength perishing because of the weakness of the heart and the mouth has become silent for it cannot speak, with the mind ceasing up (tm(.w)) because it cannot remember yesterday, the bones having suffered because of old age. Goodness has turned into badness, for all taste has gone. What age does to people is evil in all regards (m hꜣ nbt), the nose is blocked, and it cannot breathe because of the difficulty of old age (n tnw ‘hꜥ hꜣmst)⁴¹⁷. May the servant be appointed a staff of old age” (Žaba: 4.1 -5.3).⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ *ihw hr mꜣw* is a circumstantial *hr* + infinitive.

⁴¹⁶ *sꜥr n=f hrd(.w) rꜥ nb* – Potentially *sꜥr.n=f* could be treated as a *sꜥm.n=f* but a standard past tense does not fit in with the flow of the narrative as it would read – ‘he has slept’ whereas Ptahhotep is talking about how old age is affecting him in the present. *sꜥr* here has been treated as a noun and the subject of *hrd(w)*, which is translated as a stative. *hrd* is written *hꜥr* in the text and is determined with the swallow sign (GG: G36). Due to the obscurity of the word *hꜥr*, Lichtheim suggests the reading *hrd* – ‘child’ or ‘become childlike’ (1973:76, comment 1) and Žaba (1956: 69) simply translates as ‘childlike’ but offers no commentary on the word.

⁴¹⁷ *tnw* – to be difficult, see *HWB*, no 37202: page 1005.

⁴¹⁸ Allen, 2015b: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, Simpson, 2003: 129- 148, and Žaba, 1956, *Les Maxims de Ptahhotep* for a translation.

The introduction to *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* not only sets the scene for this wisdom text but also highlights a social situation that must have occurred in ancient Egypt for this teaching to resonate with its intended audience. Ptahhotep is too old to maintain the requirements of the office, but as he is still alive, post-mortem succession was obviously not possible. A means to work around circumstances such as these was granting the son a special dispensation in the form of a staff of old age from the King, for the transmission of the viziership to take place ante mortem. However, this text does not include any details regarding what the son was doing in terms of career whilst waiting to succeed, especially since Ptahhotep reached a grand old age. Indeed, how the hereditary nature of succession impacted on the career progression of all the men who were pre-set to inherit the office of the eldest male within the family is an issue to be considered. The 6th Dynasty officials, Weni (Abydos) and Hesi (Saqqara), did not inherit the office of vizier until quite late into their careers to the extent that they both completed their tombs before holding this title, which is signified by the absence or infrequency of the vizier title being recorded on their tomb walls.⁴¹⁹ Weni and Hesi obviously still held various offices before they became viziers, but to what degree of influence did their predetermined promotion to vizier have on their careers beforehand is definitely a point of interest.⁴²⁰ Therefore, the author would like to propose that the initial appointments given to a young man were training and experience for the highest achievable title that was available to a person, via paternal succession. By highest achievable title, I mean the highest title within the family, so if the father were a vizier, then the successor to this office would be working towards this appointment. For example, the 12th Dynasty stele of Amenyseneb (Louvre 12) reads;

⁴¹⁹ See the introduction to chapter 2 for Weni and the title of vizier. The title vizier (*ḥꜣḥꜣ*) appears in Hesi's tomb once, on the west pillar of the portico (see Kanawati, 1999: 7, 11-13, and 20-21 & plate 51). Weni does not have the vizier title inscribed on his tomb wall, it is included on a secondary stele, which is a later addition to his tomb (see figure 23).

⁴²⁰ For a full list of Hesi's titles, see Kanawati, 1999: 11-13. For Weni see *Urk I*, 98 – 110, 2. For the full translation of Hesi's biography see Strudwick, 2005: 275-277 and for Weni, see Strudwick, 2005: 252-257.

“The coming (*iwt*) of the scribe of the vizier (*sš tšty*) Seneb, the son (*sš*) of the vizier to summon (*š*) me on a mission (*wpt*) of the vizier. Then I went with him, and I found the overseer of the city (*imy-r niwt*) and the vizier (*tšty*) Ankhu in his office (*hš=f*). Then the official appointed what was ordered to me (*m-hr=i*), saying look it is ordered that you restore (*sw^cb*) the temple of Abydos.⁴²¹ Craftsman (*hmwt*) have been appointed to you to execute it (*nt^c=f*) together with the priests (*dwš hwt-ntr*) of the district and the producers of divine offerings (*šn^c n htp ntr*)” (Sethe, 1924: 76, lines 4-8).⁴²²

Amenyseneb, who was a controller of the phyle of Abydos (*mty n sš n šbdw*) has recorded an event where he was summoned to the vizier Ankhu to carry out orders concerning maintenance work on the temple at Abydos. It is Seneb, who is the son and scribe (*sš tšty*) of the vizier Ankhu that is sent to bring Amenyseneb to the vizier. Seneb has his own office as scribe of the vizier in which he is learning the business of the vizierate, by obtaining first-hand, on the job experience of the inner workings of the office of vizier. Additionally, Seneb is building up a professional reputation with the people who might one day be under his authority. This gives us an insight into the activities of sons when the father is still alive. If the head of the household is living, then his successor would still have to carve out a career before the succession of office occurred. Seneb was placed in a position whereby he carries the title of scribe and is actively working, but this appointment is based under the umbrella of the family business i.e., the office of vizier.⁴²³

⁴²¹*sw^cb* can be read as make pure or decorate, as both priest and craftsmen are appointed to Amenyseneb, the temple of Abydos was having an overhaul, which included decoration then purification by the priests, therefore, *sw^cb* has been translated as restore, which covers all processes. See *HWB*, page 732: no 26683-26695.

⁴²² Lichtheim, 1988: 80-82. Additionally, Amenyseneb has a secondary stele (Louvre 11) that praises him for the work he conducted in the temple (see Lichtheim, 1988: 82-83).

⁴²³ The evidence in chapter 2.10 and figure 36 regarding Nekhabu and his family of Viziers and the Wadi Hammamat inscriptions is also relevant here, in terms of sons working within the sphere of the father’s profession.

It should be noted that the argument here is not that with every high-ranking title a Curriculum Vitae can be traced to demonstrate a pre-set promotional pathway, so for example, every person who was pre-determined to enter the office of vizier had the same promotions and offices leading up to this position. Nigel Strudwick carried out a study in his 1985 publication *The Administration of Egypt in The Old Kingdom* where he attempts to ascertain if specific promotional patterns and departments are connected to the attainment of various high-ranking titles (Strudwick, 1985: 172). He concludes with “No clear promotional path is discernible among the highest officials of the Egyptian administration of the Old Kingdom. Beyond a certain level on the promotional ladder, the principal feature common to the many officials who held the very highest positions in the land was a high standing in the sight of the ruler of the land at that time, and it is to be supposed that the fortunes of some, if not many, officials changed in the course of time, especially since the succession of a new King would probably introduce a new group of men to the administrative system of the day” (Strudwick, 1985: 345).⁴²⁴ Strudwick’s approach uses titles to gauge if specific career pathways could be established for particular offices in the Old Kingdom but concludes that achieving the highest offices was more to do with an official’s relationship to the King rather than a set string of titles leading to the top promotion.⁴²⁵ Although the focus in this chapter is similar to Strudwick’s in that the aim is to identify vocational pathways, the theory is different. The aim is to demonstrate that initial appointments were not so much influenced by Royal favour, but by the highest title available to a person, and these early promotions were engineered to be beneficial to the highest office available to a person in terms of gaining experience and building a reputation.

⁴²⁴ For a full discussion of the purpose of this study see Strudwick, 1985: 172-175 and the discussion on specific titles see Strudwick, 1985: 176-335.

⁴²⁵ For comparable studies using titles of the Old Kingdom see Baer, 1960, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* and Kanawati, 1980a, *Governmental Reforms in Old Kingdom Egypt*.

3.1 Weni: A case study

Weni of Abydos will be the focus in this chapter with regards to identifying how early career responsibilities were targeted to benefit the highest attainable appointment. Weni has left us with a lengthy narrative involving his career which spanned the reign of three 6th Dynasty Kings – Tety, Pepy, and Merenre. This is coupled with the fact that his father was a vizier, meaning this was a title that Weni was going to eventually succeed, making him the ideal candidate to explore this theory.⁴²⁶

The message that Weni wished to convey in his biography is the fact that he conducted various tasks for the King that went beyond the realms of normal duties associated with the office of overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace (*imy-r hnty-š pr-ꜥꜣ*). Weni makes a point of this as a reoccurring theme within his inscription. On leading troops on a military expedition, he states;

“I was the one who used to make the plan (*šhr*) for them,
whilst my office was overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace” (*Urk*
I, 102, 9 – 10).

When the King asked him to explore a matter in the Royal harem, he recalls;

⁴²⁶ For discussions concerning Weni’s career and his father, see chapter 2 introduction, Collombert, 2015: 145-157, Eyre, 1994a: 107-124, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 88-90, Richards, 2002: 75-102. For translations, transliteration, and line drawings of Weni’s biography, see Lichtheim, 1973: 18-23, Piacentini, 1990, *L’Autobiografia di Uni, Principe e Governatore dell’Alto Egitto*, Simpson, 2003: 402-407, and Strudwick, 2005: 252-257. As Weni is the focus of this chapter, I have referenced the publications that include a translation of his biography here, but any further translations in this chapter will only reference the line drawing employed to translate that specific section of text. Sethe’s reconstructions will be marked by [] throughout my translations of Weni’s biography.

Martinet (2019: 261-278) conducts a similar study on great chief’s (*hry-tp ꜥꜣ*), in which their eldest sons and their title *hkꜣ hwt* are studied with regards to how the roles of *hkꜣ hwt* were like that of great chief.

“Whilst my office was overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace,
never had my likeness heard the secrets of the Royal harem
but his Majesty caused that I listen...” (*Urk I*, 101, 3- 4).

According to Weni, his tasks were extraordinary for an overseer of the *hnty-š*. The evidence is meagre regarding the duties of a *hnty-š*, and in fact, the meaning of the title and how it should be translated is still widely debated.⁴²⁷ The material that we do have suggests that the *hnty-š* were in personal service to the King and attached to either the Palace or a temple. In the temple of the 5th Dynasty King Sahure at Abusir, the *hnty-š* appear in a hunting scene with the King, where they are tasked as beaters, flushing out animals (See figure 38 below).

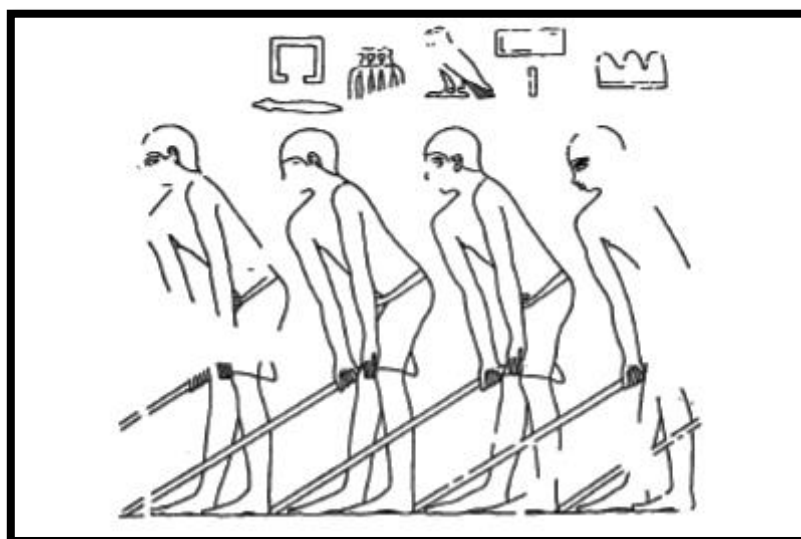


Figure 38: Hunting scene from the temple of Sahure at Abusir. The *hnty-š* stand in front of the King, holding large sticks to flush out animals for Sahure to hunt. They are captioned as *hnty-š* (image taken from Kanawati, 2003: 18. For original line drawing of the whole scene, see Borchardt, 1913: Plate 17).

Weni himself describes his duties as an *hnty-š* in his biography, stating;

“I acted until his Majesty favoured me,

⁴²⁷ For discussions concerning the translation and duties of the *hnty-š*, see Baer, 1960: 301, Eyre, 1987: 35-36, Fischer, 1968: 170-171, Jones Vol II, no 2539: page 691-692, Kanawati, 1980a: 29-30, Kanawati, 2003: 14-20, Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 7-8, 42-43, 88-89 & 157-158, Posener- Kriéger, 1976: 577-581, Martinet, 2019: 166-167, Roth, 1990: 177-186, Roth, 1995: 40-43, Schott, 1965: 9-15, and Stadelmann, 1981: 153-164.

in making protection (*m irt stp-s3*) for the King,
 in making the King's way (*m irt w3t nsw*),
 in making service (*m irt ḥꜥw*) ..." (Urk I, 100, 9 - 10).

In the context of Weni's role as *ḥnty-š*, he functioned as a guard to the King. Weni's duties coupled with the hunting scene from the temple of Sahure (figure 38) illustrate that the *ḥnty-š* were in attendance on the King and were charged with various tasks. In addition, a papyrus from the temple of Neferirkare, at Abusir, contains a duty rota for the festival of Sokar and the *ḥnty-š* are listed to make purifications and offerings during the festival.⁴²⁸ The papyrus reads;

Year 3, month 4 of Akhet, day 25.

The service list for the day of the Sokar festival that was made
 for the Phyle *ḥ3-wr*⁴²⁹ –

Those who make purification in the temple: Keema,
 Merydjeutykakai, and Wehi

Those who are to be (*nty(w) r*) bearers of the 2 standards:⁴³⁰

The ones who ascend to Re - The priest Ankhkakai, the *ḥnty-š*
 Nitawykakai, and Merydjeutykakai the younger.

The ones who unite with Re – The priest Ipi, the *ḥnty-š*
 Mertdjeutykakai, the eldest son of Merydjeutykakai the elder,
 and Ima. (Posener-Kriéger & de Cenival, 1968: plate 13a)

⁴²⁸ Posener- Kriéger, 1968: 6, Posener- Kriéger, 1976: 549-552, Roth, 1991: 77-89, and Strudwick, 2005: 166-167.

⁴²⁹ Service list is written *imy-st-ꜥ*, see *HwB*, no 2431: page 77.

⁴³⁰ *ntyw r* - translates as those who are toward. For *r* of futurity, see GG: 122.

hnty-š were also sent on missions by the King to deal with correspondence between the King and provincial officials. The Dakhleh decree from Pepy II highlights this task;

Horus Netcherkhau:

A Royal decree to the boat commander, ruler of the oasis, and overseer of priests [...]. My Majesty has ordered the building of a ka-chapel for you in the oasis, and the induction of Ka-priests for you as patrons of your choosing (*ṯst n-k ḥm(w)-kz m wnmw tp-r imzḥ*)⁴³¹, just like what was done previously for your father, ruler of the oasis, Khentika (son of) Desheru (son of) Iduy.⁴³² You are to acknowledge the receiving of this document (*irr-k smtr sbt ʿ pn*).⁴³³ I have caused that the overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace Ankhunis come regarding

⁴³¹ *ṯst n-k ḥm(w)-kz m wnmw tp-r imzḥ* – literally reads the setting up of ka-priests for you as consumers upon the saying of the revered one. This instruction from the King implies that the recruitment of the priesthood for the ka-chapel is for the addressee of the decree to organise, and describing the ka-priests as consumers (*wnmw*) shows that they will receive revenues from the chapel in return for service (see Goedicke, 1990: 207, Pantalacci, 1985: 252 and Reisner, 1918: 82).

⁴³² The name Iduy is written with both the seated child determinative (GG: A17) and the ox ear determinative (GG: F21). This led Pantalacci (1985: 246) to translate it as Ididouy. Goedicke (1990: 208) suggest that it is just a hybrid between the two ways the name can be spelt.

⁴³³ *irr-k smtr sbt ʿ pn* is fragmented and has been reconstructed in different ways. Pantalacci (1985: 246) suggests *irr-k [...]* *sšm-k pn* and translates ‘you will act on these provisions’ (1985: 248). Goedicke (1990: 209) argues that Pantalacci’s reconstruction of *sšm* (instructions - CDME:247) is incorrect as the surviving determinative is walking legs with bolt (GG:O35) and not walking legs (GG: D54), which usually accompanies *sšm*. Goedicke (1990: 209) states rather than *sšm* we are dealing with the infinitive form of *sbi* – *sbt* (to send/to bring – CDME: 219) and translates this line as ‘you shall make an acknowledgement of the bringing of this document’. Strudwick (2005:115) offers the reading ‘you shall act in accordance with these instructions’, but does not include commentary for this translation in his publication. The lacuna that Pantalacci includes in her transliteration is treated as *smtr* by Goedicke (1990: 208) because of the remains of the finger determinative (GG: D50). Goedicke (1990: 208) suggests in the context of the decree, *smtr* should be read as ‘verify’ or ‘acknowledge’. I have followed Goedicke’s reconstruction with my translation.

it. Sealed in the presence of the King himself, month 4 of summer, day 3 (Goedicke, 1990: 212, line drawing)⁴³⁴

The ruler of the oasis is instructed to acknowledge the decree, which implies the King is expecting a reply and the *hnty-š* of the Palace Ankhunis is present on site, at the oasis, to return the correspondence to the King. By examining the Palace and temple duties of the *hnty-š*, Weni's claim of conducting duties above his rank of *hnty-š*, such as leading troops on military operations and his involvement in secret Palace affairs, are viable.⁴³⁵

It has been established that Weni's father Iry was a vizier, suggesting that Weni was in a similar situation to Seneb. Weni was in possession of his own titles and appointments, but his responsibilities were geared up to train him for the office of vizier and so his duties reflected this, rather than having unique privileges that went beyond the boundaries of his titles at that time. The duties conducted by Weni may have been unusual for an overseer of the *hnty-š* but these tasks were appropriate for a man who was heir to the vizierate. Weni omitting the fact that his father was a vizier was a ploy to bolster his claim of Royal favour and his special missions were aimed to reflect his relationship with the King.

Hesi's narrative is similar in that he boasts of working closely with the King but does not mention that his father was a vizier. He states;

"I was a judge (*sꜥb*) and scribe (*sš*) in the time of Isesi. I was a judge and inspector of scribes (*shꜥ sš*) in the time of Unis. It was Tety my Lord who appointed (*in tti ꜥ(w) nb=i*)⁴³⁶ me as judge and administrator (*sꜥb ꜥꜥ mr*), who appointed me as first

⁴³⁴ Goedicke, 1990: 203-212, Pantalacci, 1985: 245-254, and Strudwick, 2005: 115.

⁴³⁵ See Kanawati, 1980a: 28-30 and Stadelmann, 1981: 157.

⁴³⁶ *in tti ꜥ(w)* is a participial statement – *in* + noun + verb. Hesi's text reads *in tti ꜥ(w) k* but a *k* standing alone makes no sense, so it is taken as a scribal error and *nb* was the intention here.

of the King (*hr(y) - tp nsw*). His Majesty caused that (it)⁴³⁷ was done for me because he knows my name as one who performs scribeship with his own two hands, without deficiency, having remembered me, one said to be wise (*m iṯt sš n ʕ.w(y)=f n-wnt h3w sh3, n=f w(i) dd n=f s3r*).⁴³⁸ I acted as scribe before his

⁴³⁷ The subject is omitted here with the text reading *rdi.n hm=f ir.t(w)=ø n=i* – the omitted subject has been translated as ‘it’, which is referring to the appointment of offices issued by the Kings.

⁴³⁸ The interpretation and translation of this section of Hesi’s biography has been widely discussed due to its complexity. I will break this section down into separate constructions to better discuss the grammatical issues and interpretations.

iṯt is an infinitive form. Silverman (2000: 7) suggests “When I took over the role of scribe from his hands”. Similarly, Strudwick (2005: 276) translates “for whom I took the office of scribe from his hands”. These translations appear unlikely in that offices are granted, never taken from the King. Hesi would not take the office of scribe from the King’s hands (see Stauder-Porchet, 2015: 193, comment e). Baines, (2015b: 503), Baud & Farout (2001: 53), Kanawati (1999: 38), and Stauder-Porchet (2015: 192) translate along a similar vein in that the King takes on Hesi as a scribe with the only thing differing is the translation of ʕ.w(y)=f with renderings such as his ability and for his task.

However, the use of *iṯt* to describe the awarding of a promotion is highly unusual, as one would expect the verb *rdi* or *nd*, which Hesi employs in his biography (see Kloth, 2002: 133-137). *iṯ* has the root meaning to seize (see Wb, I. 149. 4-11) and in the instance of Hesi, the meaning is that he fully seized his role of scribe and worked to best of his ability.

n-wnt h3w nb – Has been taken by most scholars as a straightforward negative existential construction. The only difference is the translation of *h3*, although the interpretations are the same, with one exception. Baud & Farout (2001:53 :) “...without a protector,” Kanawati (1999: 38) translates “... without any backer”, Silverman (2000: 7) “... there not being any supporter”, Stauder-Porchet, 2015: 192: “... there not being any advocate”, and Strudwick (2005: 276) “... as there was no helper”. These translations all imply the same meaning, in that Hesi was a self-made man and got his position of scribe through his own self achievements and not through a patron. Baines (2015b: 523) suggests the translation “... without any deficiency” with the different meaning of Hesi was up to the task due to his flawless performance. I have taken on Baines’ interpretation, although he does not discuss the grammar that led him to this translation, he merely signposts the reader to Stauder-Porchet’s interpretation (2015b: 524, comment B). *h3* as a non-enclitic particle can be used a noun, translating as wish or would that (see GG: 238). With the negative *n-wnt*, we have the rendering there is no would that/wish that. The meaning here is that with Hesi in the role of scribe, there would be no need to ask for anything more, he will not be lacking in any task asked of him.

sh3, n=f w(i) dd n=f s3r – is written *sh3 w n=f* on the West thickness of Hesi’s tomb. The issue is the -w that come directly after the verb *sh3*. This had led to the following translations;

Majesty at the forefront of other scribes. His Majesty had me embark onto the great riverboat of the Palace (*h^cw ʕz stp-sz*),⁴³⁹ so that I was welcomed to the ways that offerings be made according to the first of the King. While I was judge and administrator, never had the like been done for any equal. His Majesty used to discuss affairs (*wn hm=f nd=f ht*)⁴⁴⁰ with me amongst the officials, when I was judge and inspector of scribes because his Majesty knew the name of the

-Baines (2105b: 523) “... with any deficiency. He remembered me and said he was satisfied.”

-Baud & Farout (2001: 53) “... without there being any protector, after he remembered him who had spoken to him wisely.”

-Kanawati (1999: 38) “... without any backer. He remembered the one who spoke to him wisely.”

-Silverman (2000: 7) “... there not being any supporter who is called to mind (or remembered to him). Nor one who it is said ‘wise one’.”

-Stauder-Porchet (2015: 192) “... there not being any advocate who mentioned me having spoken his desire for a favour”.

-Strudwick (2005: 276) “... there was no helper who he recalled and of whom it was said that he was a wise man”.

There is a difference in interpretation in these translations as some suggest it was the *h_z* (the backer /supporter) doing the action of *sh_z* whilst others infer it was the king who remembered. Baines (2015b: 523) treats *sh_z n=f* as a new section of text, independent from the previous section of text, but reconstructs this sentence to *sh_z.n=f w(i)*, emending the *w* to come after *n=f*. Baud & Farout (2001: 53) treats *sh_z n=f* as a circumstantial *sdm.n=f* and Kanawati (1999:38) as a *sdm.n=f* in a main clause but neither take account of the *w* after *sh_z*. Stauder-Porchet (2015:192) also emends to *sh_z.n=f w(i)* and translates this sentence as virtual relative clause, with the *n=f* as a resumptive pronoun referring to *h_z* – the advocate (See Allen: 2000: 12.11 for virtual relative clauses). Silverman (2000: 7) retains the *w* after *sh_z* and translates it as a passive participle. My translation is a circumstantial *sdm.n=f* with the *w* moved after the *n=f* and employed as the first-person dependent pronoun, to bring the sentence back around to the King and the reason why the King supported Hesi.

dd n=f s_zr is treated as a passive participle. Silverman (2000: 7), Stauder-Porchet (2015: 192), and Strudwick (2005: 276) have the helper or the advocate conducting the action here in terms of there was no man putting a good word in regarding Hesi to the King. Again, my translation does not include a backer or advocate, so ending this section with the reason why the King has bestowed his favour on Hesi is more suitable.

⁴³⁹ For *h^cw* – riverboat, see Jones 1988: 151, no 50.

⁴⁴⁰ *wn hm=f nd=f ht* is a noun + *sdm=f* that is made past tense by the particle *wn*.

distinguished one (*tny*) more than any servant” (Kanawati, 1999: Plate 59).⁴⁴¹

Hesi makes a point of saying he earned his promotions because he was a competent scribe and his abilities got him noticed by the King. Comparable to Weni, he conveys the idea of a self-made man, who gained his offices through his own merit. He was a judge and inspector of scribes, but the King singled him out from the other officials to confide in Hesi and gave him special privileges such as embarking on the Palace boat. Again, Kanawati (2003: 152) states that the exceptional treatment of Hesi, who was merely in a junior official position, was due to meritocracy, with the King placing trust and personal favour based on Hesi’s aptitude rather than rank. The viziership was always on Hesi’s agenda, meaning the concessions he received as a judge and inspector of scribes were not out of the ordinary, they were preparation for his eventual succession, and the duties he would one day have to fulfil as a vizier.⁴⁴²

The duties of a vizier were all encompassing regarding the affairs of Egypt (see figure 27 above).⁴⁴³ Weni’s biography is comparable in that his undertakings range across a broad spectrum of duties which consisted of involvement in judicial matters, military campaigns, and expeditions for stone, all carried out under the guise of overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace. If we look at Weni’s endeavours in conjunction with the works of various viziers, then Weni’s earlier responsibilities under his initial appointments read like what we would expect from a vizier.

⁴⁴¹ For translations of the biography of Hesi, see Kanawati, 1999: 37-38 and Strudwick, 2005: 275-277. For discussions on the composition and interpretation of Hesi’s biography, see Stauder-Porchet, 2015: 191-204, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 233-237, and Stauder-Porchet, 2021: 452-453.

⁴⁴² See Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 41-46 and Moreno Garcia, 2020a: 74 & 127.

⁴⁴³ See Bárta, 2013a: 153-175, Bárta, 2020b: 378-380, Martinet, 2019: 91-134, Strudwick, 1985: 300-334, and Van den Boorn, 1988: 310-331.

3.1.1 The Duties of the vizier - Works for the King

Now as for the mining land and any expedition (*ii.t*) to it – when the goods have been seen in it, every petitioner shall be recorded (*wnn=tw hr irt sprty nb sš*), without letting him petition to the one who listens. Any petitioner of the Lord shall be reported to him (the vizier) after it is recorded (*r-sš ir=f m sš*) (de Garis Davies, 1944: Plate 27, line 20-21).⁴⁴⁴

He (the vizier) is the one who cuts trees in accordance with what is said in the Palace. He is the one who sends out the councillors of the districts to make dykes in the whole land (de Garis Davies, 1944: Plate 27, line 24).⁴⁴⁵

According to this extract from *The Duties of the Vizier*, the authority of the vizier extended to addressing any written petitions raised during expeditions, organising the cutting of trees for wood, and the cutting of canals. Weni has similar responsibilities when he carried out works for the King;

Example one

His Majesty sent me to Ibhat (*ibhšt*) to bring back the sarcophagus (*nb ḥh hn* – Lord of life chest) together with its lid, with its precious pyramidion (*bnbnt sšwt*) for Merenre who appears beautifully, my Mistress.⁴⁴⁶ His Majesty sent me

⁴⁴⁴ The duties of the vizier was composed in the late Middle Kingdom but the copies preserved date to the New Kingdom and although we cannot take this text as an official handbook for viziers, rather, it was an idealised description of how a vizier should conduct his work, it does demonstrate the different administrative sectors under the authority of the vizier, see Eyre, 2013: 55-77, Quirke, 2004a: 18, and Van den Boorn, 1988: 296. For translation and discussion of this section of *The Duties of the Vizier*, see Quirke, 2004a: 21 and Van den Boorn, 1988: 193-201.

⁴⁴⁵ For translation and discussion of this section of *The Duties of the Vizier*, see Quirke, 2004a: 21. and Van den Boorn, 1988: 234.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibhat is a Nubian locality – *HwB*, no 49782: page 1110.

to Elephantine to bring back a red granite false door (*mꜣꜥꜣ rwt*) together with its libation table (*sꜣꜣ*), with red-granite door jambs (*mꜣꜥꜣ ꜥꜣw*) and lintels (*rwtꜣ*) and to bring back red-granite doors (*mꜣꜥꜣ sbꜣw*) and three libation stones for the upper chapel of Merenre, who appears beautifully, my Mistress.⁴⁴⁷ I travelled North with (them) to Merenre, who appears beautifully, with 6 barges (*wsꜥꜣt*) and three transport boats (*sꜣꜣ*) of 8 ribs (*spr* 8) for one expedition.⁴⁴⁸ Never had Ibat and Elephantine been done for one expedition in the time of any King (*Urk* I, 106, 12 – 107, 11).

Example two

[His] Majesty sent me to Hatnub to bring back a great altar of alabaster of Hatnub (*ꜥꜣwt-nbw*). I brought down this altar (*ꜥꜣꜣ*) for him in 17 days, with it being cut in Hatnub. I had it travel downstream in th[is] great barge. I cut the great barge (*wsꜥꜣt*) for it from Nile acacia (*šndꜣ*) of 60 cubits in its length and 30 cubits in its width and assembled (*spꜣꜣt*)⁴⁴⁹ in 17 days in month 3 of Shemu (*Urk* I, 107, 14 -108, 7).

⁴⁴⁷ For false door (*rwt*), see *HWB*, no 17606: page 490). *sꜣꜣ* has been translated as libation table due to the determinatives which are man receiving purification (GG: A6) and stone slab (GG: O39). For examples of libation tables as a part of the funerary items left in tombs, see Taylor, 2001: 158-160. *rwtꜣ* is usually translated as gateway with the gateway determinative (GG: O32), however, it is determined with 3 stone slabs and as Weni seems to be listing the parts needed to make up a doorway, lintels are apt. *mꜣꜥꜣ ꜥꜣw* has the translation door jamb rather than door as this has already been listed above and now, we collectively have every part to make a doorway.

⁴⁴⁸ Jones (1995:89) states that ribs (*spr*) are “The timbers of a ship which rise from the keel to form the shape of the hull.” For *wsꜥꜣt* boats, see Jones, 1988: 135, No 23 and for *sꜣꜣ* boats, Jones, 1988: 143, No 58.

⁴⁴⁹ For *spꜣꜣt*, see *HWB*, No 27274: page 746.

Example three

His Majesty sent me to dig out 5 canals in order to make three barges (*wšḥt*) and 4 transport boats (*šwzḥt*) from acacia wood (*šndt*) of Wawat, since the rulers of the foreign lands of Iretjet, Wawat, Yam, and Medja cut down wood for it.⁴⁵⁰ I finished (*ir.n=i*) it in one year as well as them being filled with water (*Urk I, 108, 11 – 109, 4*).

Weni's works for the King falls under the umbrella of duties carried out by the vizier. Weni oversees the expeditions to provide stone for building works of the King. He supervises the cutting of wood for ships and the digging of canals to create transport routes for boats.

Examples of this type of work can also be found in inscriptions pertaining to viziers of the Old and Middle Kingdom. A letter of protest dating to the 6th Dynasty records a dispatch (P. Cairo JE 49623) written to a vizier from an irate overseer of the expedition. The letter reads,

[Regnal year] 11, month 1 of Shemu, day 23.

The overseer of the expedition (*imy-r mšꜥw*) says, the letter of the vizier (*sš n tꜣty*) has been brought to the servant there concerning the returning of the troops of Tura (*tꜣt nt ꜥprw r-ꜣw*) in order to be clothed in his presence at the very beautiful serekh (*srḥ nfr*).⁴⁵¹ Now the servant there is speaking about the required location (*dbḥw kꜥḥw*).⁴⁵² For the letter writer (*iry-*

⁴⁵⁰ Iretjet (*HwB*, no 40953: page 1117), Wawat (*HwB*: no 41217: page 1129), Yam (*HwB*, no 40821: page 1111), and Medja (*HwB*, no 41777: page 1155) are Nubian localities.

⁴⁵¹ For *srḥ*, see *HwB*, no 29053: page 790.

⁴⁵² *dbḥw kꜥḥw* has been translated as 'required location'. The root meaning of *dbḥw* (*HwB*, no 38763: page 1047) is 'require, need, or necessity', however the writing of *dbḥw* is accompanied by the irrigated land determinative (GG: N2). *kꜥḥw* (*HwB*, no 34070: page 920) which follows is usually translated as 'corner' or 'shoulder', also has three irrigated land determinatives. This suggests that the two words are read in conjunction and given their literal translation of 'required corner', we can infer the meaning to be required

mdꜣt) has come from Tura with a barge (*wšht*) (before) and the servant there spent 6 days in the Residence with this troop before it was clothed⁴⁵³. It is what disrupts the work (*snknt kꜣt pw*)⁴⁵⁴ in the hand of the servant there for it is only one day that it should waste (*hbt=f*) for this troop when it is clothed⁴⁵⁵. The servant there says cause that the letter carrier (*iry-mdꜣt*) knows (Gardiner, 1927: 75).⁴⁵⁶

The overseer of the expedition is angry because the vizier wants the troops of the expedition to come to the Residence to be clothed. The overseer believes too much time would be wasted and this would have an impact on work production and suggests the clothing of the troops should take place on site in Tura, meaning only one day would be needed. This letter demonstrates that although the vizier was not directly on site, he was integral to the organisation, decision making, and delegating tasks to the overseer of the expedition.

Another vizier of the Old Kingdom, Senedjemib Inti, is tasked with overseeing the construction work of the King. Senedjemib Inti recorded the correspondence from the King in his tomb, two of the extracts read;

location, and given that the context of letter was the overseer of the expedition was unhappy about bringing his troops back to the capital from Tura, the reading is satisfactory (see Gardiner, 1927: 77).

⁴⁵³ I had added 'before' to the translation as the leader of the expedition is saying he is unhappy with coming back to the Residence to clothe his troops as he had done it before, and it took six days.

⁴⁵⁴ *snknt kꜣt pw* has been translated as 'it is what disrupts the work'. *snknt* translates as 'injury' or 'disability' (*HWB*, no 28749: page 783) and so the literal translation is 'it is what injures the work'. Grammatically we have nominal sentence were the participial phrase *snknt kꜣt* is the predicate of *pw* (see Allen, 2000: 23.12 for nominal *pw* sentences with participles).

⁴⁵⁵ *hbt=f* is being treated here as a prospective participle denoting an action that should or would happen (for prospective participles see Allen, 2000: 23.8).

⁴⁵⁶ See Eyre, 2015: 64, Gardiner, 1927: 75-78, Strudwick, 2005: 177, Thorpe, 2021: 97-104, and Wente, 1990: 42.

Letter A2 extract

Your Majesty has seen this letter of yours (*mdꜣt tn*) that you wrote in order to let the Majesty know everything that you have done with the building (*kꜣd*) and inscribing (*sš*) of the meret (*mrt*)⁴⁵⁷ temple of Isefi, which is upon the lake (*š*) of the Palace (Brovarski, 2000: figure 32).⁴⁵⁸

Letter B2 extract

The Majesty has seen this ground plan (*snꜣw*)⁴⁵⁹ which you have brought to the Palace (*stꜣ-sꜣ*) to be considered (*šꜣ*)⁴⁶⁰ for the lake/garden (*š*)⁴⁶¹ of the broad court (*wsꜣt*)⁴⁶² of the temple of Isefi for the hed-seb festival. For you have said before the Majesty that you have made it 1000 cubits in length and 440 cubits in width, according to what was commanded (*wꜣꜣt*) to you at the Palace (*stꜣ-sꜣ*) (Brovarski, 2000: figure 28).⁴⁶³

Unlike the letter above, which sees the vizier not directly on site of the expedition but still making decisions regarding it, Senedjemib Inti's letter from the King illustrates that Senedjemib was on site of the construction work and tasked with reporting the progress of the building work back to the King.

⁴⁵⁷ Meret temples are connected to the worship of King's and the Goddess Hathor (see Brovarski, 2000: 92-93 & *HwB*, no 1330: page 368).

⁴⁵⁸ Brovarski, 2000: 92-94, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 135-165, Strudwick, 2005: 312, and Wente, 1990: 18-20.

⁴⁵⁹ For *snꜣw*, see *HwB*, no 28758: page 783.

⁴⁶⁰ For *šꜣ* see *HwB*, no 26184: page 719.

⁴⁶¹ For the discussion of *š* in this letter, see Brovarski, 2000: 97-98.

⁴⁶² For the discussion of the writing of broad court (*wsꜣt*) in this text see Brovarski, 2000: 98-99.

⁴⁶³ Brovarski, 2000: 96-101, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 135-165, Strudwick, 2005: 313- 314, and Wente, 1990: 18-20.

Wadi Hammamat Inscriptions belonging to the 11th Dynasty vizier Amenemhat gives other examples of a vizier attending on site during an expedition for stone. The inscription reads;

Hamm. M 192a

The Majesty had the *iry-p^ct*, overseer of the city (*imy-r niwt*), vizier (*t^cty*), the overseer of work (*imy-r k^ct*), and confident of the King (*m^h ib n nsw*), Amenemhat go together with a troop (*m^sc*) of 10,000 from the district of Upper Egypt foremost of Wabut (*w^czbtwt*)⁴⁶⁴ to bring back for (him) (the King) a precious block of pure stone from this mountain whose splendour Min created for the sarcophagus⁴⁶⁵, an eternal memorial (*sh^cz nh^h*) and for the monuments in the temples of Upper Egypt as a sending of the King (*h^czb nsw*), chief of the two lands to bring back for him, his heart's desire from the foreign lands for his father Min of Coptos. He made (it) as his monument (*ir.n=f m mnw=f*)⁴⁶⁶ for his father Min of Coptos, Lord of the foreign lands, chief of the tribe member (*hry -tp iwntyw*), so he was [given life]⁴⁶⁷ – a great amount of life, like Re forever.⁴⁶⁸

Hamm. M 192B

Day 27, the descending of this sarcophagus from stone 4 cubits by 8 cubits by 2 cubits which comes from the work. Calves were slaughtered, goats were slaughtered, and incense

⁴⁶⁴ Wabut was in the 19th nome of Upper Egypt (*HwB*, no 41219: page 1129).

⁴⁶⁵ Whose splendour Min created – *irt mnw mn^hw=s*, grammatically we have a relative form where the suffix pronoun *s* is attached to the object of the sentence *mn^hw* and refers to the antecedent *c^ct* – block of stone. The resumptive pronoun allows us to translate it in a passive sense as the action is happening to the antecedent rather than the more stilted rendering of ‘which Min created its splendour.’ See GG: 383 for the discussion of these relative constructions.

⁴⁶⁶ Doret describes *ir.n=f m mnw=f* – ‘he made it as his monument’ as dedication formula (1986: 159).

⁴⁶⁷ So, he was given life – *ir.(w)=f [di^c nh^h]*, De Buck's reconstruction would mean grammatically *ir* is an auxiliary verb in the passive *sdmw=f* form, which is usually followed by the infinitive (see GG: 485). This would read ‘he was made a giving of life’.

⁴⁶⁸ Doret, 1986: 159 and Schenkel, 1964: 265.

was placed upon the fire. Now the expedition of 3000 sailors
(*mšꜥw*) from the district of the northern land brought it in
peace to Egypt (De Buck, 1963: 75).⁴⁶⁹

Amenemhat is charged with the task of supervising an expedition of 10,000 men to cut and retrieve stone from the Wadi Hammamat for a sarcophagus and stone for the temple of Min. Additionally, he also must navigate the stone back to Egypt at the head of 3000 sailors.

Reviewing the evidence from the letter and the inscriptions belonging to Senedjemib inti and Amenemhat, a vizier was charged with taking instructions from the King concerning the building works, overseeing the construction and the workers, the retrieval of materials, and updating the King on any progress made. The letter of protest from the expedition leader to the vizier, shows that the vizier was charged with making decisions concerning the workers, despite not being present on site. Weni's responsibilities emulate that of these viziers and *The Duties of the Vizier*. The King sends him to carry out various projects to procure stone, dig canals and build boats. This is comparable to Nekhabu who is from a family of viziers and is charged to direct various works for the King in Upper and Lower Egypt.⁴⁷⁰ These missions were the perfect training regime for a man who would one day step into the role of vizier, by being tasked with a variety of projects during his career, he could acquire the skill set to organise and supervise large scale projects along with the management of people and materials. Furthermore, if a vizier had to make decisions whilst being absent from an expedition, then having first-hand experience of the work involved during these projects meant informed assessments of what was required could be made in absence.

⁴⁶⁹ For translation, see Schenkel, 1964: 268-269.

⁴⁷⁰ See Brovarski, 2000: 31-32, Dunham, 1938: 1-8, and Strudwick, 2005: 265-269. Nekhabu's family connection to the office of vizier is discussed in chapter 2.10.

3.1.2 The Duties of the vizier - Military expeditions

He is the one who assembles (*ir dmd n mšc*) the army to move to follow the Lord by sailing northward and southward. It is he who works out the arrears (*hry-c(w)*) which are in the South and in the Residence in accordance with what is said in the Palace. The attendants of the rulers (*stw n hkz(w) htp*)⁴⁷¹ are brought to him in his office together with the magistrates (*d3d3t*) of the army to give them the instructions of the armies.

(De Garis Davies, 1944: Plate 27, line 23-24).⁴⁷²

The Duties infer that in a military context, the vizier was charged with calling up the troops and instructing any line management on the directives of the army. Weni also engaged in military expeditions which he recorded in his biography. Weni claims the nature of this mission was “his Majesty opposed (*hsf*) the affairs of the Asiatic sand dwellers (*hry(w) -šc*).”⁴⁷³ He then goes on to describe;

Example one

His Majesty sent me in front of this army, and the *h3ty-c* and the seal bearers of the King (*htm(w)-bity*) and the sole companions of the great estate (*smrw wct hwt-c3t*), and the chiefs (*hry(w)-tp*) and rulers of the estate (*hkz(w) hwt*) of the southern and northern land, the companions (*smr(w)*), the overseers of the foreign caravan (*imy-r(w) cw*), the overseers of priests (*imy-r(w) hm(w) -ntr*) of the southern and northern land, the overseers of the administrative district (*imy-r (w) gs-pr*) at the head of the troops of the southern and northern

⁴⁷¹ The translation of *stw n hkz htp* as the attendants of the ruler is taken from Van den Boorn who suggests the transliteration should read *stw n tt hkz* as the *htp* may be the table sign (GG: R3) written without objects on top which represents the word *tt* (Van den Boone, 1988: 225). For the title *stw n tt hkz*, see Quirke, 2004a: 99 and Ward, 1982:13.

⁴⁷² Quirke, 2004a: 21 and van den Boone, 1988: 218-228.

⁴⁷³ *Urk I*, 101, 9.

land from the districts and towns which they rule, and the Nubians (*nḥsy(w)*) of these foreign lands. I was the one who used to make the plan (*shḥr*) for them, whilst my office was overseer of the *ḥnty-š* of the Great house (*Urk I*, 102, 1 – 10).

In this example, Weni is placed at the forefront of a conscripted army consisting of an array of officials. Weni states that his duties were to lead his troops and to make the plan (*shḥr*) for them, suggesting he had a strategic and a management role in these campaigns. Weni's position is comparative to *The Duties of the Vizier* in that he is charged with the organisation of the army and the delegation of orders to the other officials.

Coptos decree M, dating to the end of the Old Kingdom, mirrors Weni's circumstances, whereby the vizier Shemai is told that his son is given the authority over an array of different officials. The decree reads;

Horus Netcherbau: A Royal decree to the beloved one of the God, the *iry-p^ct*, overseer of the pyramid city, he of the curtain, judge, and vizier, the overseer of the South, overseer of priests, and [stolist of Min], Shemai. Your son, the *ḥzty-^c*, overseer of priests Idi, he is a *ḥzty-^c*, seal bearer of the king, overseer of the South, and overseer of priests from Ta-Sety to the North of Bat and the *ḥzty-^c*s, seal bearers of the King, the sole companions, overseers of priests, chiefs, the rulers of towns, and those who are there should act under his authority (*ḥr tp=f*). My Majesty commanded that he should act as an official, so that he makes a reputation (*ir=f ḳd m sp³wt ptn*) in these districts according to what you command as your repeater (*ir=f m wḥm=k*). No man shall have a claim against it. My Majesty has caused that you know of these nomes [...] are their names – Ta Sety, Wetjes-Hor, Nekhen, Thebes, Coptos, Iker, and Bat. He shall act with [you by working (as) one]. I had [the sole companion Intef son of Hemi come concerning it].

[Sealed at the side of the] King himself [on month 2 of Peret,
day 20] (*Urk I*, 300, 11 -301, 11).⁴⁷⁴

The decree is issued to the overseer of the South and vizier Shemai but is designed to give authority to his son Idu over local hierarchies: the *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, seal bearers of the King, sole companions, overseers of priests, and the rulers of the nomes. Weni is also placed at the forefront of these officials during the military campaign against the Asiatics. Idu's authority over these officials stem from his new appointment as overseer of the South, a title which he now shares with his father Shemai. The decree also infers that Idu was working under the guidance of his father. Shemai is informed that his son should be his repeater (*wḥm=f*) and carry out all his commands in the nomes.⁴⁷⁵ The implication from the decree and Weni's biography is that sons of the vizier were given appointments to place them in positions of authority over local hierarchies in order to hone their skills dealing with the organisation of people and to give them an opportunity to build a reputation with the officials, who will one day be under their command, when their fathers pass the baton of the viziership completely over to them.

Weni continues in his biography to describe a scorched earth campaign where Egypt's troops destroy the crops, houses, fortresses, and imprison many Asiatics to take back to Egypt.

Weni states;

Example two

This expedition returned in peace, after hacking up (*ḥbꜣ.n=f*) the land of the sa [nd dwellers]. This expedition returned in peace, having crushed (*pds.n=f*) the land of the sand dwellers. This expedition returned in peace, having destroyed (*sšn.n=f*) its fortresses (*wmwt=f*). This expedition returned in peace, having cut down (*šꜥ.n=f*) its figs and grapes. This expedition

⁴⁷⁴ [] Sethe's reconstruction. See also Goedicke, 1967: 184-187, Abb 20, Strudwick, 2005: 121, and Wente, 1990: 21.

⁴⁷⁵ see chapter 2.8 for *wḥm* and filial training.

returned in peace, having set fire (*st.n=f ht*) to all its [houses].

Th[is] expedition returned in peace, having slaughtered (*smz.n=f*) the troops in it in the many 10's of thousands (*m dbz* *šz*). This expedition returned in peace, [having brought back troops] from it, a great amount as living captives (*šzwt wrt sk^c – nht*).

His Majesty favoured me because of it, more than anything.

His Majesty sent me to lead (*r mš^c*) [this] expedition on 5 occasions to subdue the sand dwellers every time they would rebel (*bšt*) with these expeditions. I acted until [his] Majesty favoured me [because of it, more than anything]. It was said there were escapees (*btk*) in the nose of the gazelle head (*šrt tp-ghs*).⁴⁷⁶ I crossed in barges (*nmw*)⁴⁷⁷ with these troops. I made a landing in the rear of the highlands of the mountain range (*kzww n tsst*) on the North of the land of the sand dwellers, while half of this army was on the road. I returned only when I had captured them all and I had slaughtered every escapee (*btk*) amongst them (*Urk I, 103, 6 – 105, 4*).

Leading the troops in this kind of strategic warfare is a part of the 12th Dynasty Vizier Intefiker's repertoire. Intefiker says;

“... This fortress/enclosure was being built.”⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ *šrt tp-ghs* – nose of the gazelle head is an area in Syria-Palestine, see *HwB*, no 42578: page 1191.

Gundacker (2017: 355-360) suggests the transliteration *šrt-tp wnwqdw* and states that it is written logographically with phonetic complements, therefore, the reading of this location is based on the classification of the animal hieroglyph that is written after *šrt-tp*. He argues that due to the shape of the horns on the animal that it cannot be a *ghs* – a gazelle (see GG: E29) and suggests the reading ‘the nose of the goat's head’, and the area is referring to the mountainous parts of Sinai that were home to wild goats. Gundacker (2017: 357) implies that the reading of *wnqdw* is incorrect for goat (CDME: 63), and it should be rendered *wnw-qdw* – ‘child of the mountain’.

⁴⁷⁷ Jones refers to a *nmw* simply as a kind of boat (1988: 140, no 46).

⁴⁷⁸ *wn.t(w) hr kd hnrt pn* – grammatically *wn.tw hr kd* is a *iw=f hr sdm* which is employed with the impersonal pronoun *-tw*, meaning the predicate can be translated passively (see Allen, 2000: 15.5).

Then all the remaining Nubians (*nḥsw spt nbt*) in Wawat were slaughtered. Then I sailed upstream in victory, slaughtering the Nubians on the riverbank. I sailed downstream plucking crops and cutting down the remaining trees. I put fire to their houses just like what is done against rebels of the King. Never did I hear of (another) troop doing likewise" (Žaba, 1974: 99).⁴⁷⁹

Intefiker carries out a scorched earth policy in Nubia travelling by boat to each location. Weni is entrusted with the same responsibility during the campaign against the Asiatics. The motive for the military missions of Weni and Intefiker was to crush any opposition in the neighbouring foreign territories. The reason for a vizier on attendance for such a mission may be due to the fact they were dealing with an insurgence against the King and so this mitigated the involvement of the King's highest official. If this was the case then Weni, like Intefiker, was acting in the capacity of vizier by planning the strategy for the army and overseeing the troops.

⁴⁷⁹ For a discussion of the stele of Intefiker, see Žaba, 1974: 98-99 and for the translation of his text see Parkinson, 1991: 95-96.

3.1.3 The Duties of the Vizier: Jurisdiction

He is the one who makes every declaration (*šd-r*).⁴⁸⁰ He is the one who listens to every complaint (*ʿnʿn nb*) [When a man proceeds to dispute with his companion (*snw=f*)].⁴⁸¹ He is the one who appoints (*dhn*) all the appointed ones (*dhnw*) at the gate. The ones who are questioned (*šnw*) come to him in the Palace. He is the one who listens to all what is ordered... (de Garis Davies, 1944: Plate 27, line 27-28).⁴⁸²

Another responsibility attributed to the role of the vizier was to listen to petitions, interrogate those who warranted questioning, and to listen to all the orders of the King. According to the biography of Weni, the King tasks him to preside over secret affairs of the Palace, including an incident involving a Queen. Weni recounts;

Example one

“[Whi]le my office was as [...] his [Majesty appointed me] as judge and mouth of Nekhen (*s3b r nḥn*), for his [heart] was filled with me more than any servant. I heard matters alone together with the vizier (*t3yty s3b t3ty*) in all confidential matters (*sšt3 (ḥt) nb*) that were associated (*ḥnmt*)⁴⁸³ with the name of the King for the Royal harem (*ipt nsw*) and for the 6

⁴⁸⁰ *šd-r -r* has been translated as declaration with the literal rendering being ‘recitation of the mouth’.

⁴⁸¹ ‘When a man proceeds to dispute with his companion’ is the restoration taken from the tomb of Amenemopet (Van den Boorn, 1988: 273).

⁴⁸² For translation and discussion of this section of *The Duties of the Vizier*, see Quirke, 2004a: 22 and Van den Boorn, 1988: 265-284.

⁴⁸³ The sign group here is quite fragmented. The *m* (owl - GG: G17) and *t* (bread - GG: X1) signs are certain but the sign before is not clear. It does have a rounded bottom which Sethe has interpreted as *nfr* (windpipe – GG: F35) as he has drawn a long stem protruding from the top of the rounded part of the sign. The translation I have produced is based on treating the rounded sign as the stone jug with a handle (GG: W9) with the rendering – associated. This fits in with the context of Weni telling us about the areas in the Palace in which he heard the secret business of the King.

great enclosures (*ḥwt-wrt* 6) because the heart of his Majesty was filled with me more than any official, more than any noble more than any servant” (*Urk I*, 99, 8).

Example two

“A matter was investigated in the Royal Harem (*ipt-nsw*) concerning the Royal wife Weretsekhemtes in secret. His Majesty caused that I go to listen, alone (*w^c.kw*). There was no vizier (*tzyty s3b tzyty*) or any official (*srw*), but me alone, because of my excellence, because I was rooted (*w3b*) upon the heart of his Majesty, because the heart of his Majesty was filled with me. I was the one who acted as a scribe alone, together with a judge and mouth of Nekhen (*s3b r nhn*) alone, whilst my office was overseer of the *ḥnty-š* of the Palace. Never had my like heard the secrets of the Royal Harem (*ipt nsw*) before, but his Majesty caused that I listen because of my excellence upon the heart of his Majesty more than any official, more than any noble, more than any servant” (*Urk I*, 100, 12 – 101, 7).

In the first instance, Weni was listening to the confidential affairs of the Palace with the vizier and no other officials were present. Weni at this point refers to his appointment as judge and mouth of Nekhen. Strudwick (1985: 188-189) states that those appointed as judge and mouth of Nekhen were based in each of the courts in the institute of the six great courts, which were presided over by the vizier. If this was the case with Weni, then the first example would not be that unusual as he was acting in the capacity of judge and mouth of Nekhen. However, the second example is more remarkable, given the nature of the circumstances. Weni participates in a matter involving a Queen which was a high-profile case. In this instance, there was no vizier present, and Weni is accompanied by a judge and mouth of Nekhen, so essentially, Weni has now taken the place of the vizier. It has been surmised by scholars that perhaps the vizier was involved in the conspiracy

involving the Queen, and as a result, was disgraced and removed from his position, so Weni had to act alone.⁴⁸⁴ For example Kanawati states “All viziers and higher officials were excluded from taking part in the Queen’s trial, which was entrusted to Weni who clearly stated that never before had anyone like him heard the secrets of the Royal Harem. It is likely that none of the top officials were trusted to take part in the event, but the choice of Weni was due to his Royal background and the need to contain any further exposure of the case” (2018: 88). Kanawati also highlights that Weni’s participation was due to the King’s trust in him and takes Weni’s statement him being singled out to investigate this matter concerning Royalty as fact. Additionally, Bárta (2020b: 365) argues that it was Royal favour that placed Weni at the centre of this case against a Queen, he suggests “this was such an important and unique event and such an uncommon expression of the King’s trust, that Weni included the following in the biographical inscription at Abydos”. However, Weni was working towards the office of vizier and the evidence presented, for example from Coptos decree M (see above) illustrates that sons were integrated into various aspects of their father’s office ante mortem. Therefore, Weni acting as a vizier in this hearing was not due to meritocracy, it was an integration of the vizier duties into his career. The 6th dynasty biography of the vizier Kagemni, although much shorter than Weni’s, lists his promotions in chronological order via the King who was reigning when he was awarded these offices. His career pathway is similar to Weni, in that Kagemni starts out as a judge (*sꜣb*) under Unis then under Tety he carried out the King’s orders in the six great courts and he is an overseer of all places and all duties of the Majesty.⁴⁸⁵ Weni also begins his career as a judge in the 6 great courts prior to his role of vizier. As listening to petitions and making judgements was a key role in the office of vizier, it makes sense that a part of the preparation for the viziership was some involvement in the judicial system.

⁴⁸⁴ For a discussion on this matter involving a Queen and Weni’s involvement, see Chapter 4.3.1, El-Fikey, 1980: 45-46, Eyre, 1994a: 110-112, Kanawati, 1980a: 28-32, Kanawati, 2003:171-173, and Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 82-91.

⁴⁸⁵ Edel, 1953: plate 3, lines 1-3 and Strudwick, 2005: 258-287.

The Information about the career of the father and any working relationship with the tomb owner is almost always excluded from the autobiographies of the Old Kingdom.⁴⁸⁶ At face value, Weni's involvement in military, judicial and works for the King is considered unusual for a *hnty-š* of the Palace, but not as a training regime for his future role as vizier. Eyre (2013: 63) compares the vizier to a spider at the centre of a web who delegates activities to his agents. By exposing Weni to a variety of duties early in his career, he was equipped to deal with the many facets of responsibility expected from a vizier. Seneb and Idu both worked under the command of their fathers who were viziers, Idu as an overseer of the South and Seneb as a scribe. The special feats in Weni's biography signifies that he was working with his father, but in keeping with tradition that focuses on appointments given through Royal favour, he excluded this from his inscription.

⁴⁸⁶ With exception to Djau and Sabni who talk about succeeding their father and Harkhuf (also Aswan) who mentions that he went on an expedition with his father (see chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion on the paternal motif featured in the biographies of Djau and Sabni, and chapter 2.8 for Harkhuf).

3.2 Conclusion

The similarity in career pathways expressed by officials with same highest titles, such as vizier, was not a result of a strict regime of promotions that had to be achieved to move up the career ladder until they reached the office of vizier. After all, these men were already earmarked for that position through their paternal bloodline. Consequently, initial appointments were targeted to instil experience and skills pertaining to the area of administration to which, the official belonged. Weni's position was not as exceptional as his biography would have us believe. The tasks the King gave him would be extraordinary if he were a *ḥnty-š* alone and came from a family, in which, this was the highest title. As a son of a vizier, these missions can be considered normal and within the parameters of a vizier in training. Weni demonstrates the stage of career development where he is no longer a novice in training and having to shadow family, he is old enough to hold office, work independently, and take on responsibility pertaining to his highest achievable title.

CHAPTER FOUR

Problematic Succession and Job Security

“If you are an excellent man, then you should beget a son to please the God (ir-k s3 n sim3m ntr). If he is honest (ir mty=f)⁴⁸⁷, he follows in your nature, he listens to your teachings, makes excellent his conduct within your household, and he takes care (nwi=f) of your property in good order (r-st-iry), then do all good things for him. This is your son who was issued from the seed of your ka (s3=k pw nssw styt k^c=k) and you should not separate from him (im=k iwd ib=k r-f).”⁴⁸⁸

“A progeny (mtwt) can make strife. If he should go wrong, he strays from your plans, he does not carry out your instructions (tm=f irt sb3yt=k)⁴⁸⁹, and his plans are vile within your household, having rebelled against everything that you say with his mouth babbling awful words that are vile (šm r=f m mdt hst)⁴⁹⁰, then his future (w3w m hr=f)⁴⁹¹ is not (n-wnt) in your hands. Drive him off, he is not your son, and he is not born to you...” (Žaba, 1956: 7.9-7.12).⁴⁹²

On a surface level, heirship with a hereditary nuance appears to be a straightforward tradition. The eldest son is the main successor and younger siblings are integrated into the domain of the highest title within the family.⁴⁹³ However, if a man was handing over his office, wealth, and property to the next generation, it was imperative that his heir was suitable for the position of head

⁴⁸⁷ *ir mty=f* – reads if he is exact.

⁴⁸⁸ *im=k iwd ib=k r=f* – for negative constructions that employ *im=k* to denote a negative wish or command, see GG: 434 & 345.

⁴⁸⁹ *tm=f irt sb3yt=k* – an example of the negatival verb *tm* followed by the infinitive, see GG: 342 & 344.

⁴⁹⁰ *šm r=f m mdt hst* – reads ‘the mouth goes/sets out with awful words that are vile’.

⁴⁹¹ *w3w m hr=f* – reads ‘the path in his sight’.

⁴⁹² Allen, 2015a: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, Simpson, 2003: 129- 148, and Žaba, 1956, *Les Maxims de Ptahhotep*.

⁴⁹³ See chapter 2.10 and chapter 3.

of the household. Being the first-born son did not necessarily mean that he was guaranteed to be the best candidate to succeed his father in office. The extract from *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* above demonstrates that the ancient Egyptians were aware that negative traits could transpire in their sons, making them unworthy successors. The consequences of an underserving or incapable heir was disownment and the withdrawal of inheritance by the dissatisfied parent.

Goody (1973:4), in his study of heirship in a modern-day context and focusing on the African-Eurasian societies, recognised that there were three factors that the benefactor needed to consider with the act of succession –

- Continuity of the funerary cult
- Continuity of the family estate
- Security in old age

The ancient Egyptians also had these concerns, which manifested as warnings in their tomb inscriptions which stated that any neglect on the part of the inheritor, could result in the forfeit of succession. The concern regarding the management of a funerary estate can be found in the tombs of two 6th Dynasty officials from El-Hawawish. Qereri and Nehutdesher, both include warnings to neglectful children in their tomb inscriptions;

“I have come to the necropolis, having dug a pool of 100 cubits and 10 sycamores on all its banks. As for any son who might neglect (*sbnw.t(y)=f(y)*) these. He will not make a claim (*ʿy=f*) against any of my property (*išt=i*).”⁴⁹⁴

These types of warnings did not just extend to private individuals, Kings were also keen to warn any potential heirs against the consequences of not safeguarding their lands i.e., continuity of the family

⁴⁹⁴ For Qereri, see Kanawati, 1986: 49, fig 20 and for Nehutdesher, Kanawati, 1988a: 12, fig 3b (Nehutdesher is more fragmented). For a translation of these texts, see Strudwick, 2005: 361.

estate. The Semna Stele of Senusret III (12th Dynasty) demonstrates the difference between a good and bad successor. The stele reads –

“Now as for any son of mine, who will strengthen this boundary, which my Majesty made, he is my son, and he is born to My Majesty. Pleasing is the son who protects his father, who strengthens the boundaries of the one who begot him. Now as for the one who will not fight regarding it (the boundary), he is not my son and he is not born to me” (Sethe, 1924: 84, lines 13-17).⁴⁹⁵

The assurance of security in old age is best demonstrated in the New Kingdom will of Naunakhte, from Deir el Medina, who disinherits the children that did not care for her in later life.

“She said, as for me, I am a free woman of the land of the Pharaoh. I have brought up these servants of yours⁴⁹⁶ and I have given them a household (*grg-pr*) and all the things on par with their status (*n n3 nty mi-ḳd*).⁴⁹⁷ But look, I have grown old and see, they are not looking after me likewise (*bn-st ḥr-irt ḥr gr ink*).⁴⁹⁸ Now as for any who has cared for me amongst them (*ir p3 w3ḥ nb drt=f ḥr drt=i im=w*)⁴⁹⁹, I will give my property to

⁴⁹⁵ See Eyre, 2016: 166-167, Morschauer, 1991: 170-172, Sethe, 1924: 83-85, and Simpson, 2003: 337-338.

⁴⁹⁶ ‘Yours’ is written with the possessive adjective *tn-my* – a late Egyptian form of the Middle Egyptian *n-tn-imy*, designed to place emphasis on the possessive adjective, see GG: 113.

⁴⁹⁷ *n n3 nty mi-ḳd* – translates ‘those who are likewise’.

⁴⁹⁸ *bn-st ḥr-irt-ḥr gr ink* – is a negative first present construction. *irt-ḥr* reads as ‘providing a state’, Naunakhte is saying that the level of lifestyle in which she has brought up her children has not been reciprocated during her old age by her children. *irt-ḥr* has been translated as ‘looking after’ here, for this construction see Černý, 1945: page 33, comment g and Gardiner & Sethe, 1928: page 24, VIII: 28. *gr ink* – particle + independent pronoun construction, see Junge, 2005: 88.

⁴⁹⁹ The literal translation of *ir p3 w3ḥ nb drt=f ḥr drt=i im=w* is ‘now as for any who have put his hand in my hand amongst them’. This gives the sense of caring or supporting someone.

him. As for he who has not provided for me, I will not give my property to him” (Černý, 1945: plate 8a, line 2.1-2.7).⁵⁰⁰

Although tradition in ancient Egypt dictated hereditary based succession, the textual evidence above demonstrates that it was not set in stone, and the successful transmission of office or property depended on the steadfastness of the child, in terms of their attitude towards their parents and their work ethic in maintaining the family property and estates. As a reaction to the social expectation of caring for parents both pre and post-mortem, it is common for sons to express their part in the burial of their father. It was anticipated that the eldest son, as the successor, interred his father, carried out burial rites, and ensured the continuation of the mortuary cult of his father.⁵⁰¹ For example, the three statements below are from the sons of the tomb owners that confirm they did their duty by interring their fathers, they read;

Kahap-Tjetiiker

His eldest son (*sꜣ=f smsw*), his beloved, the *hꜣty-ꜥ*, seal-bearer of the King, [sole companion, stolist of Min and overseer of the southern grain], Kheni, he says “– I had this tomb made for my father, the *hꜣty-ꜥ* and stolist of Min Tjeti.

(Kanawati, 1980b: Figure 19).⁵⁰²

⁵⁰⁰ For the will of Naunakhte, see Černý, 1945: 29-53, Donker Van Heel, 2016. *Mrs Naunakhte and family: The Women of Ramesside Deir el Medina*, Eyre, 2015: 106-108, and Feucht, 1995: 211-212 & 218.

⁵⁰¹ For the responsibilities of the eldest son and inheritance in ancient Egypt, see Feucht, 1995: 51-84, 86-92 & 212-213, Janssen & Pestman, 1968: 137-170, Kloth, 2002: 203-208 & 217-218, Olabarria, 2020: 90-93, Marshall, 2021: 38-47, McCorquodale, 2012a: 28-30, McCorquodale, 2012b: 71-88, Pestman, 1969: 58-77, Stauder-Porchet, 2017: 198-207, and Strudwick, 2005: 239-250 for more examples of sons carrying out the funerary duties for his father. Allam (2010a: 29-34) has an alternative view on eldest sons and succession, in that the parents could choose who carried the term eldest out of all their children regardless of birth order, which in turn meant that the parents designated the heir. However, there should be some caution to Allam’s approach as he bases this theory on evidence dating to the Hellenistic era. See Myśliwiec, 2010: 305-336 for the iconography employed in tombs to differentiate the eldest son from his other siblings.

⁵⁰² Restorations taken from *Urk I*: 265, 5. For transliteration and translation, see Kanawati, 1980b: 19 and figure 19 for line drawing.

Nebi

“It was his eldest son (*s3=f smsw*), his beloved son Seni who acted for him ...” (Kanawati, 1989: Plate 6).⁵⁰³

Hesmin

“[His] eldest [son], his beloved, the sole companion, Chamberlin and lector priest [...] who acted for him when [He went to the beautiful west]”⁵⁰⁴ (Kanawati, 1986: Figure 3).⁵⁰⁵

These three short statements illustrate that these men fulfilled their duty as primary heir by burying their fathers.

The biographies of Djau from Deir el Gebrawi and Sabni of Aswan are similar in nature in that they both assert that they buried their fathers, but they go to more extreme lengths than the El Hawawish examples by orientating the entire focus of their biographical narrative around their father. This is to the extent that they break away from the traditional content and structure that was employed in Old Kingdom tomb biographies. Stauder-Porchet (2020a: 198-201) breaks down the structure of the core narrative of a so called ‘event based’ Old Kingdom biography to a simplified tripartite model (see figure 39)⁵⁰⁶ –

⁵⁰³ For the stele of Nebi (Louvre C235), see Kanawati, 1989: 54-55 & plate 6a.

⁵⁰⁴ Kanawati (1986: 11) suggests the reconstruction [*sb r imnt nfrt*] – gone to the beautiful West.

⁵⁰⁵ For Hesmin, see Kanawati, 1986: 11 and figure 3.

⁵⁰⁶ Stauder-Porchet (2020b: 197-222) discusses the structure of biographies with Harkhuf’s inscription at the centre of this study, however, the biography of Sabni and its peculiarities, in comparison to other self-presentations, is referenced on pp 215-218. See also Stauder- Porchet, 2017: 226-230 for further discussion on the tripartite structure employed in Old Kingdom biographies.

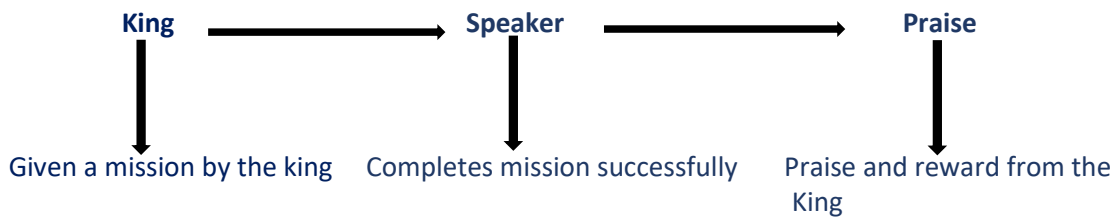


Figure 39: Model based on Stauder-Porchet’s tripartite structure of an event based Old Kingdom tomb biography.

By applying this model to the 6th Dynasty biographies of Harkhuf and Nekhabu, we can see that they follow this scheme (figure 40 below) –

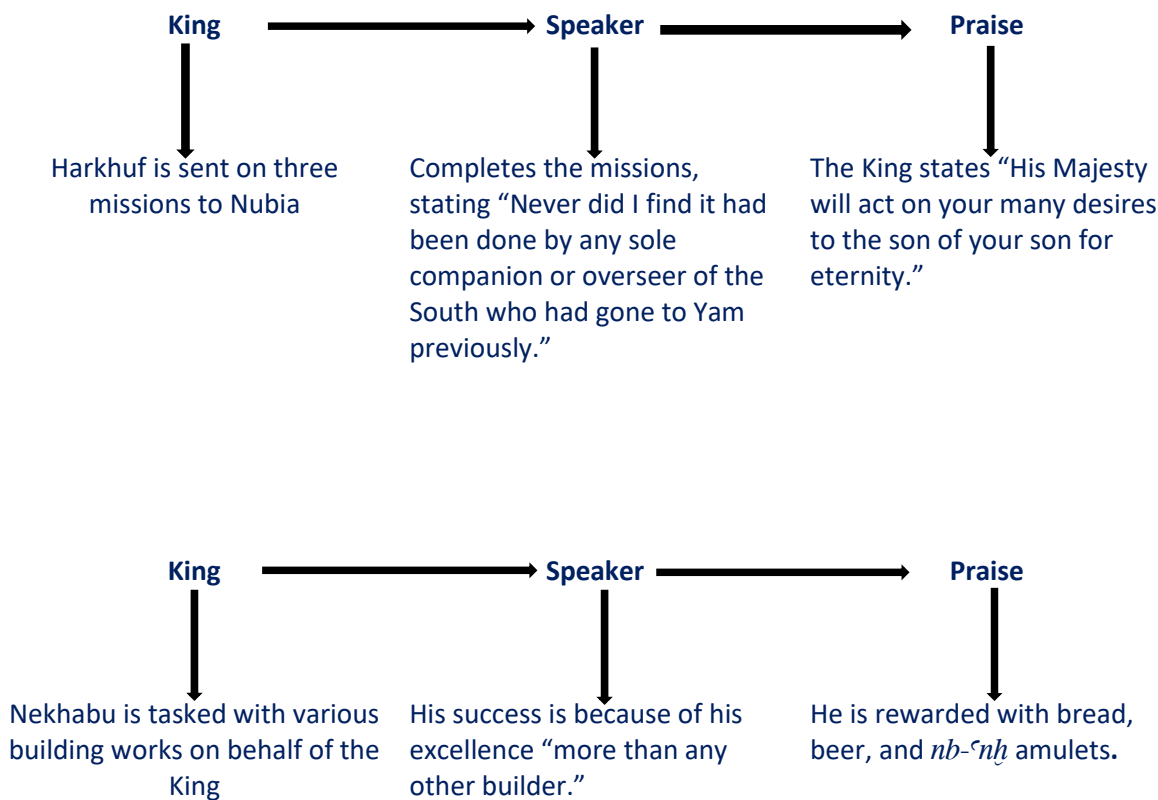


Figure 40: Stauder-Porchet's tripartite structure in relation to the biographies of Nekhabu and Harkhuf.

Nekhabu and Harkhuf follow the tripartite structure proposed by Stauder- Porchet (2020b:198-201).⁵⁰⁷ They are given missions by the King, then carry out these tasks in a way no other official could match, which resulted in patronage from the King. The biography of Djau and Sabni deviate from this model.⁵⁰⁸ They still have the same tripartite structure as Harkhuf and Nekhabu, but Djau and Sabni stray away from the expected format of self-orientated biographies and place their fathers at the forefront of their subject matter, more specifically in a mortuary context (see figure 41 below).

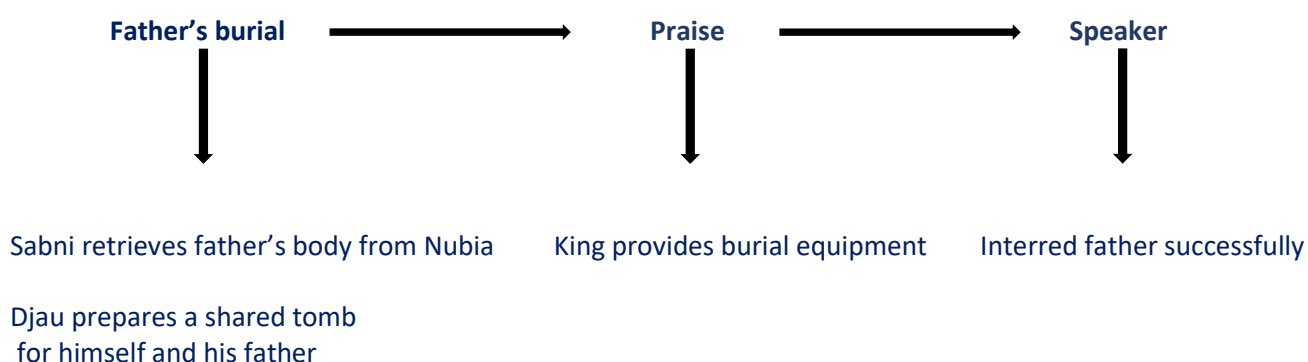


Figure 41: A model demonstrating how the tripartite narrative structure proposed by Stauder-Porchet differs in the biographies of Sabni and Djau.

Djau and Sabni follow the model - Father's burial-Praise-Speaker within a narrative framework based on the burial of their father. They both have the traditional examples of parental burial comparable to the three El Hawawish examples (see above), whereby they include a statement to verify that they buried their father in accordance with the expectation of an eldest son. However, the material then becomes more unorthodox in that there are attempts to include elements of tradition by expressing Royal favour, but this is targeted towards their father, rather than themselves, and is expressed in the form of receiving funerary goods from the Royal workshop. Weni has similar

⁵⁰⁷ Also see Stauder-Porchet (2020a:69) for a discussion concerning the biography of Harkhuf and how his biography corresponds to the model - King-speaker-praise.

⁵⁰⁸ The biographies are translated and discussed further below.

material in his narrative, but the favour of burial equipment is given to him, which is what we would expect in a self-presentation. Weni states -

“I [requested] from the hand of the Majesty, my Lord that a white stone coffin (*inr ḥd krs*) be brought from Tura for me. His Majesty had a divine seal bearer cross with a troop of sailors who were equipped with him, to bring this coffin back for me from Tura. It came back with him in a great ship to the Residence, together with [its] lid (*ḥ[=f]*), false door (*rwt*), lintel (*rwyt*), two door jambs (*kmḥ.wy*) and libation table (*zst*). The like had not yet been done for any servant, because of my excellence upon the heart of his Majesty, because I was rooted upon the heart of his Majesty, because the heart of his Majesty was filled with me”. (*Urk I*, 99, 9 – 100, 4).

Weni has expressed his receipt of Royal favour in the conventional sense in that the praise from the King is directed to him.⁵⁰⁹ Djau and Sabni forgo this to express their favour from the King in the form of burial equipment for their father, making their fathers the protagonist in their autobiographies. Regarding Sabni and his biography, Stauder-Porchet states “As discussed, any textual reference to the father is very untypical in an event biography given the genre is all about orientating the speaker’s relational person on the King” (2020b: 216). This deviation from the customary content infers that a significant factor influenced Sabni and Djau to stray from tradition. As it was a natural social expectation for the eldest son and successor to inter their father, then there must have been a reason for Djau and Sabni to base their whole inscription on the funerary arrangements of their father when it could be expressed in a much simpler format like the El - Hawawish examples above. They both include the customary references to burying their father better than any other official.

⁵⁰⁹ See Richards, 2002: 80-81 & 97 for a description of some of the funerary equipment mentioned in Weni’s biography that was found intact in his tomb. For the King’s involvement in the provisioning of tombs and funerary goods see Alexanian, 2006: 3-4, Allen, 2006: 13-15, Chauvet, 2007: 313-321, Eyre, 1987: 21-25, and Kloth, 2002: 211-217.

These shorter statements would have encapsulated that they had done their duty and freed up space in the biography to describe their own feats and favour from the King. However, this paternal theme is stressed to extraordinary proportions to the extent that their own achievements are backgrounded in favour of their duties towards their father, rather than the King.

To add weight to the theory that Sabni and Djau were reacting to some sort of situation, they also share a motif that is unique to them and is not found in other 6th Dynasty biographies. They both mention that they receive decrees from the King, which award posthumous appointments of office to their father, although, such promotions do mark Royal favour for Sabni and Djau, as they would ultimately inherit these titles.⁵¹⁰ Usually, promotion is only mentioned in the context of the King's favour, consequently, including content that refers to paternal offices is a subtle reference to the hereditary nature of office transmission and is contradictory to the awarding of titles as Royal patronage. A further connection between the two men is that they share a tomb with their father. Stauder-Porchet (2015:191-204) in discussing the biography of Hesi, ascertains that the unusual phraseology employed by Hesi is to attract the reader's attention and make it distinct. Djau and Sabni appear to have the same motivation with the unusual themes used within their biographies. Sabni and Djau are hundreds of miles apart and yet the combination of similarities within their biographical material, the decrees, and their shared burials with their fathers suggests that we are dealing with two men who needed to emphasise their position as eldest son and legitimise their succession.

By examining in detail, the comparative material within the biographies of Djau and Sabni, the full extent of their drive to be viewed as the legitimate successor becomes more evident.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ For Royal decrees, see chapter 2.9.

⁵¹¹ Sabni and Djau's biographies are used throughout this chapter, so I will reference fully here once, rather than repeating the same footnote and reference the plate or line drawing after each of my translations. For Sabni, see Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: 51-52 and Strudwick, 2005: 335-338 and for Djau, see Strudwick, 2005: 357-388.

- Djau and Sabni begin in a conventional sense, like the El-Hawawish examples above, by claiming responsibility for the interment of their fathers. Thus, reaffirming that they fulfilled the social expectation of the eldest son burying their father by stating;

Djau

“I buried my father the *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* more successfully, more beautifully [than] any of his [peers] (*mit=f*) who are in [this Upper Egypt]” (*Urk I*, 146, 3 - 5).⁵¹²

Sabni

“...I buried this father of mine in his tomb of the necropolis. [Never] had [any] of his peers been buried [like him] (Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: Plate 9, lines 50-51).⁵¹³

- When recording his shared burial with his father, Djau states that despite having a joint tomb, he could have had his own tomb erected;⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² [] Sethe’s reconstructions.

⁵¹³ [] Edel, Seyfried & Vieler’s reconstructions.

⁵¹⁴ Alexanian (2006: 5-6) argues that Djau’s statement regarding the joint tomb is an explanation of sorts, designed to elucidate that his joint tomb is not a reflection of his social status, it was his personal choice. Alexanian, including Hesi in the discussion states “Hesi and Djau anticipated that every tomb visitor would notice the discrepancy between their high social position and their modest tomb or burial. Due to the fact that they wanted to avoid the impression that they did not have permission to erect a more impressive respectively individual tomb that they gave individual explanations for their respective renunciations.” Hesi does not share a joint tomb but states “I had one room made in this tomb in order that voice offerings come forth for me in it, even though I was empowered (*shꜣm.kw*) with making it with many rooms” (Kanawati, 1999: plate 59, line 4-5). It is suggested by scholars that Royal permission was needed to erect a tomb and there was an administrative system to facilitate this (see Allen, 2006: 13-15, Chauvet, 2007: 313-321, and Kloth, 2002: 217-218 for the primary material this theory is based on. Therefore, Alexanian (2006: 5-6) is arguing that Djau did not want visitors to his tomb thinking he was not granted permission to build his own tomb, making his statement a disclaimer. Whether the theory of Royal permission to build a tomb stands or not, it is my suggestion that Djau’s statement goes beyond an exclamation of status and permission to build a tomb. Examining his biography fully, rather than this one extract cited above, it can be read that Djau could have erected his own tomb, but he chose to be buried in one tomb to emphasise his relationship with his father. The content of his

“However, I caused that I be buried in one tomb together with this Djau through the desire that I be with him in one place. Not because I was lacking in the means of making a second tomb (*n-ís n tm(=i) wnn hr-ꜥ n irt is. w(y) sn. w(y)*),⁵¹⁵ so I did this through the desire that I see this Djau every day.” (*Urk I*, 146, 16 – 147, 5).

Sabni does not mention the joint tomb with his father in the self- presentation, but this is reflected in the tomb plan itself which was constructed in four phases to integrate Sabni’s section of tomb within his father’s pre-existing structure.⁵¹⁶ It should be noted that a shared or adjoining tomb was not unusual in ancient Egypt. Senedjemib Inti had a family tomb complex, additionally his eldest son Senedjemib Mehi also expands on his father’s biography with similar content to Djau and Sabni by stating the King equipped his father with funerary goods from the Royal workshops.⁵¹⁷ However, Brovarski (2000: 26-28) does state that where the images of Mehi appear in his father’s tomb is always a palimpsest, where his figure is inscribed over another, and suggests that Mehi had an elder brother who died. If this was the case, then Mehi not being the original eldest may have led him to include a more detailed description of his responsibility in the interment of his father to legitimise his place as new heir, which is in line with Sabni and Djau. Another aspect is Mehi has a separate Mastaba to his father. In fact, Brovarski (2000: 133) states that Mehi’s tomb “sits on an independent site, on the north side of the paved court of G2370 (his father’s tomb).” Although, Mehi was within the vicinity of his father’s tomb complex, he had his own tomb to

biography is centred on his father, not his own status or his own Royal favour, furthermore, his father’s offices are confirmed by a decree from the King. If his own status and standing with the King was something that he needed to reaffirm then surely the material would be more self-centred.

⁵¹⁵ The verb *wnn* is made negative with *tm* and the nominal predicate *hr-ꜥ n irt is. wy sn, wy* is negated with *n...ís*. See Doret, 1986: 54.

⁵¹⁶ See Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: 8-21 and Vischak, 2015:58-76 for images and descriptions regarding the construction of the tomb and the various stages of building to adapt it into a joint tomb.

⁵¹⁷ See Brovarski, 2000: 101-110, line drawings 18-23, Strudwick 2005: 314-315, and *Urk I*: 59-67.

express his own Royal favour and successes.⁵¹⁸ Kanawati (2013: 11) remarks on the fact that Djau's tomb is unique compared to other shared tombs, in that, this was not a son integrating his tomb into his father's pre-existing monument or building a chapel in the perimeter of his father's tomb complex. Nor was it the father allocating a portion of his tomb to his son, this tomb was planned, built, and decorated to be shared.

Sabni and Djau list the funerary equipment from the Residence which was given as a favour from the King. The biographies read;

"I requested (*dbh.n(-i)*)⁵¹⁹ namely my needs (*s3ir(-i)*) from the Majesty of my Lord, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Neferkare, so that a coffin, clothe and setj oil (*sṯ*) be apportioned (*šd.t(w)*) for this Djau. His Majesty caused that the southland wood (for) the coffin (*hnt- t3 ht krs*) be brought and the setj oil (*sṯ*), sefset oil (*sfsṯ*), 200 garments of hatyu with beautiful Upper Egyptian clothe for cord (*[hb]sw 200 m h3t m šmꜥw nfrt n rwd*) which was apportioned from the double treasury of the Residence for this Djau" (*Urk I, 146, 6 - 14*).

Sabni claims Iry a man from the Residence comes and;

"He brought [a sealbearer of the King],⁵²⁰ 2 embalmers (*wṯ.wy*), senior lector priest (*hry-hby smsw*), one who is on annual duty (*imy-rn[pt]*),⁵²¹ and inspector of the wabet (*šhd wꜥbt*), mourners (*hꜥw*), and the items of the funerary workshop (*pr nfr*) [...] in th[eir] entirety, having brou[ght] the setj-heb oil (*sṯ hb*) from the funerary workshop and the secrets from the embalming place, [...] from the house of weapons (*pr*

⁵¹⁸ See also chapter 4.1 for a discussion of the shared tomb belonging to the family of Mereruka and Wepemneferet.

⁵¹⁹ For the verb *dbh* -to request, see Doret, 1986: 47 and 64.

⁵²⁰ Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: 50, line 37 restores *sd3wty-bity* here.

⁵²¹ For *imy-rnpt*, see Jones, Vol 1, no 1012: page 281.

ḥꜣ), the cloth of the treasury and all the burial equipment what comes out of the Residence according to what is issued for the *iry-[pꜣt]* Mereru” (Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, lines 36-42).⁵²²

Sabni does include a short statement about Royal favour directed to him, but in comparison this is eclipsed by the King’s favour to his father. Sabni recalls;

“30 aroura (*sꜣꜣt*) in the northern and southern land were given to me as a *ḥnty-š* of the pyramid of Neferkare” (Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, line 71-72).⁵²³

- The biographies of Sabni and Djau both incorporate the inclusion of appointments awarded to their fathers posthumously by Royal decree⁵²⁴.

Djau requests a decree which confirms the office of his father, stating;

“I have requested (*dbḥ.n-i*) [from his Majesty to confer (*nḏ*)] the office of *ḥnty-ꜣ* on this Djau. His Majesty caused that a decree be made for making him as *ḥnty-ꜣ* as an [offering] which the King gives [*(ḥtp) di nsw*]” (Urk I, 147, 13 - 16).

According to Sabni, he just receives a decree from the Residence with no mention of him requesting one, he says;

“I went down to place this father of mine [in his tomb] in the district, and [th]is Iry came from the Residence having brought a decree (*wḏ*) to confer (*nḏ*) a *ḥnty-ꜣ*, seal bearer of the King,

⁵²² Urk I, 138, 2 – 9.

⁵²³ Urk I, 140, 9 - 10. For areas of land in ancient Egypt, see GG: 266. See chapter 2.5 for a discussion on this text.

⁵²⁴ See chapter 2.9 for a discussion on Royal decrees.

sole companion, and lector priest, to this Mekhu (Sabni's father)"

(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: plate 9, lines 34-36).⁵²⁵

Their tomb inscriptions include information regarding a decree that cemented their father's offices, which in turn, would confirm their newly appointed titles. Kanawati & Swinton (2018: 184-186) suggest that Djau's father died soon after his own father, meaning he did not live long enough to acquire the family titles, and so a dispensation had to be made in the form of a decree to bestow the titles over to Djau. If the decree was the only unusual aspect surrounding Djau and his father then this may be the case, but we also have the paternal based biography and the shared tomb, which overall suggests there was something more profound behind the choices Djau made with regards to his tomb and inscriptions.

The mention of their father's titles tiptoes between the line of meritocracy and the hereditary factor involved in the transmission of appointments, which is normally avoided in Old Kingdom biographies. The King is usually at the forefront of promotions, but Djau and Sabni make mention of their father's title holding, which have now become their own, and are legitimised through this decree. In order to really hit home regarding his rightful succession, Djau includes in his titles;

"His eldest son, his beloved, of his body, who does what his father favours, who is in his heart belonging to his place (his father's office) (*imy ib=f n st=f*)" (Urk I, 145, 12 - 13).

Additionally, Djau describes himself in one scene on the north wall of his tomb as;

"His eldest son, his beloved of his body, truly"
(Kanawati, 2013: plate 62).

⁵²⁵ Urk I, 137, 8 – 138, 1.

If the decree confirms his father's offices, then these statements fortify Djau's position of successor. Sabni and Djau do avoid alienating the King from the process of promotion by including the King as the origin of the decree.

An interesting comparison to Djau and Sabni can be found in the 8th Dynasty tomb of Shemai of Coptos, in which, his son Idu has left an inscription that details some of the things that Idu did for his father. The inscription reads;⁵²⁶

[...] What the Great ones (*wrw*) hate (*swfz̄t*) throughout the nomes *hn?*[...] ⁵²⁷: [...] [Gods fat]her beloved one of the God ((*i*)*t n̄tr mry n̄tr*)⁵²⁸, the *iry p̄t*, foster child of the King, the overseer of the [South], [...] Idu. I have established {these} monuments [...] making pleasant with incense this ka-chapel of my fathers and ancestors, so that the ka-chapels of these nobles (*s̄h̄w*) were like [...] noble (*šps*), < which I purified > (*w̄b. n=i*)>. ⁵²⁹ I re-established (*smnh. n=i*) the statues of these

⁵²⁶ [...] lacuna, { } Mostafa's reconstruction, () transliteration of text, and < > my own reconstruction.

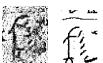
⁵²⁷ I have followed Fischer's suggestion that the beginning of this inscription (the first three lines) is missing as it was painted rather than inscribed, which affected the preservation (1991: 26). Other scholars such as Strudwick (2005: 346) translate the first line as the introduction to the inscription, treating *swfz̄t* as a causative of *wfz̄* – 'to talk, speak' (CDME: 60), and so they translate – 'beginning of the speech of the officials'.

⁵²⁸ For the titles *it n̄tr* and *mry n̄tr*, see Jones, vol 1, no 1283: page 345 & no 1626: page 439. For discussion see Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 174-176, Martinet, 2019, 105-106, Martinet, 2020: 71, and Papazian, 2015: 410-411.

⁵²⁹ Mostafa (1984/85: 245) suggests reconstructing *sr̄f. n=(i)*, translating this line as 'which I warmed up'. He bases this on the fragment of a sign which he classes as the brazier sign (GG: Q7) and the following *r̄f* signs. Strudwick (2005: 346) goes with the translation 'I refreshed'. However, I would like to suggest a different reading, instead of ...*šps sr̄f. n=(i)* another proposal is to treat this sentence as ... *šps r̄=f w̄b. n=f*, so the *r̄=f* is a particle and refers to the *šps* and the destroyed section of text that came before. The fragmented sign that Mostafa treats as the brazier is possibly an example of the seated man receiving a purification (GG: A6). If

we examine this section of text (taken from Mostafa, 1984/85: plates 1 & 2) -



and the sign in question -  , the rounded part at the top of the sign could be the seated man's head with the pot above it and the round section at the bottom is the remainder of his kilt. The lines running down in front of the figure is the water running from the pot. The translation, 'which I purified,'

noble ones, these *iry p^ct*, which I found destroyed, so it happened that (*r hpr*)⁵³⁰ [I brought new statues?] (*šms twt m₃w*) just like those that were destroyed in his ka-chapel in accordance with his *imyt-pr*. I saw to the tomb of my father (*iw(=i) hr m₃₃ is n it(=i)*), the *iry-p^ct*, *h₃ty-^c*, the sole companion, overseer of priests [...] Min, (Shemai) [...] the offering stones [were filled – *m_h.(w) ‘b₃(w)*]⁵³¹ with good things with their name and offices placed upon them⁵³², in order that they endure for eternity (*r wnn=mn n dt*).⁵³³ I made these stele for them [...]. Now I carried out all that he commanded, namely the work of the necropolis according to everything he ordered. Never did I weary (*wrd*) him, and never did I do what he hated (*sft.n=f*) [...] at the side of (*r gs?*) I looked out for any who hated him (*m₃₃.n=i nb sf₃ -sw*) and any who made an accusation against him amongst them (*srh n=f nb im=sn*), when he was in his house. I overthrew them completely (*iw shr.n=i n=sn mi-kd=sn*), so that I deprived [him of his house, from] (*sw pr=f m*) his granaries, from his treasuries, from his bulls, from his cattle, from all his duties

also makes sense in the context of temple ritual and in the text, it follows nicely on from Idu using incense within the ka-chapel.

⁵³⁰ *r hpr* – example of an auxiliary verb used to set the scene, in this case, it marks the transition in the text from the statues of his ancestors being destroyed to Idu installing new ones. For auxiliary verbs see GG: 460-485. For a discussion on this section of text see, Mostafa, 1984/85: 425, comment o & p.

⁵³¹ Mostafa (1984/85: 427, comment w) suggests the reading offering stones - *‘b₃(w)* based on the remaining determinatives, which are three stone slabs (GG: N39).

⁵³² There is just the possessive pronoun *s* written after *hr*, translating as - with their names and offices placed upon it, but as he is referring to more than one offering stone, a plural pronoun such as *sn* makes better sense.

⁵³³ *r wnn=mn n dt* – The subject is omitted after *wnn*, but it is clearly referring to his ancestors enduring for eternity due to their names being inscribed on the offering stones and offerings being made, therefore *-sn* would be the pronoun here.

(*wnwt*), so that he passed over (*sw3-f*) his household [...]⁵³⁴

(Mostafa, 1984/85: Plate 2).⁵³⁵

Idu really places emphasis on not only ensuring the continuation of his father's funerary cult but also other ancestors. He claims that he was a good son before the death of his father by looking after his father's best interests by the removal of any problematic people in the household. In addition, there is the mention of an *imyt-pr* that appears to order the upkeep and maintenance of the family ka-chapels and this inscription allows Idu to demonstrate that he adhered to what was ordered in this document.⁵³⁶ Every aspect of Idu's inscription is engineered to highlight his worthiness as heir. The mention of an *imyt-pr* does suggest that there was an underlying issue within the family and Idu had to strengthen his claim as successor. Idu and Shemai, like Djau and Sabni, receive decrees from the King (Coptos decree M and O).⁵³⁷ The function of the decrees aimed at Idu was to outline the transition of office from father to son, rather than the confirmation of paternal offices like we see in the biography of Djau and Sabni. Overall, there is a correlation between the three men that go beyond the formulaic prose usually found in Old Kingdom biographies, which were centred on the King and the conformation of the expected social behaviour. The focus of their inscriptions is that the interment of their father was carried out by them, in turn highlighting that they fulfilled their role as successor. Djau and Sabni appear to have an underlying motive for these extra measures, apparent in the fact they were also buried with their father to further enhance the relationship between the benefactor and the heir. The nature of these paternal based biographies does present that an issue had arisen, and this was a reactive

⁵³⁴ There is a last line of the text that is not included here because it is very fragmented. It mentions a festival, a stele, and the Residence.

⁵³⁵ For a full translation of this text, see Strudwick, 2005: 346-347. For a full translation, the hieroglyphic transcription, commentary, and discussion, see Mostafa, 1984/85: 419-429. Additionally, there is a second publication by Mostafa (1987: 169-184) that focuses on the date and historical context of this text.

⁵³⁶ *imyt-pr* documents are discussed in chapter 4.1.

⁵³⁷ For Coptos decree M and O, see Goedicke, 1967: 178-189, Strudwick, 2005: 121-122, and *Urk I*: 299, 2 – 11 and 300, 11 – 301, 11.

strategy to a situation that needed to be addressed and literally set in stone to deter any further problems with succession. Looking beyond the biographies there is other evidence that surrounds Djau and Sabni that alludes to the motivation behind their biographical content.

4.1 Plurality of heirs and complex family dynamics

We only need to look at some of the textual evidence from ancient Egypt to see how remarriage and additional wives affected family dynamics. Heqanakht a priest of the early Middle Kingdom struggled to keep the peace within his household, whilst he was away from home, and berated his eldest son Merisu over the mistreatment of his new wife. In letter two, he states;

I have said to you “Do not keep a friend of Hotepet away from her, namely her hairdresser or her *prt?*.”⁵³⁸ Take care (*ḥz tn*)⁵³⁹ concerning her! If only you would be firm in all matters like this, but you do not like her, so you shall have *lutenhab*⁵⁴⁰ brought to me. As this man lives for me⁵⁴¹ and I am talking about Ip, he who will create any case troubling to my wife (*ir.t(y)=f(y) sp nb ḥr pgz n ḥbswt (=i)*)⁵⁴², he is against me, and I am against him. Look as for he who will act for her is likewise acting for me. Indeed, would one amongst you endure his wife

⁵³⁸ The exact nature of the *prt* is ambiguous. The seated woman determinative (GG: B1) coupled with the term for house has led to Allen (2002: 44 & 109-110) to suggest the term means a type of female domestic role and so he translates as house servant. See also Eyre, 2007: 237, comment 82.

⁵³⁹ *ḥz tn* – is an example of a dependent pronoun following the imperative to reinforce the order, see GG: 337. *ḥz* has the root meaning ‘to fight’ (CDME: 46), so Heqanakht is saying ‘fight you on behalf of my wife’.

⁵⁴⁰ *lutenhab* and Hotepet are thought to be the same person, see Allen, 2002: 108-109 and Eyre, 2007: 238. Additionally, she is referred to as *ḥbswt*, a term with the suggested translation ‘new’ or ‘second wife,’ see Allen, 2002: 108, Eyre 2007: 237-239, Robins, 1993: 61-63, and Ward, 1986: 65-69.

⁵⁴¹ *ḥn n-i s pn* – ‘as this man lives for me’ is a nominal *sdm=f* employed in an oath to highlight the predicate and the consequence of the oath which is ‘he is against me, and I am against him.’ For oaths see GG: 218 and Allen 2000: 25.11.

⁵⁴² (*ir.t(y)=f(y) sp nb ḥr pgz n ḥbswt (=i)*) – Future participial and *ḥr pgz* has been treated as a circumstantial *ḥr* + infinitive in my translation. Some scholars have treated this sentence as mistreatment of Heqanakht’s wife of a sexual nature due to the word *pgz* – to open (CDME: 96), which gives connotations of the wife being ‘opened up’ for sexual advances. For example, Parkinson, 1991: 107 translates – ‘Anyone who commits a misdeed against the sex of my new wife’ and Wentz 1990:62 renders ‘whoever shall make a sexual advance towards my wife’. However, *pgz* can also be read as battlefield (CDME: 96) and given that the household is in conflict due to the strained relationships between Heqanakht’s new wife and his children, rendering *pgz* as trouble is apt.

(*ḥbswt*) complained (*srḥw*) about to him, then I would endure.

In what way can I be with you at one table (*ptr ky wnn=i ḥn^c
=tn m t̄ w^ct*) when you will not respect the wife (*ḥbswt*) for me
(Allen, 2002: Letter two, plate 30, lines 38-44).⁵⁴³

Royalty was not exempt from the tribulations that came with an extended family, and Rameses III paid the ultimate price. The Harem Conspiracy Papyrus records the assassination of Rameses III plotted by one of the women of his harem – Tiye, who wished to elevate her son Pentaweret to the next in line to the throne. An extract of the Turin Judicial papyrus reads;

Pentaweret, the one who used to be called the other name (*pzy wnw dd(w) n=f pzy ky rn* ⁵⁴⁴, he was brought on account of the collusion (*ḥw(t)w*)⁵⁴⁵ which he made with Tiye his mother, when she had plotted the matters together with the women of the harem regarding making a rebellion against his Lord (*m-dr wn=s w3w3 n3 mdwt i-r-m n3 ḥmwt pr -ḥnr ḥr irt sbi ḥr nb=f*). He was placed in the presence of the butlers (*wb3w*), so he could be examined, and they found him guilty. They left him in his place, and he killed himself (*iw=w w3ḥ=f ḥr st=f iw=f mt n=f ds=f*) (KRI V: 358, 5.7).⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ For translations, discussions, and extracts of letter two, see Allen, 2002: 17 & 44-47, Eyre, 2007: 237-239, Parkinson, 1991: 105-107, and Wente, 1990:60-62. Heqanakht also complains in letter one about the treatment of his new wife, regarding a house servant treating his wife badly and how his family is allowing this to happen. See Allen, 2002: 16 for translation, 35-37 for commentary and plate 28, lines 14-17, Eyre, 2007: 237, Parkinson, 1991: 105, and Wente. 1990: 60.

⁵⁴⁴ De Buck suggests that the other name was a King's name given to him by his co-conspirators (1937:157). This would validate why the name was not recorded in the papyri. Deveria (1897: 27 & 51-52) infers that Pentaweret is a pseudonym, and the other name is referring to his actual name.

⁵⁴⁵ For *ḥw(t)w* – collusion, see LED: 305.

⁵⁴⁶ For the full hieroglyphic transcription of the harem conspiracy papyri, including the Turin Judicial papyrus, Papyrus Lee Rollin, and Papyrus Rifaud, see KRI V: 350-366. For an examination of the Harem conspiracy papyrus in terms of historical context, translation, philological study, line drawings of the papyri, and discussions of the people and processes involved in the conspiracy see Deveria. T. 1897, *Le Papyrus Judiciaire de Turin et les Papyrus Lee et Rollin* and for an updated publication but without the philological study and line

Maternal ambition concerning inheritance and conflict regarding a new wife in the family is a common theme that appears in literature in the New Kingdom and the Late Period.⁵⁴⁷ The beginning of the *Tale of the Doomed Prince* highlights the impact of a new wife joining the family. In the introduction to the tale, he says;

“I am the son of a chariot officer (*sny*) of the land of Egypt.
My mother died and my father took another wife, but she
started to hate me (*iw=s hpr hr msdd=i*) so I left to get away
from her” (*LES*: page 3-4, lines 5.11- 5.12).⁵⁴⁸

Similarly, in *The Tale of Setne and Tabubu*, Setne is infatuated with a lady called Tabubu but before she will entertain Setne, she makes several demands. Tabubu wants a deed of maintenance written up that gives her the rights to Setne’s property. Furthermore, she wants his children to agree to the deed that forfeits their rights to inherit and adds weight to her own children’s claim. Finally, she insists that Setne kills his children to eliminate any future threat to her own children’s claim to Setne’s property.⁵⁴⁹

Family discord regarding succession is not only traceable in the textual evidence, but there is also more underhanded indication of sibling rivalry in the form of *Damnatio Memoriae*.⁵⁵⁰ In the Old Kingdom, vandalism of tombs becomes more frequent during the 6th Dynasty and the main target of defacement are the figures of eldest sons.⁵⁵¹ The tomb of Mereruka, located at Saqqara, is a prime

drawings, see Redford, S. 2008. *The Harem conspiracy: The Murder of Rameses III*. For translations and discussion of the Turin Papyri and the Harem conspiracy in general, see de Buck, 1937: 152-164 and Vernus, 2003: 108-120.

⁵⁴⁷ See Eyre (2007: 223-243) for a discussion on the impact on heirship and families due to remarriage and Feucht, 1995: 173-194 for the influence of mothers.

⁵⁴⁸ Eyre, 2007: 223-227, Lichtheim, 1976: 200-203, and Simpson, 2003: 75-79.

⁵⁴⁹ See Lichtheim, 1980: 133-136.

⁵⁵⁰ For *Damnatio Memoriae* performed as a result of disfavour with the King, see chapter 4.2.1.

⁵⁵¹ See Myśliwiec, 2010: 315-318 for a discussion and a list of defaced tombs where the eldest sons are the targets of vandalism.

example of how a multifaceted family can lead to conflict. Mereruka had two wives, the first is absent from his tomb but the second – Waatetkhathor not only features throughout her husband's tomb, but she also has her own independent tomb.⁵⁵² The reason for the preferment in Mereruka's decoration and the designation of her own tomb was due to her Royal status. According to the captions that accompany her images, she was a *s3t nsw smsw nt ht=f* – eldest King's daughter of his body, this would make her the sister of Pepy I and the daughter of Tety.⁵⁵³ As a result of the two maternal branches within one family, Mereruka had two eldest sons. Pepyankh-Memi is the eldest son of the first unknown wife and Meryteti-Mery is the eldest son of Waatetkhathor.⁵⁵⁴ In only one scene in Mereruka's tomb, Pepyankh-Memi and Merytety-Mery are depicted together, and both have the caption *s3=f smsw* – eldest son (see fig 42).

⁵⁵² For Waatetkhathor, see Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2004: 11-12 and Kanawati, 2010: 22-23. For the publication of her tomb, see Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2008, *Mereruka and his family, part II: The Tomb of Waatetkhathor*.

⁵⁵³ See Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2008: 11, Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2010: 22-23, and Myśliwiec, 2010: 315-316.

⁵⁵⁴ Meryteti-Mery is featured throughout his mother's tomb and is always labelled a *s3=s smsw mry=s* – Her eldest son, her beloved, although he lacks any titles (see Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2008: Plates, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 69 & 70).

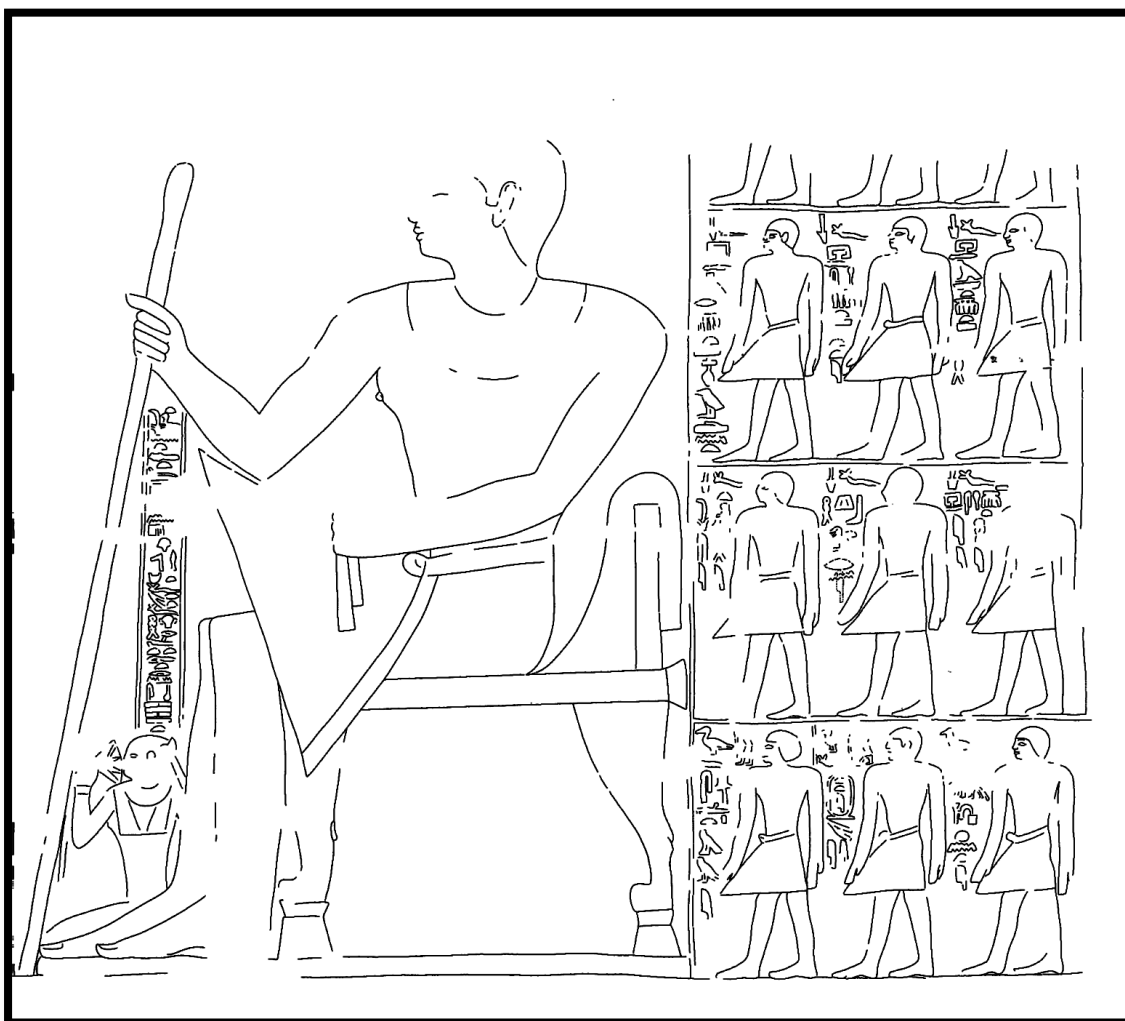


Figure 42: Room A10 - Family scene from the west wall of Mereruka's tomb. Mereruka is seated with his wife kneeling before him. Behind the chair is three surviving registers of Mereruka's brothers and sons. (Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2010: plate 97).

On the bottom register, there are three of Mereruka's sons, Pepyankh-Memi is first in the row followed by Meryteti-Mery in second position, and both are captioned as eldest son. The last in the row is a son called Khenti. Pepyankh-Memi has the title sole companion, and Khenti is a judge and scribe (*s3b sš*), whereas Merytety-Mery is without any titles. This is the only place in Mereruka's tomb that Meryteti-Mery is described as eldest son, but his more frequent caption is *s3 nsw smsw n ht=f* - King's eldest son of his body, which is referring to his maternal Royal family line. Thus, demonstrating that it was more important to highlight his Royal connection through his mother

rather than his paternal relationship.⁵⁵⁵ The situation between the brothers becomes more obscure with the iconography and captions contradicting each other. In room A3, the bottom half of the scenes are preserved on the north and south wall (see figures 43 & 44). The south wall shows the bottom of Mereruka's legs with his wife stood before him, and behind him on the lower register stands Pepyankh-Memi who is entitled eldest son (figure 43).

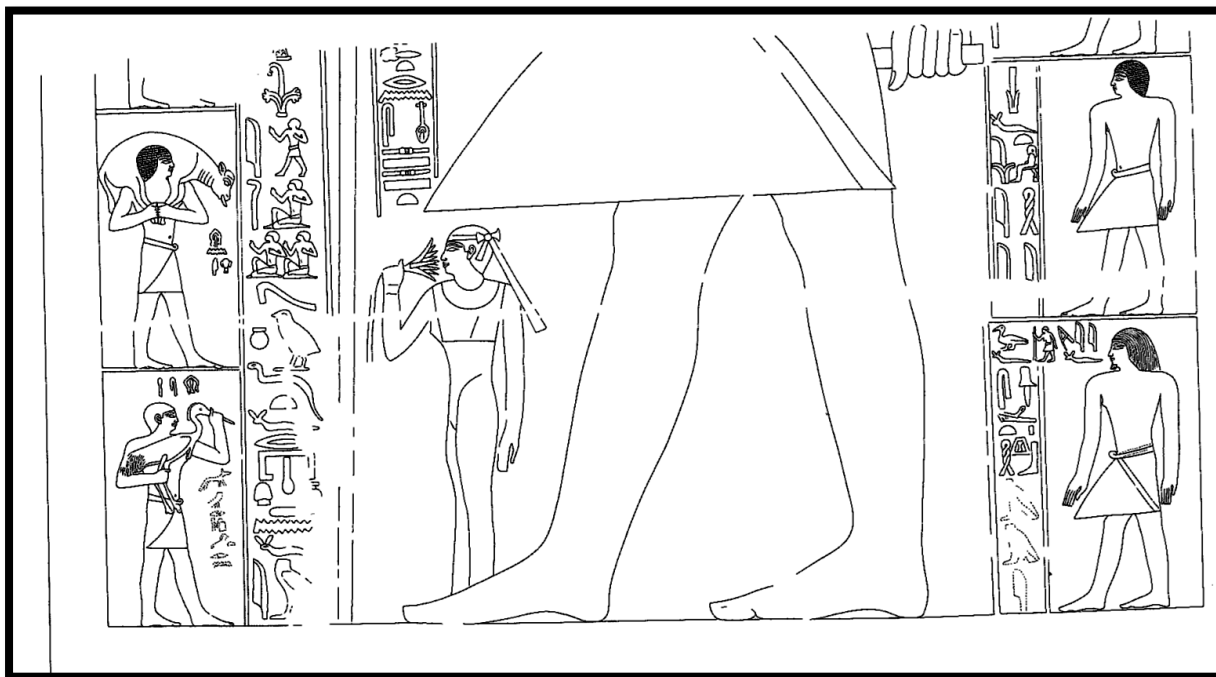


Figure 43: Room A3: South wall – Pepyankh-Memi stands behind his father and is captioned as eldest son (Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2010: Plate 72).

However, on the north wall, despite being labelled as the King's eldest son and not the son of Mereruka, Merytety-Mery is stood in the position usually reserved for the eldest son with him stood directly in front of his father with their feet overlapping (see figure 44).⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁵ It is also suggested that Merytety-Mery has references to belonging to the King's body because he was next in line for the throne until Pepy I came along. See Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2010:24- 25 & 32, and Kanawati & Swinton 2018: 32-34.

⁵⁵⁶ For a discussion on overlapping feet and iconography pertaining to the identification of the eldest son in tomb scenes, see chapter 2: introduction.

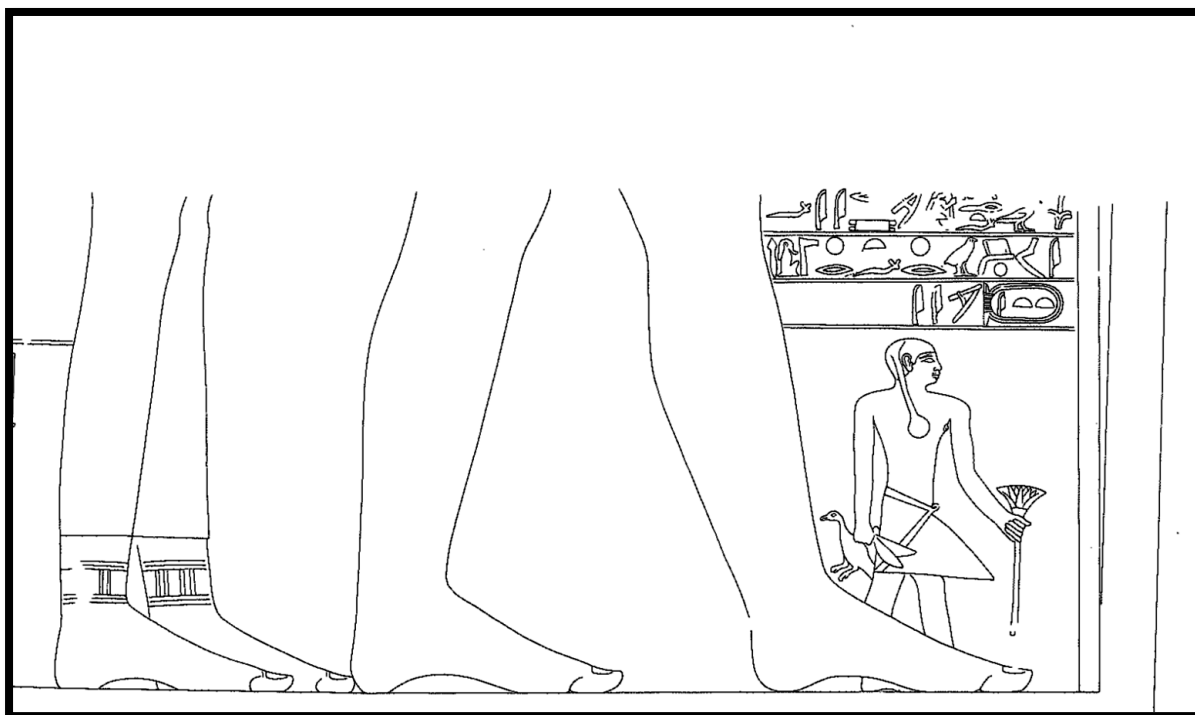


Figure 44: Room A3: North wall - Merytety-Mery stands in front of his father with the iconography and posture that is usually reserved for the eldest son (Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2010: Plate 76a).

In addition to Merytety-Mery presented as the eldest son, he also inherits the office of vizier (*tꜣyty sꜣb tꜣty*) from his father, and he has his own independent tomb within the complex.⁵⁵⁷ Mereruka's actual eldest son Pepyankh-Memi to his elusive first wife has been bypassed for succession, which was diverted to Merytety-Mery, perhaps due to his connection to Royalty that made him a more prestigious progeny for Mereruka.⁵⁵⁸

At some point however, Pepyankh-Memi took matters into his own hands and reclaimed his position as eldest son by usurping Merytety-Mery's tomb for himself. The figures in the tomb scenes remain intact but Merytety-Mery's caption of King's eldest son of his body is replaced with his eldest son of his body and the name Merytety-Mery was erased and Pepyankh-Memi inscribed

⁵⁵⁷ For the publication of Merytety-Mery's tomb, see Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2004. *Mereruka and His Family, Part I: The Tomb of Merytety* (See pages 13-15 for Merytety's titles).

⁵⁵⁸ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2004: 11.

over.⁵⁵⁹ At some point, the ownership of the tomb reverts back to Merytety-Mery, and the only evidence of the usurpation by Pepyankh-Memi is one trace of his name left behind on the North side of the sarcophagus as the tomb was reverted back, rather crudely, as the resting place of Merytety-Mery with Pepyankh-Memi's name being made into a new title for Merytety-Mery *šḥd ḥm(w)-nṯr mn-nfr-ppi* - Inspector of priests for the pyramid of Pepy (see figures 45 & 46 below).



Figure 45: Sarcophagus from the tomb that still bears the name Pepynakht and is evidence of his usurpation of the tomb (Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, 2004: plate 38a).⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁹ Kanawati & Abder- Raziq, 2004: 11-12 and Myśliwiec, 2010: 315-316.

⁵⁶⁰ It should be noted that Kanawati and Abder-Raiziq (2004: plate 38a) label figure 45 as the east side of the sarcophagus but in the description, it is described as the north side.

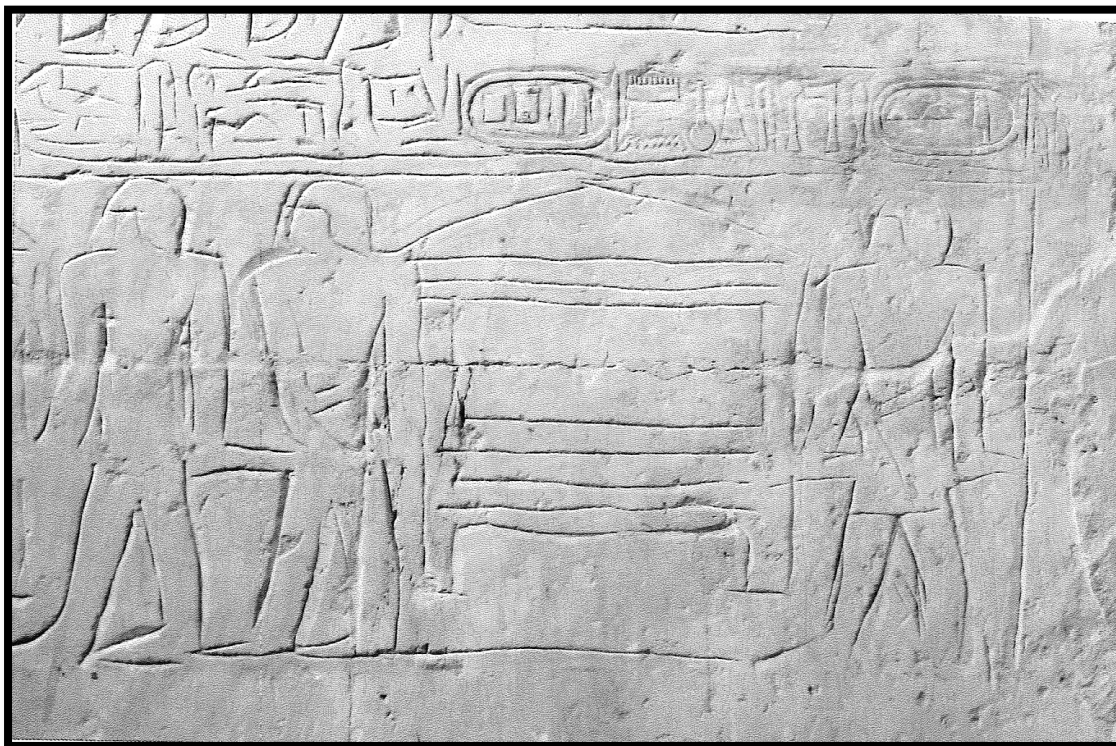


Figure 46: A section of relief that has been restored to Merytety. The workmanship is of crude quality compared to the original work in the tomb (Kanawati & Raziq, 2004: Plate 31a)

Introducing a new woman to an established family whether it was through the death or divorce of a previous spouse or polygamy had the potential to generate maternal and sibling rivalry that impinged on the natural order of succession. This is the case with Djau's family and explains the causative factor behind the content in his biography. Djau's grandfather Ibi has two eldest sons depicted in his tomb at Deir el Gebrawi, called Djau Shemai (Djau's father) and Ibi.⁵⁶¹ Within the fishing scene, depicted on the wall of the tomb, we see the tomb owner Ibi drawn in the largest

⁵⁶¹ For brief discussions on Ibi having two eldest sons, see Kanawati, 1976b: 238, Kanawati, 1977: 123-129, and McCorquodale, 2013: 104-105.

scale standing on his boat and surrounded by his family (see figure 47).

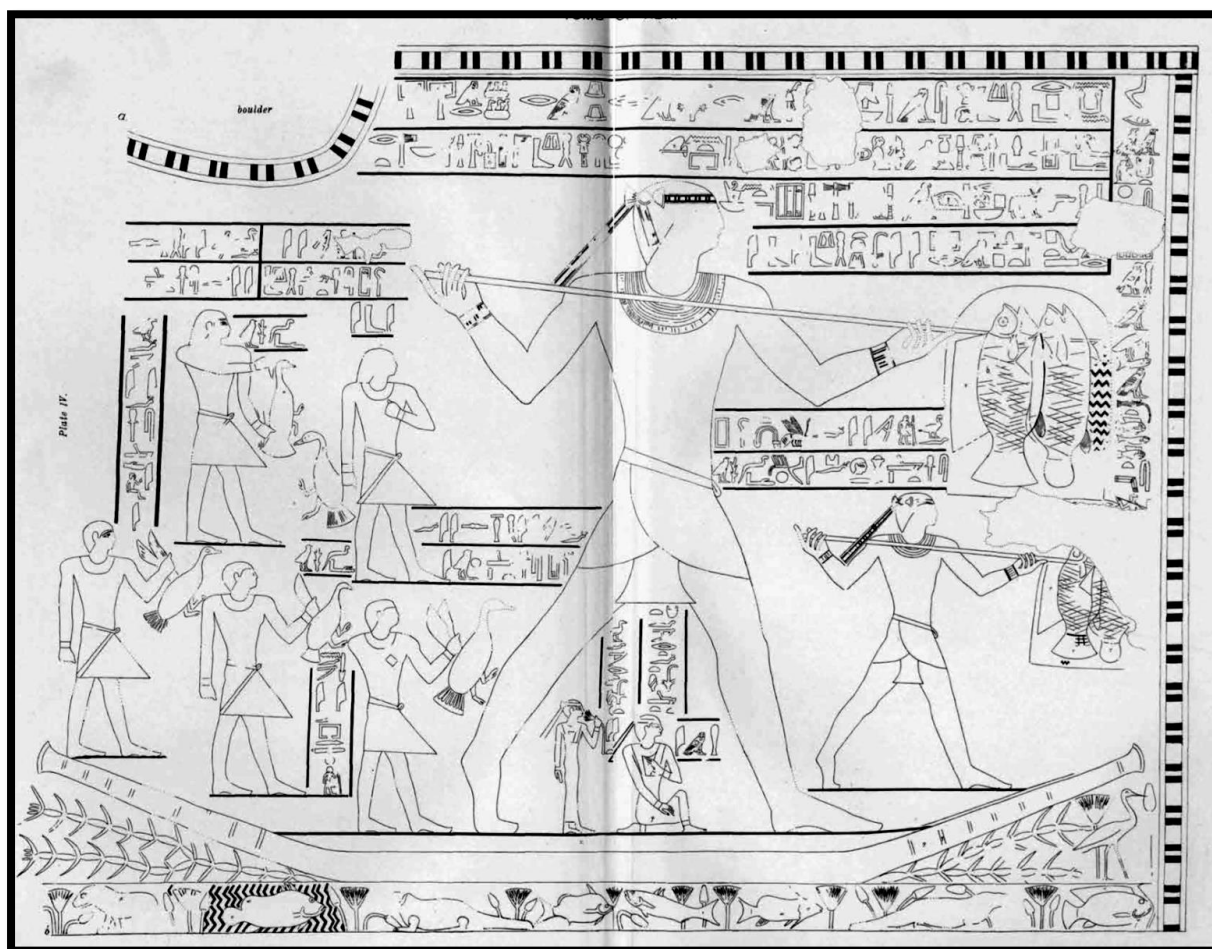


Figure 47: The fishing scene from the tomb of Ibi at Deir el Gebrawi (Davies, 1902, vol I: plate 4)

By examining this scene, the primary successor of Ibi was Djau Shemai (the father of Djau), determined by his position in front of his father, he is drawn on a slightly larger scale than his siblings and he holds the highest titles compared with his brothers. Djau Shemai has inherited the highest title held by his father Ibi— great chief of Duf (Deir el Gebrawi).⁵⁶² His caption reads;

“His eldest son (*s3=f smsw*), his beloved, seal-bearer of the King, ruler of the estate, sole companion, and great chief of

⁵⁶² For the full list of titles held by Ibi and Djau Shemai, see Davies, 1902: 8-9 and Kanawati. 2013: 11-14.

Duef (Deir el Gebrawi), the *imšḥw* Djau” (Davies, 1902, vol 1:

Plate 4).⁵⁶³

There is also another eldest son who stands behind Ibi in the upper register of figures, who is captioned;

“His eldest son (*sꜣ=f smsw*), his beloved, ruler of the estate (*ḥkꜣ ḥwt*), sole companion and lector priest Ibi (Davies, 1902, vol 1: Plate 4).⁵⁶⁴

Although Ibi has two eldest sons, only one wife is depicted in the tomb, a woman called Hemi.⁵⁶⁵ Kanawati (1977: 125-126) argues that the two eldest sons are indicative of a polygamous marriage which resulted in two different family groups. Kanawati champions polygamy based on the tombs that feature more than one eldest son belonging to officials who held the highest titles, with the theory that given their higher positions in society, they would be able to support more than one family group (1976b: 251). However, it is impossible to determine if polygamy was at play here, we could be dealing with the consequences of remarriage after the death of a first wife or a second marriage following a separation of a previous relationship, and Ibi made the decision to only make one wife, Hemi, a prominent figure in his tomb.⁵⁶⁶ What we can take from Kanawati’s study is that there were two separate maternal family branches belonging to Ibi.

⁵⁶³ For the fishing scene, I have chosen to work from Davies, 1902 publication as the scenes are better preserved than in Kanawati’s updated publication (2013: plate 53).

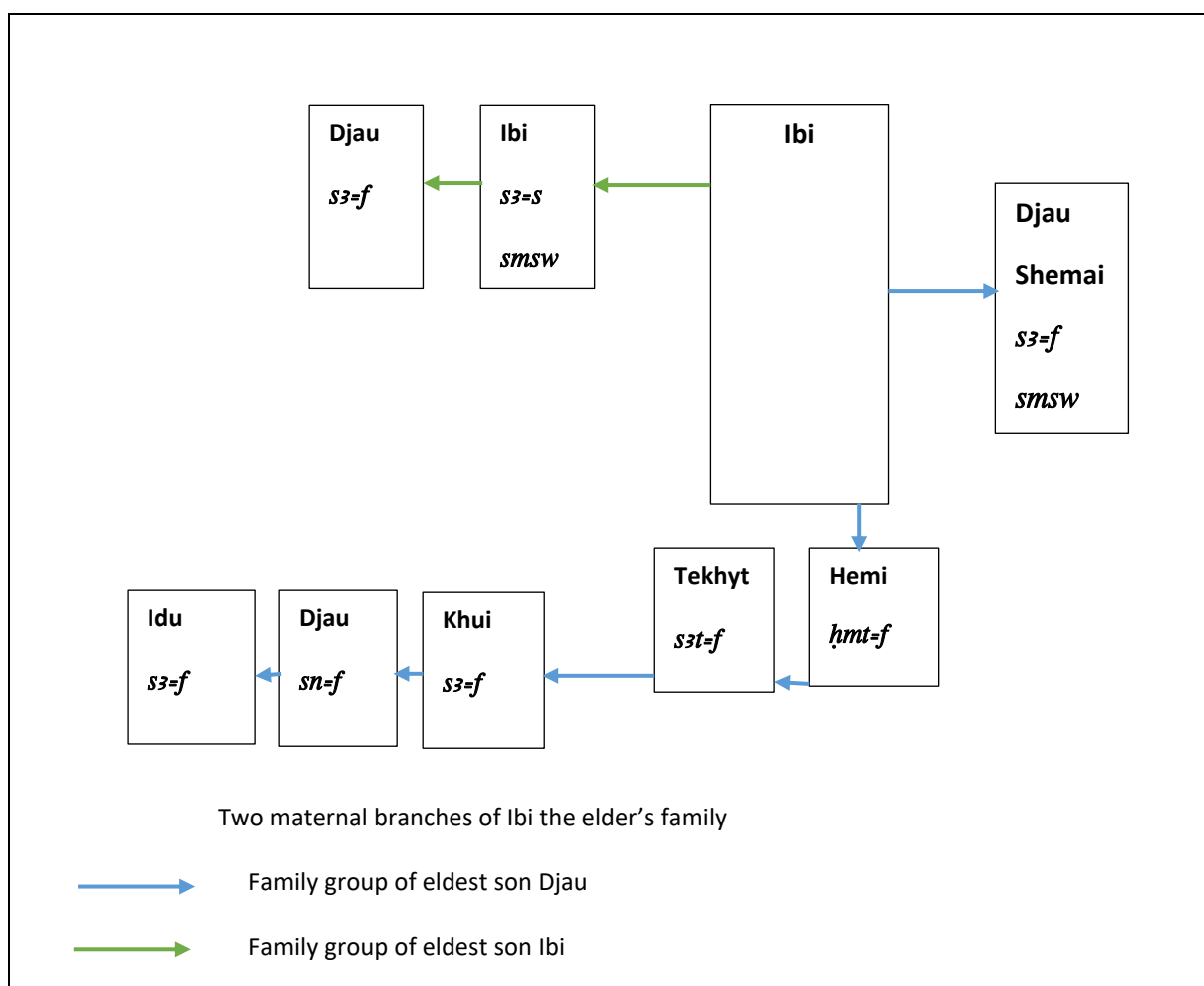
⁵⁶⁴ Ibi and Djau are also depicted separately in the shrine and again, both have the title of eldest son (Davies, 1902, vol I: plate 17-18).

⁵⁶⁵ See Davies, 1902, vol 1: Plate 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 18 for images of Hemi.

⁵⁶⁶ For discussions on polygamy in ancient Egypt see, Barber, 1935: 409-414, Eyre, 2007:241-242, Kanawati, 1976a: 146-160, Kanawati, 1976b: 235-251, Kanawati, 1977: 123-129, McCorquodale, 2012a:27, McCorquodale, 2013: 67-85, Robins, 1993: 64-67, Scheele-Schweitzer, 2007: 69-76, and Simpson, 1974: 100. Additionally, McCorquodale 2013: 90-108 lists the tombs of the Old Kingdom with more than one eldest child and discusses each case individually to ascertain if polygamy was at play. Furthermore, in a summary of McCorquodale’s data there is no set pattern to how many wives are depicted in a tomb, it is a personal preference of the tomb owner (2013:107).

An examination of the fishing scene above (see figure 47) shows Djau Shemai the eldest son, the wife Hemi, daughter Tekhyt, son Khui, son Djau II, and son Idu on one register with the other eldest son Ibi and a third Djau placed above this family group on an upper register. These separate registers are headed by the two eldest sons that defined each of the family groups. Quirion (2020: 128-140) discusses the uniqueness of this scene in that it depicts eight members of the family with the tomb owner, whereas fishing scenes typically just show four members and Quirion reasons that Ibi is expressing his strong family bond.⁵⁶⁷ However, this peculiarity could easily be a convention to incorporate a complex family dynamic into a traditional tomb scene. Below is a simplified model of the fishing scene, showing the family members and their relationship to each other (see figure 48 below).

Figure 48: Orientation of figures and their filial association to Ibi on the south wall fishing scene.



⁵⁶⁷ For a discussion of the composition of fishing scenes, see Quirion, 2020: 128-140.

Initially, Kanawati (1977:125-126) suggests Djau and Ibi could be twins, but he dismisses this in favour of polygamy and a bipartite family. He argues that another son Khui follows Djau the elder in a scene on the north wall where seven sons are kneeling before a seated Ibi, and if Djau and Ibi were twins, then surely Ibi would follow directly after Djau (Kanawati, 1977:125-126) (see figure 49 and a simplified model of this scene below figure 50).

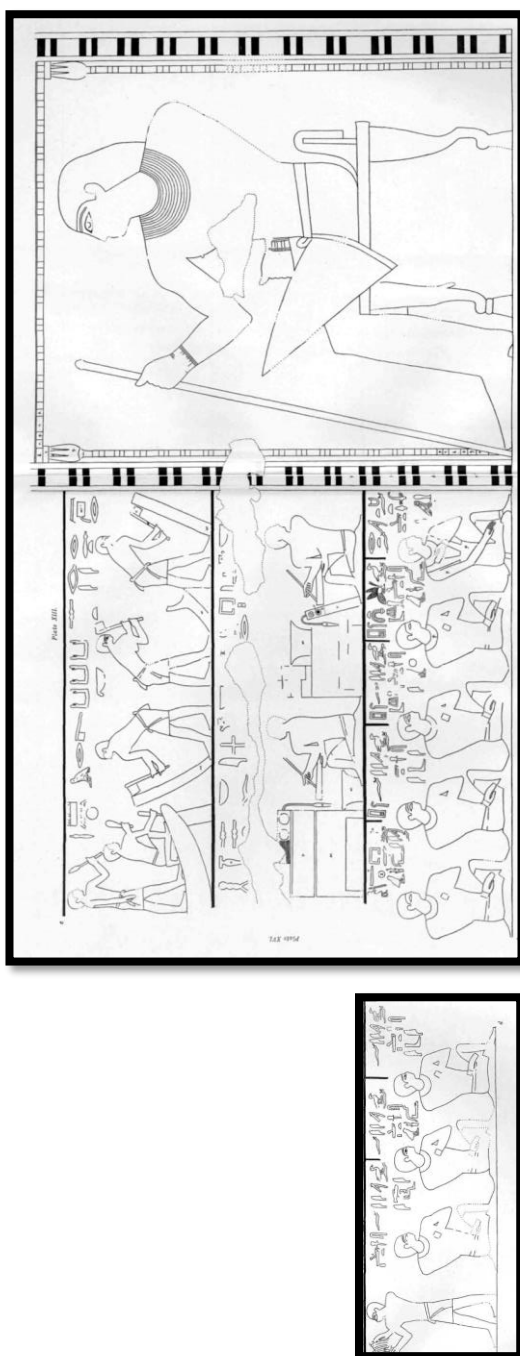


Figure 49: Offering scene from the tomb of Ibi. His children are kneeling before a seated Ibi (bottom register) (Davies, 1902, vol I: Plate 15 & 16).

Idu son	Djau 3 son	Ibi son	Djau 2 son	Ibi Eldest son	Khui son	Djau Eldest son	Hemi wife	Ibi
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Figure 50: Orientation of the figures and their filial association to Ibi in the offering scene on the north wall

In the fishing scene, the second Djau is stood behind Khui and is described as his brother (*sn=f*) rather than his son (*s3=f*), which also occurs in another scene on the northern wall.⁵⁶⁸ Consequently, Quirion (2020: 133) argues that the second Djau is a brother of Ibi the tomb owner. Contrastingly, in the line-up of sons in figure 49 and 50, the second Djau is referred to as the son of Ibi. Kanawati (1977:126-127) suggests that this is an artist convention to explain why Ibi as an eldest son follows Khui rather than the elder Djau. Kanawati (1977:126-127) reasons that Khui is older than Ibi and is the second eldest son to the same mother as Djau the elder, with Ibi being the eldest son of a different mother, and therefore Ibi comes after Khui. The second Djau is occasionally labelled as *sn=f* because he is the brother of Djau the elder and Khui. However, he is sometimes separated from them by Ibi, so the label of *sn=f* when he appears next to Khui explains the sequence and reconnects that sibling group (1977:126-127).⁵⁶⁹ This convention to connect family groups is also seen in the tomb of Mery-aa from El- Hargasa. Mery-aa has quite a complex family unit as he has six wives depicted in his tomb and eleven children born from these women.⁵⁷⁰ In the offering scene on the north wall of the chapel, the daughters of Mery-aa are labelled in the following order –

⁵⁶⁸ For the scene on the north wall, see Davies, 1902, vol I: Plate 10.

⁵⁶⁹ McCorquodale (2012a: 27) also discusses *sn=f* as an artistic device to connect family groups in tomb scenes and discusses this convention more specifically to Ibi and Djau in McCorquodale, 2013: 105-106.

⁵⁷⁰ On the family of Mery-aa see, Kanawati, 1995: 25-26, McCorquodale, 2012a: 28, McCorquodale, 2013: 73 & 106, and Simpson, 1974: 100-101.

- His eldest daughter Nenu born of Hesyt
 - Her sister Bebi
- His daughter Shemat born of Nefertjentet
 - Her sister Deben
- His daughter Shemat born of Nehi
 - Her sister Shemat⁵⁷¹

The list of daughters and their captions use either *s3t=f* or *snt=f* to convey the separate family groups similar to the practice in the tomb of Ibi and his children. Ibi's fishing scene (figure 47 and 48) implies that there were two different sibling groups indicated by a separate register, each headed by two eldest sons.

Whatever the reason behind the separate family units in Djau's family, whether it was polygamy or remarriage, having more than one wife and surplus heirs impeded the natural progression of inheritance, which led to strategies such as legitimising heirship within tomb inscriptions and other means. Djau is not the only instance in which this occurs, there is evidence from both ancient and modern Egypt which demonstrates that having more than one maternal branch within a household had the potential to upset the natural order of succession and extra measures were executed to solidify the rights of the beneficiaries.

Again, there is a striking similarity between Djau and Mery-aa's family dynamic. Mery-aa had three sons to three separate women, who were;

- Nenu born to Nefertjentet
 - Nenu born to Nehi

⁵⁷¹ For this scene, see Kanawati, 1995: plate 42.

- Nenu born to Wenteshi⁵⁷²

Nenu born to Nefertjentet appears to be the eldest as he is first in line to offer to his father Mery-aa in an offering scene in the tomb and he is eager to emphasise that he performed the duties of an eldest son and heir.⁵⁷³

What his eldest son, his beloved, possessor of all his property (*nb n išt=f nbt*), the *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* Nenu made for him, who says “I buried my father as an offering which the King gives (*m ḥtp dī nsw*), I united the land to the beautiful West for him, having embalmed him (*wꜣ.n (-i) –sw*) with *st* oil of the Residence with *insw* cloth from the [house] of life. I inscribed his tomb, and I erected his statues just like what an excellent heir (*iwꜥ ikr*) provides. The beloved one of my father, he who buried my father with his own strong arm” (*Urk I*, 267, 8 - 13).⁵⁷⁴

Mery-aa has an extremely complicated family structure, not only does he have three eldest sons due to the different maternal lines, but they have also been given the same name – Nenu. The eldest Nenu clearly wanted to legitimise his position as successor by adding that he buried his father in Mery-aa’s biography. Again, this example goes a little beyond the El–Hawawish examples by stressing that Mery-aa was in the King’s good grace as his burial was supplemented by the Residence – as an offering which the King gives (*ḥtp-dī-nsw*). Furthermore, he employs various statements to illustrate that he is the rightful heir, stating he is the possessor of all his father’s property, he is an excellent heir, and he buried his father with his own strong arm.

An inscription from the tomb of the 5th dynasty official Wepemneferet stipulates which of his sons had the right to be buried with him. Wepemneferet had two eldest sons depicted on the

⁵⁷² See Kanawati, 1995: 26.

⁵⁷³ See Kanawati, 1995: plate 43 for the offering scene.

⁵⁷⁴ For a full translation of the biography of Mery-aa, see Strudwick, 2005: 362-363.

doorway of his chapel – Iby on the right jamb and Khure on the left jamb.⁵⁷⁵ The inscription in question is accompanied by an image of Wepemneferet and Iby, who are stood before fifteen witnesses as he grants his eldest son the right to share his tomb.⁵⁷⁶ Not only do we have a text to validate the rights of Iby, but also an image that includes named witnesses. Furthermore, the captions above the figures corroborate with legitimising the rights of Iby. The caption before father and son reads;

Made in his own presence (*r-gs=f ds=f*),⁵⁷⁷ while he was alive
on his feet as he made a written command

(Hassan, 1936: figure 219).

Before the witnesses, the caption reads;

Given in the presence of many witnesses (*mtrw*). (It) was made
in writing in his own presence (*r-gs=f ds=f*).

(Hassan, 1936: figure 219).

The main inscription reads;

The sole companion Wep, he says “I gave to my eldest son, the lector priest Iby for eternity, the northern burial chamber (*ḥꜣt mḥtt*) along with the northern chapel (*it mḥtt*) that is in my tomb of eternity in the necropolis, so he may be buried therein it and that voice offerings come forth (*prrt-ḥrw*) for him there, he is a revered one (*pw imꜣḥw*).⁵⁷⁸ No brother has

⁵⁷⁵ Hassan, 1936: figure 214 and McCorquodale, 2013: 93-94.

⁵⁷⁶ See Hassan, 1936: figure 211 for a diagram of the layout of the tomb and pages 179-201 for a study of the tomb. See chapter 1.9.2 and figure 16 for the image of this tomb scene.

⁵⁷⁷ *r-gs=f ds=f* – reads – at his side himself.

⁵⁷⁸ See Fischer (1991: 22) for a discussion on how *imꜣḥw* can be employed as a term of respect to the living as well as the dead, which is the case here as Iby was alive when Wepemneferet made this statement.

claim (ꜥy) to it, no wife or any children, except for my eldest son, the lector priest Iby” (Hassan, 1936: figure 219).⁵⁷⁹

Again, two eldest sons in the same family unit required the need for an edict to be made to specify the beneficiary and remove the right to claim from other family members. Wepemneferet specifically mentions that wives and children cannot contest his decision, inferring he was aware that some family members had the potential to take issue with his successor. The inscription, captions, and image all work together to counteract any contestation. There can be no mistake that these were the wishes of Wepemneferet, he made this endowment while he was alive and in front of witnesses, resulting in removing any future challenges from Khure (the other eldest son), and his side of the family, or the accusation that Iby coerced his way into inheriting his father’s property. Wepemneferet and Iby are another example, like Djau, where the family has more than one maternal branch, so the inheritance of the eldest son is made firm using tomb inscriptions and a joint burial with the father which further demonstrated his paternal favour. This display of paternal favour shows the other family members and the outside world that his successor met with his approval.

imyt-pr documents illustrate another tactic to combat any future conflict when dealing with complex family structures. The *imyt-pr* of Mery, demonstrates how having children born to different mothers can summon the need for clarification when it came to who inherited what. *imyt-pr* translates as ‘what is in the house’ and these documents pertained to passing down property from one person to another (Logan, 2000: 49).⁵⁸⁰ Logan (2000:66), in his examination of these documents, also raises the question if sons naturally inherited from their father, why were

⁵⁷⁹ For translations and discussions see Eyre, 2015: 84-85, Goedicke, 1970: 31-33, Hassan, 1936: 190, and Strudwick, 2005:303.

⁵⁸⁰ The *imyt-pr* of Mery dates to the 12 Dynasty and was discovered at Lahun.

these documents needed? The answer to this lies in the documents themselves, for example, Mery's *imyt-pr* reads;

imyt-pr of Mery (UC 32037)

Regnal year 39, month 4 of Akhet, day 19. The *imyt-pr* what the controller of the phyle Intef's son Mery called Kebi made for his son Mery's son Intef called Iuseneb for my staff of old age because I am old. Have him appointed straight away (*m t3 3t*).⁵⁸¹ As for the *imyt-pr* that I made for his mother before – it is annulled (*s3-r=s*). As for my house which is in the district of ...?⁵⁸² It belongs to my children born to me by the daughter of the guard Sobekemhat's daughter Nebetnennesut along with all that is in it (*hn^c ntt nbt im=f*).

(Collier and Quirke, 2004:100).⁵⁸³

Mery makes explicit that his son Intef is his successor in the office of controller of the phyle and appoints him as his staff of old age. However, the rights of Intef's mother to inherit any of Mery's property has been revoked in favour of children born to him by a different wife. The custom of remarriage warranted documents like this to be made. Mery had two wives, each with their own children to him. Although he mentions the children of Nebetnennesut, he does not mention if they were male or female. The fact this document has been written up, we can assume that Mery had a son/s to both wives, and so he technically had two elder sons, meaning the heir to his offices had to be made explicit. Eyre (2007: 233) states "Egyptian custom involved so full a commitment of resources to the line of inheritance at marriage, and so clearly defined expectations of shares at inheritance, that the concept of the last will and testament, central to Anglo-American legal

⁵⁸¹ *m t3 3t* - translates as 'in this time'.

⁵⁸² The reading of the name of the district is ambiguous.

⁵⁸³ For the translation and transcription of the *imyt-pr* of Mery, see Collier and Quirke, 2004: 100-101. For a list of examples and the usage of *imyt-pr* documents, see Eyre, 2007: 232-236, Logan, 2000: 49-73, and Théodoridès, 1971:304-306.

traditions, is inappropriate; A man's ability freely to bequeath his property was so limited by custom that the concept of will is largely irreverent. The process associated with the *imyt-pr* is more like that of a formal endowment, made at a time when, for whatever reason, the head of the joint household needed to define specific shares due to individual members." Therefore, if for instance, the transmission of office from father to eldest son was a naturally flowing occurrence, then a document outlining this would be superfluous.

Harkhuf from Aswan refers to an *imyt-pr* as a part of his tomb biography, stating;

"The king favoured me, and my father made an *imyt-pr* for
me" (*Urk I*, 121, 17 – 122, 1).

There are also subtle indications that some sort of successional issue was occurring within his family. If we examine the three expeditions that Harkhuf describes in his biography, he describes a staff of old age occurring between him and his father;

- Mission 1

The Majesty of Merenre my Lord sent me together with my father, the sole companion, and lector priest Iry to Yam⁵⁸⁴ in order to explore (*wb3*)⁵⁸⁵ the pathway to this foreign land. I did

⁵⁸⁴ The location of Yam is widely debated with two suggestions that Yam lies in the western desert or Upper Nubia. For example, Goedicke (1981: 1-20) argues that Yam is an extensive region in the western desert, encapsulating the Khargah, Kurkur, and Dunkul oasis, whilst O'Connor (1991: 27-50) suggests that it lies in Upper Nubia near the Shendi reach and northern Butana (central Sudan). For further discussions regarding these theories, see Cooper, 2012: 1-21, Dixon, 1958: 40-55, Obsomer, 2016: 127-134, and Stauder-Porchet, 2020a: 66-67.

⁵⁸⁵ The root meaning of *wb3* is to bore/ drill / open (*CDME*: 58 and *Wb I*. 290. 102). This has led scholars to debate that *wb3* inferred that Harkhuf opened up a new trade route to Yam or explored a pre-existing route (for the discussions and various translations of *wb3*, see Goedicke, 1981: 1-2, Kadish, 1966: 24-28, Obsomer, 2016: 127, and Stauder-Porchet, 2020a: 66). The use of *wb3* in Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt leans towards the argument that Harkhuf was traversing an already established route. The oracle of Amun voices to Hatshepsut "Explore (*dʿr*) the ways (*w3wt*) to Punt. Open (*wb3*) the pathways (*mʿnw*) to the terraces of Myrrh (*hntyw-ʿntyw*)" (*Urk IV*, 342, 6 - 17). The oracles then goes on to recall that Hatshepsut's ancestors (previous

it in 7 months, and I brought all produce (*inw*) from it, good and rare things (*k^ch*), and was greatly praised for it (*Urk* I, 124, 8 - 15).

- Mission 2

His Majesty sent me a second time, alone. I came by the Ivory pathway (*wꜣt ꜣbw*)⁵⁸⁶, and I descended into Makher, Terres, and Iretjetj (of) Iretjet (*irtt m^chr trrs irtt*)⁵⁸⁷ in a time of 8 months. I returned, having brought a great amount of produce from these lands. Before which the like had never been brought from this land. I returned in the area of the house of

kings) told tales regarding Punt and bought back exotic goods (*Urk* IV, 344, 6 - 15). The oracle than assures Hatshepsut “There are none who will reach it except for your troops. For I will have your expedition travel after I have guided them by water and land, having opened (*wbꜣ*) the pathways for them” (*Urk* IV, 344, 16 - 345, 2). The oracle of Amun mentions previous Kings telling tales regarding Punt and the goods they bought back from there, which demonstrates that there were pre-existing trade routes to Punt already, meaning Hatshepsut’s troops were essentially rediscovering these pathways. Furthermore, we know from sources such as Harkhuf’s biography that Punt was already the destination for expeditions in the Old Kingdom (see Harkhuf’s letter from King Pepy II, Strudwick, 2005: 331-333, *Urk* I, 128 - 131, 7, and Wente, 1990: 20-21). With this in mind, *wbꜣ* can mean the rediscovery of an existing route, and not necessarily, the maiden journey to an unknown land.

⁵⁸⁶ The debate surrounding *wꜣt ꜣbw* concerns its translation. The two suggestions for translation are ‘Elephantine pathway’ or ‘Ivory pathway’ due to the lack of area with crossroad determinative (GG: 049) in the writing of *ꜣbw* (see *Urk* I, 125, 1). It is agreed that this was referring to a pathway, in which ivory was shipped from Nubia into Egypt (see Cooper, 2012: 6, Dixon, 1958: 40, Goedicke, 1981: 2-4, O’Connor, 1986: 40, and Stauder-Porchet, 2020a: 67, comment C).

⁵⁸⁷ Iretjet, Makher, Terres, and Iretjetj are written *irtt m^chr trrs irtt* in the text. This is a case of apposition and would literally read Makher, Terres, and Iretjetj – Iretjet (see GG: 90.3 & Doret, 1986: 71, comment 771-775). The locations of Iretjetj, Makher, and Terres are under debate. Goedicke, 1981: 7-8 and Obsomer, 2016: 132 favour lower Nubia, whereas O’Connor (1986: 32-33), Cooper (2012:8, comment 56), and Stauder-Porchet (2020a: 67, comment H) suggest these were Upper Nubian areas close to the 3rd cataract given their juxtaposition to Iretjet in the biography of Harkhuf.

the ruler of Setjau and Iretjet (*stw irtt*),⁵⁸⁸ having explored (*wb3*) these foreign lands. Never did I find that it had been done by any sole companion or overseer of foreigners, who had gone to Yam previously (*Urk I*, 124, 17 – 125, 11).

- Mission 3

Now his Majesty sent me a third time to Yam. I came from the Thinite nome (*t3-wr*) upon the Oasis paths, but I found the ruler of Yam had gone from it to the land of Tjemeh (*tmh*) to drive off the Tjemeh⁵⁸⁹ to the western corner of the sky (*r kꜥh imnt n pt*).⁵⁹⁰ I went after him to the land of Tjemeh, and I contented (*shꜥp.n(=i)*) him,⁵⁹¹ so he might praise all the Gods for the sovereign.

⁵⁸⁸ Again, Setjau and Iretjet are subjects of debate as to whether they are located in Upper or Lower Nubia. A good reference for these theories is depicted in O'Connor (1986: figure 2), who provides three maps with reconstructions of Harkhuf's journey with the locations of Setjau and Iretjet in the various positions proposed by himself and various scholars. Cooper (2012: figure 1) follows O'Connor, suggesting that Setjau and Iretjet are riverine localities, and provides a map with the hypothetical route that Harkhuf took.

⁵⁸⁹ Tjemeh (*tmh*) is referring to the Libyans.

⁵⁹⁰ *r kꜥh imnt n pt* – to the western corner of the sky suggests that the ruler of Yam was going to drive the Libyans as far away as possible. Dixon (1958: 45) suggests that this is a slang expression, comparable to knocking someone for six in that the Libyans were going to be driven beyond the boundary.

⁵⁹¹ The nature of *shꜥp* is widely discussed with several interpretations. The suggestions for *shꜥp* are it was a violent pacification of the ruler of Yam, it reflected trading relations, it suggested that Harkhuf had to pay for passage through Nubia, and it was Harkhuf's way of expressing that he had to calm the ruler down to avoid war (this is based on the next section of Harkhuf's biography below (see Dixon, 1958: 45-46, Goedicke, 1981: 11-13, and Kadish, 1966: 28-33). If the ruler of Yam was on a military campaign to drive off the Libyans, it is questionable that he would be prepared to do trade deals with Harkhuf. It is doubtful that *shꜥp* is referring to paying for passage through Nubia as the usual motif is the subjugation of the foreigners (for example, see the biography of Pepynakht from Aswan (*Urk I*, 131, 9 – 135, 7) and chapter 3.1.2 for Weni's military accounts in foreign lands). In the case of Pepynakht, the first part of his narrative describes him on a military campaign against the Nubians where he hacks (*hb3*) up the land in Nubia and kills (*sm3*) a great number of people (*Urk I*, 133, 9 - 12). In his next account, Pepynakht then returns to *shꜥp* Nubia and returns to the Residence with two

Then I sent [title PN with] (a man from) Yam to the followers of Horus⁵⁹² to let the Majesty of Merenre my Lord know [that I had gone to the land of Tjemeh], after the ruler of Yam. When I had satisfied (*shtp.n(=i)*) that Ruler of Yam, I came down in] in the South of Iretjet (*itt*) and in the North of Setjau (*sꜣtꜣw*), and I found the ruler of Iretjet, Setjau and Wawat (*wꜣwꜣt*) [united in one place].⁵⁹³ I was travelling with 300 donkeys loaded with incense, ebony, heknew oil, sesat, leopard skin, elephant tusks, throw sticks, and all good produce. Now, when the ruler of Irtjet, Setjau and Wawat saw the strength and number of the troops of Yam coming with me to the Residence along with my expedition, who were sent with me, then this [ruler] escorted me, giving me cattle and goats, showing me the way to these paths and ranges (*wꜣwt tn tꜣswt*)⁵⁹⁴ of iretjet, because of my excellence and the vigilance, which I conducted more than any sole companion (or) overseer of foreigners, who were previously sent to Yam (*Urk I, 125, 12 – 127, 11.*⁵⁹⁵

Nubian chiefs and livestock to offer to the Residence (*Urk I, 134, 3 -10* and chapter 2.6 for a discussion concerning Pepynakht's expedition) . Violent pacification and *shtp* are two different events here with *shtp* representing diplomatic relations occurring between the chiefs and the King at the Residence. Harkhuf was escorted with the troops of yam after meeting with the ruler of Yam and *shtp* occurred, suggesting that this was a peaceful meeting, in which terms were agreeable to both parties without conflict.

⁵⁹² Goedicke (1981:14) suggests *iw hꜣb.n=i smi m-ꜣ iꜣm n šms* – 'I sent a request in the arm of a Yam person to the followers of Horus'. However, I have employed Edel's reconstruction for the lacuna here, although it should be noted that -a man from- is not included in the transliteration, it is placed in brackets in Edel's translation (2008: 625).

⁵⁹³ Edel restores *dmdꜣ m ht wꜣt* and translates 'united in one (place)'. The reconstruction literally reads 'united as one thing'.

⁵⁹⁴ For *tꜣswt* and other anatomical terms used for markers of landscape, see Gundacker, 2017: 360.

⁵⁹⁵ For the use of *in* – 'to bring', *wꜣꜣ* – 'to open', and *shtp* – 'to make peaceful' in relation to expeditions in the Old Kingdom, see Kloth, 2002: 195-200.

Harkhuf's first mission is a joint expedition with his father Iry. It is a short passage, and straight to the point in comparison to the other two missions. Harkhuf also uses the first person, singular pronoun rather than first person plural to describe his successes, meaning his father is left out of the equation here. There is a battle occurring here where he feels the need to adhere to the traditional biographical content, whereby, the tomb owner's achievement is due to their own hard work and enterprise. There is also a nuance of his need to highlight the transmission of office where he was initially under the guidance of his father before taking over the role completely, which demonstrated his role as primary heir. In the subsequent solo missions, he describes the produce in more detail, he conducts diplomatic relations, and describes different areas of exploration. This gives the impression that his father oversaw the first mission, and he was there for the experience and training. Harkhuf could have omitted his father's presence from this expedition or left it out completely, inferring that he wanted to emphasise his succession but not let it overtake from his own accomplishments.

There are two other instances in Harkhuf's biography that refer to succession;

As a part of his ethical behaviour, Harkhuf declares.

Ne[ver did I judge between two brothers] in a case (*m sp*) that
a son might lose (*sšw*) the property of his father
(*Urk I, 123, 3*).⁵⁹⁶

In the letter from King Pepy II, the King states;

His Majesty will act on your many desires to be beneficial to
the son of your son for eternity (*Urk I, 129, 8 - 9*).

The *imyt-pr*, the inference of a staff of old age, his ethical behaviour aimed at succession, and Pepy II declaring that any reward will benefit his male family line, collectively suggests his role as primary heir was somehow under threat. The tomb of his father Iry is undiscovered, so it is not known if Harkhuf was one of two eldest sons, so his family dynamic cannot be explored. What we can

⁵⁹⁶ For restorations see Edel, 2008: 621-622. For similar examples see Kloth, 2002: 81.

ascertain is the creation of documents like *imyt-pr* were a solution to address a specific situation within a family where the transmission of office or property could not play out naturally. By writing up this document in the presence of witnesses, Mery and Iry eliminated any future disagreements by laying out the transmission of his property and office pre-mortem, meaning any challenges could be rectified to ensure that all heirs were happy with the arrangement, and it could be set in writing for future reference.

Complications surrounding succession was not just an issue for the ancient Egyptians, there is a case in modern Egypt during the 1950's, in the village of Silwa in Aswan that demonstrates the discord within a polygamous household when the heir must be decided post-mortem. Ammar (1954:64) records a conflict between two brothers over their deceased father's office of Omda.⁵⁹⁷ The father of the family had two wives, one with six children and the other with five. They all lived amicably as one household whilst the father was still alive but when the father died, conflict between the two-family groups arose. The disagreement was based on which son was going to take over the role of Omda. The rivals for the position were the second eldest son of the first wife (the 1st eldest son was not an ideal candidate as he was illiterate) and the eldest son of the second wife. The fighting culminated in a meeting with the Arab council to determine which of the brothers should take on the role as Omda. The Arab council choose the second eldest son of the first wife and the second wife, and her son had to accept this decision made by the council. Unfortunately, this did not stop the rivalry as the second wife and her son spread scandal about the newly appointed Omda which led to him being suspended from office. After court proceedings the ousted Omda was found not guilty of the allegations, but he was not restored to office. The office was opened again, and the same two brothers went for the position. This time the eldest son of the second wife won the office

⁵⁹⁷ The office of Omda was the village head who was on hand to represent the village on official occasions (Ammar, 1954:61).

but this resulted in the first wife and her son (the previous Omda) spreading scandal about the current Omda.

A man must have felt a sense of security having an heir and a spare, but it was not without consequences. The tomb inscriptions, the creation of the *imyt-pr* documents, the motif of evil stepmothers in literature, and the Harem conspiracy all demonstrate that complex family dynamics were a melting pot for conflict and the successors in these families had to set themselves apart and legitimise their positions. Additionally, the future generations that stemmed from the succeeding branch of the family were susceptible to contestations from family members outside of that familial line. This occurred in the family of Neshi who received land in return of service to king Ahmose. His descendent Mose, dating to the reign of Rameses II, records several court proceedings disputing ownership of the land of Neshi in his tomb at Saqqara (Gaballa, 1977: 1-2). Neshi's future generations have split into three family groups who, at various times, want to claim ownership of the land.⁵⁹⁸ Having a son to pass down offices and property was important but adding to a family muddied the waters of inheritance. Subsequent wives producing more sons creating the problem of who should inherit, furthermore after the first eldest son dies, should the office pass to his male child or revert to the second eldest son (his brother)? Djau had to make his succession concrete by emphasising his position as rightful heir. The shared tomb, burial of his father, and the decree were measures put in place to counteract any contestation stemming from the second branch of his family belonging to his Uncle Ibi.

⁵⁹⁸ See Gaballa, 1977: 28-29 for the family groups and 22-25 for a translation of the dispute. For discussion see Eyre, 2015: 155-162, Feucht, 1995: 214, and Janssen & Janssen, 1996: 48-49.

4.2 Slander, jealousy, and challenge to office

The reasoning behind Sabni's biographical content appears to have a different motivation than Djau. According to the pictorial evidence from the joint tomb of Sabni and his father Mekhu, Sabni was the only son and only one wife is depicted throughout the tomb.⁵⁹⁹ This is confirmed with the textual evidence as Sabni is described as his son (*s3=f*) and not his eldest son (*s3=f smsw*), which one would expect if more than one son was born to the tomb owner.⁶⁰⁰ Therefore, a complex family dynamic does not appear to be the incentive behind Sabni's choice of biographical material. Within the chronology of events laid out in his biography, Sabni takes over from his father automatically, even before the decree has arrived from the Residence, Sabni states;

“I buried this father of mine in his tomb of the necropolis.
[Never] had [any] of his peers been buried [like him]. I [sailed
Northward] to Memphis carrying (*hr*) the tribute (*inw*) of the
foreign lands which this *h3ty-ꜥ* brought after I had collected
(*w3h*) all the tribute (*inw*) which this father of mine had
collected (*w3h*) with the previous taking (*[m šs]p tp-ꜥwy*) with
that troop of mine consisting of Nubians and my own support
(*(shnt(-i))*)” (*Urk I*, 139, 1 - 7).

Sabni simply carried on where his father left off by collecting the goods from the foreign land, which were acquired by Mekhu, and transporting them to the Residence. The fact that Sabni immediately assumed his father's duties, and he is the only son mentioned in the tomb suggests that he did not have to legitimise his inheritance against rival heirs, who might have contested his right to office, like in the case of Djau.

There is, however, a piece of evidence, which may explain the need for a decree and the paternal themed self-presentation. Papyrus Berlin 8869 is a letter of complaint from the Elephantine

⁵⁹⁹ Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: vol I, fig 15 & 16.

⁶⁰⁰ Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008:208, for the full discussion regarding the family of Sabni, see pages 207-230.

archive, which dates to the late Old Kingdom.⁶⁰¹ The letter is from a *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* called Iru and addressed to an overseer of the army Merrenakht. Iru is concerned that Merrenakht has sent a man called Hotepi to deal with an issue with Nubian troops rather than his complaint against Sabni. Iru wants support from Merrenakht to bring Sabni to justice by not allowing him to cover up his crimes (*ꜥwꜣy*). Iru implies that if Merrenakht ignores his pleas then he favours Sabni over him. The letter reads;

The *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, seal-bearer of the King, sole companion, and seal-bearer of the God, Iru (to) the overseer of the army Merrenakht son of Khnumhotep, son of the lector priest Sobekhotep.⁶⁰² Your brother has given his full [attention?]⁶⁰³ (*rdi.n sn-k im (ꜥwy?)=f tp r*) to the business (*wpt*) about which you sent (*ḥꜣbt*) the sole companion and steward Hotepi, in order that I might (*n mrwt nfr n*) not do anything that you dislike.⁶⁰⁴ Now if you had written to me, so that you might

⁶⁰¹ See Porten (et al.). 1996. *The Elephantine Papyri in English* for the full publication of the Elephantine archive and pages 32-34 specifically for this letter.

⁶⁰² Smither, 1942: 16 and Strudwick, 2005: 178, translate the letter as if Merrenakht is the writer and Iru is the addressee. However, in a later publication by Eichler (1991:22-24), the writer is identified as Iru due to the arrangement of the letter, as his name and titles appear in the first vertical column and is separated from the rest of the text by a line and Merrenakht's name and titles appear in the only horizontal line after the line break. This was already adopted by Wente (1990: 58) and later publications by Manassa (2006:152, comment C), and Vittmann (1996, 32, comment 3). Additionally, we have examples of inverted filiation with the paternal connections of Merrenakht - Merrenakht son of Khnumhotep, son of the lector priest Sobekhotep. The direct genitive is used to connect the relationships so A of B of C, reading Merrenakht of Khnumhotep of the lector priest Sobekhotep with the word for son - *sꜣ* omitted, see GG: 85, Olabarria, 2020: 131-134, and Vittmann, 1996: 32, comment 7 for filiation formula.

⁶⁰³ *rdi.n sn-k im (ꜥwy?)=f tp r* – translates as 'your brother there has given his two arms and the head of the mouth'. Altogether it gives the effect that Iru has made this issue his top priority, he is carrying the weight of this matter in his arms and the head of the mouth gives the impression that it is foremost in Iru's discussions and business.

⁶⁰⁴ The writer Iru refers to himself as 'your brother' - *sn-k* and Merrenakht is referred to as 'your scribe' – *sꜣ-k*. Translating using these terms makes it hard to comprehend the information, so I have followed Manassa, 2006, 152, comment D, Smither, 1942: 18, comment c, and Wente, 1990: 58 and used the pronouns I/you with exception to the first example of *sn-k* in the letter. Vittmann (1996: 33, comments 8 and 10) maintains the

expose a crime (*rdi srht*)⁶⁰⁵, which has been done against me, then the matter is settled.⁶⁰⁶ But if you have done this to break up the fighting because you see the two foreign lands [*n?*][...] [*sn=k im?*][...] *dt?*⁶⁰⁷ Then I will [see] that you love the *hsty-ꜥ*, seal-bearer of the King [sole companion, and overseer] of priests Sabni more than me. It is good to prefer justice rather than [continual] crookedness (*hzb (zw?)*).⁶⁰⁸ Then this is a matter for standing up to every transgression of this *hsty-ꜥ*, for he is one who does not li[ve] (*wmm*) from his own property.⁶⁰⁹ Now you have commended (*sbꜥkk*)⁶¹⁰ me in the Hall of Horus

translation your brother/ your scribe throughout his rendering of the text. Eichler noted that the fact *bꜥk=sn* – your servant, a popular address in letters, has not been used is because both men are of equal ranks (1991: 26).

For negative sentences expressed with *n mrwt nfr n* – ‘in order that not’, see Doret, 1986: 63-54.

⁶⁰⁵ *rdi srht* – reads ‘to provide/ give a crime’ for the stock phrase *rdi srht* translated as ‘expose a crime’ see *CDME*: 236 and Smither, 1942: 17.

⁶⁰⁶ The matter is settled reads, *ht m st* – ‘the matter is in place’.

⁶⁰⁷ The text breaks up here, so we lose some of the context.

⁶⁰⁸ *hzb (zw)* – ‘continual crookedness’, for this term see *CDME*: 1 and Smither, 1942: 1942: 18.

⁶⁰⁹ The base meaning of *wmm* is to eat (*HwB*, no 7639: page 212), and so the translation reads he is ‘not one who eats from his own possession’. The sense here is Sabni does not sustain himself or live by his own means. *wmm* is used in a similar sense in the Old Kingdom tomb of Nekaankh, where he states in his inscription – *ir msw(=i) nb iḡr irt.n(=i) n=sn m hrt wmm=sn* – “Now as for my children, what I have made for them is property, so they may live” (Thompson, 2014: Plate 64, column 1). Again literally, we have – ‘so they may eat but the general sense is continual eating in order to sustain /live’.

⁶¹⁰ *sbꜥkk* – causative derived from the root *bꜥk* - to make bright (see *CDME*:78). *CDME*: 220 simply records *sbꜥkk* as a causative, meaning ‘to give a clear character’. However, as *bꜥk* is trilateral, comprised of three strong consonants, there should be no germination of the final consonant. This may be an example of reduplication, in which, the final two, or rarely the last consonant, is repeated to denote a repeated or continuous human action (*GG*: 274). This fits in nicely with the context of the letter, as Iru is reminding Merrenakht that his character was commended (made bright/clear) before the King and the reduplication is denoting that his character is clear to this day as a continued action (see footnote below for the Hall of Horus). For discussions of the meaning of *sbꜥkk* rather than a grammatical interpretation, see Smither, 1942: 19, comment I and Willems, 1991: 186, comments H-I.

(*wšht nt ḥr*).⁶¹¹ Just like you and I will be together as one thing, so that this *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* will not lay aside the crime, which he committed.⁶¹² Moreover, the sole companion and steward Hotepi has seen that I am not rising up against the troop of Medjet and Wawat (*ḥꜥ sn=k im n tꜣt nt mdꜣ wꜣwꜣt*), in order that I [might not] do what [you] dislike.

The *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, the sole companion, and overseer of priests Iru
(Smither, 1942: 17).⁶¹³

Firstly, it should be noted that scholars such as Strudwick (2005: 178-179) and Wentz (1990: 58) give papyrus 8869 an 8th Dynasty date. Conversely, the most popular consensus is that the Sabni referred to in this letter is the Sabni of the 6th Dynasty who is widely discussed in this chapter.⁶¹⁴ This is furthered by the fact that the Sabni studied in this chapter does make a point of denying that he stole the property of King i.e., the produce he was bringing back from Nubia to further his own agenda. He states in his biography;

⁶¹¹ Hall of Horus (*wšht nt ḥr*) – Horus is referring to the King, meaning this was a place where disobedient officials were judged in the presence of the King. See Lorton, 1977: 9-10, Vittmann, 1996: 33, comment 24 and Smither, 1942: 19, comment m. This theory is based on evidence written in Coptos B (*Urk I*, 283, 11 - 13), C (*Urk I*, 287, 14 – 16), and D (*Urk I*, 292, 3 - 5) as the Hall of Horus is referred to as the location where officials are sent who do not abide by the King's decree.

⁶¹² *nfr-n wꜣḥ ḥꜥty-ꜥ pn ḥꜥwꜥ ir.n=f r tꜣ* reads 'so that this Sabni might not put aside the crime which he has put to the earth'. *ir.n=f r tꜣ* – putting something to earth gives the sense of unloading or getting rid of something. For example, in the tale of the Shipwrecked sailor, the sailor collects armfuls of food, more than is needed and after he has eaten his fill, he *rdi.n=i r tꜣ n wr ḥr ḥꜥw(y)=i* – 'I put to earth (the food) because of the greatness upon my arms' (De Buck, 1948: 101, lines 53-54 and Allen, 2015a: 9-53 for transcription, translation, and commentary). Therefore, the sense is that *rdi.n=i r tꜣ* or putting to earth is unburdening yourself of something, in the case of this letter, it is Sabni hiding his crime by putting it away.

⁶¹³ A copy of the original hieratic and hieroglyphic transcription can be found in Erman (1911: plates 2 & 3).

⁶¹⁴ Erman, 1911: see forward, Manassa, 2006: 154-163 (discusses other possibilities but leans towards the Sabni discussed in this chapter), Smither, 1942: 19, Vercoutter, 1992: 338, comment 1, and Vittmann, 1996: 33

“Never would I allow any produce (*m3ʿw*) go to another man (*ky s*)⁶¹⁵, foreigner or any Nubian in exchange? for the property of the Residence” (*Urk I*, 137, 4 – 5).

This denial goes beyond the usual formulaic prose against theft and retracts a specific crime, suggesting that he was accused of abusing his duties in Nubia. Furthermore, Sabni ensures that throughout his biography that he highlights that the expedition to retrieve his father’s body was comprised of people from his own *pr-ḏt* estate⁶¹⁶, he states;

- On initially setting off to Nubia to collect his father:

“I [went] (*pr*).*n=i*) with a troop (*tst*) of my *pr-ḏt* estate “(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler 2008: plate 9, line 5-6).⁶¹⁷

- When he reached his father:

“I had him car[ried] (*f [3i].tw=f*) by the troop (*tst*) of my *pr-ḏt* estate “(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler 2008: plate 9: line 18).⁶¹⁸

- He sends some men ahead of his expedition:

“... and I [sent] (*sbi*).*kw*) the Royal nobleman Iry together with two *mrt* people of my *pr-ḏt* estate as an advanced party (*srw*) “(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler 2008: plate 9: line 27-28).

⁶¹⁵ Edel reconstructs *rmt* here rather than *ky s* (2008: page 50, line 22).

⁶¹⁶ Qar of Edfu also refers to his own resources by feeding his nome and paying off the debts for people in his nome with grain from his own *pr-ḏt* (Strudwick, 2005: 344 and *Urk I*, 254, 16). Ibi from Deir el Gebrawi mentions three sources for his wealth, his own *pr-ḏt*, from his father, and from the King (Kanawati, 2007:53, Strudwick, 2005: 364-365, and *Urk I*, 144, 10 – 145, 3). For the nature of *pr-ḏt* estates, see Campagno, 2014: 12 and 20, Eyre, 2005: 174-175, Moreno Garcia, 2016: 491-512, and Swinton, 2012: 118-126.

⁶¹⁷ *Urk I*: 136, 4 leaves the lacuna as is and does not reconstruct the construction *pr.n=i*.

⁶¹⁸ See also *Urk I*, 136, 17.

- After he has buried his father, he heads to the Residence with the produce with:

th[at] great expedition of mine (*mšꜥ pꜥ* [ꜥw]) consisting of
Nubians and my own troop (*ꜥꜥst=i*) “(Edel, Seyfried & Vieler
2008: plate 9, lines 54-55).⁶¹⁹

Sabni denies any theft of property on his part, and he reiterates throughout his biography that the men in his expedition were from his own estate. We know from the Old Kingdom Kings and their decrees that officials removing property and people from the Royal estates was a real and valid concern that warranted the writing of a decree to counteract corrupt officials.⁶²⁰ Sabni was accused, in the words of Iru from his letter - as one that does not li[ve] (*wmm*) from his own property and guilty or not, he felt the need to refute these misdemeanours in his biography. In Addition, Smither (1942: 19) adds weight to this suggestion that this letter is referring to 6th Dynasty Sabni by stating a fragment of another letter from the Elephantine archive has survived, which also features the name of Sabni’s father Mekhu. The fragment reads;

The sole companion Sabni, son of Mekhu
(Erman, 1911: plate 6, str cb recto: line 6)

There is a viable case to argue that the Sabni from Papyrus Berlin 8869 is the same Sabni who retrieves his father’s body from Nubia. Sabni is accused of corruption, but we will never know who was right in this situation and if the accusations were justified. As he is referred to as a *hꜥty-ꜥ*, Sabni has clearly inherited the titles decreed to his father and this letter occurred after Mekhu’s death. However, these allegations may have inspired Sabni to include that a decree was issued to his father, giving him a higher rank and title, which would strengthen Sabni’s heirship of this status. Sabni

⁶¹⁹ See also *Urk I*, 139, 7.

⁶²⁰ See chapter 4.3 for the removal of office as punishment. Goedicke’s *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich* and Strudwick, 2005: 97-127 for the collection of Old Kingdom Royal decrees.

already had a bad reputation and so he felt it was necessary to legitimise his succession by stressing his filial status. Additionally, Sabni furthered this campaign of being the rightful appointee by focusing his biography on the retrieval and burial of his father and his assimilation into his father's position proving to his peers that he fulfilled the social expectations of an heir.

Despite Sabni's efforts to solidify his position as the successor to his father, the conflict continued into the next generation. His son, Mekhu II, follows his father's footsteps by centring his narrative on Sabni's death. On finding out his father had passed away, he states;

I sailed northward to Memphis and when I arrived at the Residence, his Majesty said "voice offerings shall be established for your father. I have caused that a decree be set up for him. It (the decree) protected the *h3ty-ꜥ*, seal bearer of the King, sole companion, and lector priest Sabni together with me. All the burial equipment was offered from the place of the Residence according to what was offered to an *iry-pꜥt* in the pyramid of Neferkare for him, the imakhu before the great God Sabni" (Edel, Seyfried & Vieler, 2008: plate 8).⁶²¹

Again, history repeats itself, we have the provision of Sabni's burial equipment from the Residence, offerings for his funerary cult and a decree from the King that protects (*nd*) both Sabni and Mekhu II.

Sabni anticipated potential conflict regarding his position in office, and like Djau requested a decree to reinforce his succession. It makes sense that in a culture that practised hereditary based promotions, offices would be monopolised by one specific family, which created resentment. Goody (1966: 2) states " But we are dealing here with the men at the top and high office tends to be unique and non-duplicating; the paramount, premier, president, and chairmen of the board are by definition, highly restricted roles; if you want the position, there is only one way to get it – by ousting the present incumbent". Although Sabni does not carry the highest of offices, the hereditary

⁶²¹ For translation of this biography, see Strudwick, 2005: 338-339.

factor would still monopolise roles and restrict the mobility of a title within one family. Slander may have been a way for officials to acquire offices that they coveted outside of their own family profession.

There are inferences within the corpus of Old Kingdom biographies that demonstrate that slander and corruption were present and certainly a concern of the ancient Egyptians.⁶²² One of the most dominant themes within the biographies is the value of virtuous speech. Two of the more generic phrases are;

“I am one who spoke beautifully, one who repeated
perfection.”⁶²³

“Never did I say anything evil against any man.”⁶²⁴

Henqu from Deir el Gebrawi and Nekhabu from Giza add further detail to this motif in their biographies;

Henqu

“I am the one who spoke and repeated goodness”
“I never slandered (*hm*) a man to the one more powerful than
him” (*Urk I*, 78, 10 - 11).⁶²⁵

Nekhabu

“Never did I say anything evil (*ḏw*) to the King against any
person or powerful one (*šym ir=f*) against any person” (*Urk I*,
217, 11).⁶²⁶

⁶²² For corruption and slander in ancient Egypt see Eyre, 2011: 701-711 and Eyre, 2016: 163-179.

⁶²³ For more examples and variants of this phraseology, see Kloth, 2002: 10.

⁶²⁴ For more examples and variants of this phraseology, see Kloth, 2002: 105-107.

⁶²⁵ Kanawati 2005: 71-73, plate 66-67, Lichtheim, 1988: 23-24, Schenkel, 1965: 41-44, and Strudwick 2005: 366-368.

⁶²⁶ Dunham, 1938: 1-8 and Strudwick, 2005: 265- 269.

Henqu used the verb slander to highlight his ideal speech and Nekhabu states he did not slander any person to their superiors, including the King. Although these virtues are expressed frequently and in a generic manner, it must not be assumed that these were flippant ideal traits with no real meaning.

There must be an underlying reason why the theme of perfect speech, not repeating anything malicious (i.e., gossiping), and not slandering a person was included in the biographical content. Slander is also a common motif in teachings, for example *The Teaching of Ptahhotep* advises;

Do not repeat slander (*m mskī n mdt*)⁶²⁷, when you did not hear it, for it is the spewing (*prw*) of a hot temper (*t3 ht*).⁶²⁸

Repeat the words which are seen and not heard

It is base (*n(y) -st r t3*)⁶²⁹, do not say it at all.

Theft is ordered when its making is created, so that it appropriates hatred according to law (*iw wḏ.t(w) t3wt irt=s*

shprw r itt=s m msdt mi hp).⁶³⁰

Look it is a nightmare (*mk sswn rswt pw*)⁶³¹,

Shield yourself from it (*hbs -tw hr=s*)⁶³²

(Žaba, 1956: 11.4-11.8).⁶³³

⁶²⁷ For idiomatic term *m mskī n mdt* see *CDME*: 118 and for *mskī* see *Wb* II. 150: 7.

⁶²⁸ *t3 ht* – literal reading is heat of the body.

⁶²⁹ *n(y) -st r t3* – translates as ‘it belongs to the ground’, and is an adjectival possession sentence (see Allen, 2002: 7. The suggestion is that repeating slander is low.

⁶³⁰ Breaking this sentence down we start with *iw wḏ.t(w) t3wt* – ‘theft is ordered’ which is a passive present *sḏm.w=f irt=s shprw* – ‘its making is created’ is the infinitive as the subject of a circumstantial stative sentence. *r itt=s m msdt mi hp* – *r itt=s* is a nominal *sḏm=f* in a prepositional clause to emphasis the adjunct *m msdt mi hp*.

⁶³¹ *mk sswn rswt pw* – translates as ‘it is the destruction of dreams’.

⁶³² *hbs -tw hr=s* – literal reading is ‘cover yourself from it’.

⁶³³ See Allen, 2015a: 167-227, Lichtheim, 1973: 61-80, Parkinson, 1997: 246-272, and Simpson, 2003: 129- 148.

Ptahhotep compares the damage caused by slander to theft here, and his son is advised to avoid it at all costs and only repeat what is heard first-hand.

The popularity in the use of themes concerning slander and controlling one's tongue brings to question, was the underlying nature of perfect speech connected to the fact that officials might slander their contemporaries to obtain an appointment that would otherwise be closed to them due to filial connection. The character assassination of others was so common that it facilitated the denial of such behaviour in the biographies of the officials.

Evidence of slander that many officials deny in their self-presentations is found in the 6th Dynasty biography of Pepyankhheryib from Meir.⁶³⁴ The biography reads;

“I spent all my lifetime, having acted being a magistrate (*ir.n(=i) hr srwt*)⁶³⁵ in the office of the seal (*dbt*) until my end (*r phty=i*). Never did I [sle]ep with my seal far from me, since I was app[ointed] as a magistrate. Never was I guarded, never was I [impr]isoned. [A]s for anything that was said against me in the presence of the magistrates; I came away from it with satisfaction. While it backfired (*hr*)⁶³⁶ upon the ones who spoke, since I was innocent (*bꜥk*) there before the officials, since they spoke (out) against me by slandering me (*sdwy=i*)”
(*Urk I, 223, 8 - 16*).⁶³⁷

Pepyankhheryib mentions his devotion to the job in the same context as the defamation case suggesting that his conduct in his office was connected to the situation, and he was at risk of being removed from his position due to the accusations. Pepyankhheryib makes a point of starting this

⁶³⁴ Eyre, 2011: 708 discusses Pepyankhheryib in the context of how accusations against officials were dealt with in ancient Egypt.

⁶³⁵ *ir.(=i) hr srwt* – here we have a circumstantial *sdm.n=f*, followed by a circumstantial *hr* + infinitive with *srwt* used verbally, giving the translation – being a magistrate.

⁶³⁶ *hr* is ‘to fall’ (*HwB*, no 23917: page 657 and *Wb III. 319-321*) but the sense here is those who spoke against him were proven wrong because he was innocent. Additionally, the verb *hr* has an omitted subject.

⁶³⁷ Baines, 2015a: 25, Kanawati, 2010: 33-35, and Strudwick, 2005: 368-371.

section of his biography with his devotion to the post of magistrate and despite the slander, he acted in this office until his end, meaning he was never ousted from this office. It is also worth noting that he states he slept with his seal (of office) close to him, which might again illustrate his keenness for the job, or he had to sleep with it next to him because it was under threat from potential usurpers.⁶³⁸ Interestingly, Coptos decree R threatens that an official will have his seal (*db^ct*) removed if he does not carry out his duties in terms of maintaining order in his nome;

As for any Chief (*hry-tp*) or man (*s*) who does not act (*nfr hsf=f*) in his nome against any man who shall do these things until the King, vizier or officials arrive, he has no claim to his office (*išt=f*) and his seal (*db^ct=f*). Moreover, he has no claim to any of his property (*išt=f*). His children shall have no claim concerning it. He who remains as an official is he who will take action (Goedicke, 1967, Abb 28: lines 28-31).⁶³⁹

Pepyankhheryib goes on to say – as for everything which was said against me (*ir ht nb dd[d]t r=(i)*) and that he was never guarded or imprisoned. This means he was accused of more than one thing and the allegations must have been quite serious as the potential outcome may have been his imprisonment. A formal hearing occurs concerning these accusations as Pepyankhheryib was challenged in front of his peers, as he says the allegations were said in the presence of the magistrates. He also uses the past, plural participle *ddw* (those who spoke) to describe his accusers,

⁶³⁸ Baines (2015a: 32-33) interprets Pepyankhheryib sleeping with his seal as a sign that the day's business was settled, so he could sleep peacefully.

Lashien (2017: 49) suggests that Pepyankhheryib may have been involved in the trouble that occurred during the reign of Pepy I, based on the grounds that Pepyankhheryib had titles that connected him to the Residence, and he was “almost certainly at Memphis at that time”. This is purely speculation and there is no tangible way to confirm if this was the case based on the evidence available. The officials involved in the conflict at this time were removed from office and their tombs vandalised to remove any trace of them (see chapter 4.3). It seems unlikely that if the accusation against Pepyankhheryib involved high treason then he would be sent into the provinces and given so much authority in his nome.

⁶³⁹ Goedicke, 1967: 214-225, Hayes, 1946: 3-23, Strudwick, 2005: 123-124, and *Urk I*, 306, 2 - 8.

meaning it was more than one person who complained about him. Despite a successful outcome for Pepyankhheryib, the incident clearly vexed him as he managed to aim a barb towards his accusers at the end of his biography with the line;

“I speak with true words, without saying it as a big mouth (*m*

ꜥꜣ r)” (*Urk I, 224, 18*).⁶⁴⁰

The fact that Pepyankhheryib includes this in his biographical material is hugely significant.

Biographies are manufactured to place the tomb owner in a positive light and negative events are usually omitted. Pepyankhheryib felt he had to protest his innocence for eternity, but his supplication of innocence puts us in mind of Queen Gertrude’s famous saying in Hamlet “The Lady doth protest too much, methinks.” He clearly got himself into trouble, earned a reputation to the point where he had to create a permanent disclaimer carved into stone. This leads us to one of the negative elements attached to hereditary succession of office. The restrictive mobility of titles due to familial succession triggered resentment. Therefore, we see denials of slander in biographies.

Defamation was a tactic to remove a man from his office, like the attempt made against Pepyankhheryib. The Medieval Tudor court is a good example of hereditary succession and underhanded tactics to oust powerful families, with warring families such as the Howards and the Seymours, who were at loggerheads for the prime positions closest to the King. There is no reason to think that high ranking official families from Ancient Egypt were any different. It would be easy to dismiss the anti- slander statements as formulaic prose within the biographies but looking at Pepyankhheryib’s statement it is apparent that complaining against an official was serious business that threatened the removal of office if proved to be true. Therefore, by denying any ill-

⁶⁴⁰ *m ꜥꜣ r* – here we have what Allen (2000: 6.5) calls a *nfr hr* construction where the adjective is used as the first noun of an indirect genitive, so it reads ‘as a big one of mouth’.

speaking in a biography demonstrated that the tomb owner did not come by his titles in an underhanded way by misappropriation from another man.

4.3 The King's authority to remove office

The risk of being withdrawn from office did not just come from other officials, the King could also pose as a threat to a man's position. A man passed down his office to his progeny, but this natural succession was dependent on a degree of Royal favour and acceptance articulated as approval to allow the transmission to take place.⁶⁴¹ Despite filial promotion, the King had the power to remove favour and offices from an individual, which ultimately meant the title was lost to his heirs. The Coptos decree of Nebukheperre, dating to the 17th Dynasty explicitly demonstrates the King's ability to demote a man. A man called Tety has been accused by the temple staff of some sort of misdemeanour and they have complained to the King. Nebukheperre who not only lays out Tety's punishment but also includes a warning and consequences to any man who will side with Tety;

Have him removed from the temple of Min. Throw him out
(*imi di.tw=f hr t3*)! Have him removed from his temple office,
from son to son (*s3 n s3*), heir to heir (*iw^c n iw^c*), with him
being cast to the ground. Take away his provisions (*k^w=f*), his
title deeds (*drf=f*)⁶⁴² and his meat offerings (*w^cbt*). His name
shall not be remembered in this temple just like what is done
to one like him, who has rebelled regarding the *hft^yw* of his
God.⁶⁴³ His inscriptions in the temple of Min, from the treasury

⁶⁴¹ See chapter 2.9.

⁶⁴² Morschauser (1991: 174) translates *drf* as food with his translation reading – 'The income from it, its food and its pure meat shall be given to him'. Geobs (2003: 28) translates *k^w=f*, *drf* and *w^cbt=f* collectively as 'his endowed provisions'. Eyre (2013: 36) refers to *drf* as lines referring to the writing in the temple that recorded his right to a share of the endowment income. Wente (1990: 26) also translates 'title deed' and *Wb* V. 603. 6 gives the definition 'prescription'.

⁶⁴³ The criminal act is unclear in the decree and is described with the term *t3w hft^yw*. Posener, (1969: 30) states this term was used to avoid putting into writing a crime committed against a God. Uljas (2013: 357-364) translates as the *hft.w* and discusses two different interpretations of the meaning. One view is that Tety was found to be harbouring enemies, and the second being it was the misappropriation of temple property. Alternatively, Morschauser (1991: 172) suggests that Tety overstepped his boundaries and seized an enemy of the King without proper authority. Sethe (1927: 166) and Wente (1990:26) translate as sacred relic. Goebis

and from every papyrus roll will be destroyed. As for any King or powerful one (*sh̄m-ir=f*) who might pardon him (*nty r ḥtp n=f*)⁶⁴⁴, he shall not receive the white crown, nor wear the red crown. He will not sit on the seat of Horus of the living, and the two Ladies of Upper and Lower Egypt will not be gracious to him as one whom they love.

Now as for any commander (*ṯsw*) (or) any *hꜣty-ꜣ* who will petition to the Lord LPH, to pardon (*r ḥtp n=f*) him (Tety). Stop! His people, his things, and his fields shall be given to the divine offerings of his father Min, Lord of Coptos together with not having any persons belonging to his family, belonging to the relatives of his father or of his mother be appointed to office, and letting the office be awarded to the seal bearer of the King and the overseer of the *gs-pr*⁶⁴⁵ Minemhat. Its provisions (*ꜣḳw=s*), its title deeds (*ḏrf=s*), and its meat offerings (*wꜣbt=s*) shall be given to him when it has been established for him in writing in the temple of the father Min, Lord of Coptos from son to son (*sꜣ n sꜣ*) and heir to heir (*iwꜣ n iwꜣ*) (Sethe, 1924: 98).⁶⁴⁶

Amongst the various punishments is the removal of office and this also extends down the male family line – from son to son, heir to heir. What is significant in this decree is that the punishment also extends to a King who might give pardon to Tety or his family. This is like the warning in the 12th Dynasty Boundary Stele of Senusret III;

(2003: 30-33) it is regarding the theft of temple life stock, as stealing a statue or relic of the God would incite a more severe punishment.

⁶⁴⁴ Relative adjectival sentence with the *r* of futurity, the dative is employed as a resumptive pronoun as the subject Tety is different to the antecedent (see GG: 200 & 304).

⁶⁴⁵ *gs-pr* translates as side of the house.

⁶⁴⁶ For translations and discussions regarding Nebukheperes' decree, see Eyre, 2015: 340, Goebis, 2003: 27-37, Lorton, 1977:18-23, Morschauer, 1991: 172-176, Uljas, 2013: 357-364, and Wente, 1990: 25-26.

“Now as for any son of mine, who will strengthen this boundary, which my Majesty made, he is my son, and he is born to my Majesty. Pleasing is the son who protects his father, who strengthens the boundaries of the one who begot him. Now as for the one who will not fight regarding it (the boundary), he is not my son and he is not born to me” (Sethe, 1924: 84, lines 13-17).⁶⁴⁷

Even Royal sons were not excluded from the forfeiting of office if they did not meet the expected standards of the King. Although, the boundary stele does not specifically state that the Prince will not inherit the Kingship, the demotion is clear in the threat of disownment.

Several decrees from the Old Kingdom also express the threat of demotion by the King. Coptos decree R, dates to the 8th Dynasty and was issued by King Demedjibtawy – an unknown King, who is not on record anywhere else except for this decree.⁶⁴⁸ The decree is issued to Idu, who, at the time of this decree, had inherited the office of vizier from his father Shemai. Coptos R initially warns against the destruction of property in temples, stating;

Regarding any man of this entire land who might do a destructive (*nbꜥ*) or evil thing (*bin*) to any of your statues, offering stones (*ꜥbꜣw*)⁶⁴⁹, ka-chapel and furniture (*ḥtwt-mnw*), which are in any chapel (*r-pr*) or any temple (*ḥwt nꜥr*). My Majesty does not allow that the property of their father’s remain therein, nor will they join with the Akhu in the necropolis, nor will they be amongst the living ones who are upon the earth (Goedicke, 1967, Abb 28: lines 3-14).

⁶⁴⁷ For the full transcription, see Sethe, 1924: 83-85, for translation, see Simpson, 2003: 337-338.

⁶⁴⁸ See Hayes, 1946: 20-23 and Papazian, 2015: 401-403 for a discussion concerning Demedjibtawy.

⁶⁴⁹ *ꜥbꜣw* – offering stone, has an unusual writing in this decree rather than three stones to denote plural offering stones (GG: O:39) (see *HwB*, no 5031: page 148 for the usual writing), we have the portion of the backbone sign (GG: F:40), which makes up the *ꜣw* part of the word. So, the ending and plural is written out phonetically rather than using *w* or determinatives. Also see Goedicke, 1967: 217, comment 8.

Then the consequences follow for the officials who do not police the miscreants who cause damage to the temple;

As for any chief (*hry-tp*) or man (*s*) who does not punish (*nfr hsf=f*) in his nome against any man who shall do these things until the King, vizier or officials arrive, he has no claim to his office (*i3t=f*) and his seal (*db^ct=f*). Moreover, he has no claim to any of his property (*i3t=f*). His children shall have no claim concerning it. He who remains as an official is he who will act
(Goedicke, 1967, Abb 28: lines 28-31).⁶⁵⁰

Coptos decree R highlights that if a person in authority such as a chief does not do his duty and deal with misdemeanours that happen in his nome until the higher authorities i.e, the King and vizier arrive, then he is no longer considered an official. The removal of office is not just targeted at the perpetrator but also the successors from his family line.

In comparison, a 5th Dynasty decree issued by Neferirkare at Abydos similarly implies the punishment of an offender, in a way that affects the hereditary nature of office holding;

... (their) house, land, dependents (*mrt*), all things that he possesses (*wn hr=f*)⁶⁵¹ shall be confiscated (*sd3*),⁶⁵² and he shall be put on manual labour (*idr^w*) (Goedicke, 1967, Abb 2: 29a).⁶⁵³

The implication of the removal of office is evident, in that the person who does not adhere to Neferirkare's decree will have everything he owns taken away and be forced into manual labour.

⁶⁵⁰ Goedicke, 1967: 214-225, Hayes, 1946: 3-23, Strudwick, 2005: 123-124, and *Urk I*, 304, 3 – 305, 7.

⁶⁵¹ *wn hr=f*- GG: 396 and Goedicke, 1967: 34, comment 32.

⁶⁵² *sd3* – confiscated, see *HwB*, no 47816: Page 858.

⁶⁵³ Goedicke, 1967: 22-36, Strudwick, 2005: 98-101, and *Urk I*, 172, 8.

4.3.1 *Damnatio Memoriae*

Damnatio Memoriae is an indication that an official has fallen foul of the King, and forfeited their office.⁶⁵⁴ The Decree of Pepy I from Dahshur has had the name of a vizier erased from the address (see figure 51).⁶⁵⁵ One theory is that the man whose name was erased was a vizier called Rewer whose tomb shows evidence of the removal of his name with the face, hands, and feet chiselled out on his figures in the tomb scenes (see figure 52).⁶⁵⁶

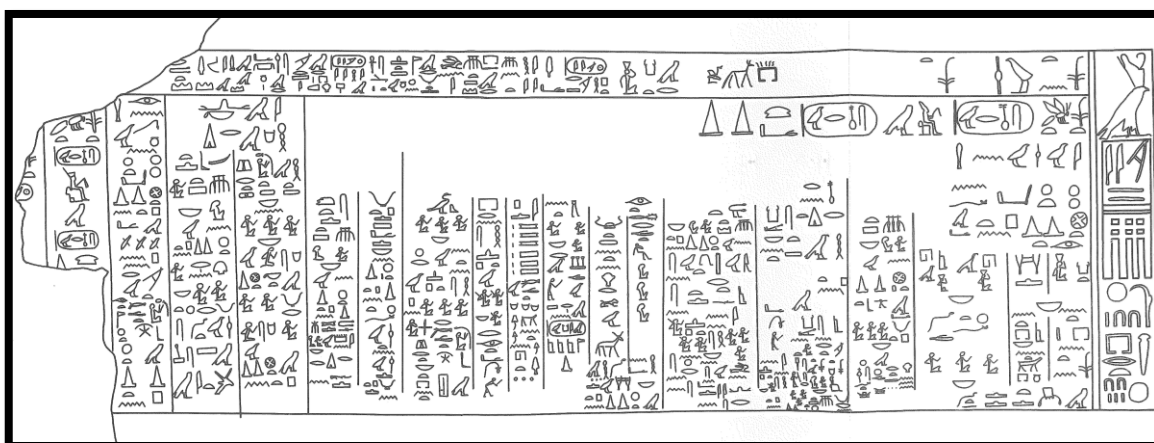


Figure 51: The Dahshur Decree of Pepy I. The first horizontal line shows a gap in the inscription before the title vizier (Goedicke, 1967: Abb 5).

⁶⁵⁴ Baines & Lacovara, 2002: 23-25, Eyre, 2015: 334-342, Eyre, 2016: 170-171, Moreno Garcia, 2013c: 1057-1060, and Myśliwiec, 2010: 315 – 318.

⁶⁵⁵ For the Dahshur decree, see Goedicke, 1967: 55-77, and Strudwick, 2005: 103-105.

⁶⁵⁶ See El-Fikey, 1980, *The Tomb of The Vizier Re-Wer at Saqqara* and Kanawati, 2003: 115-117 & 177.

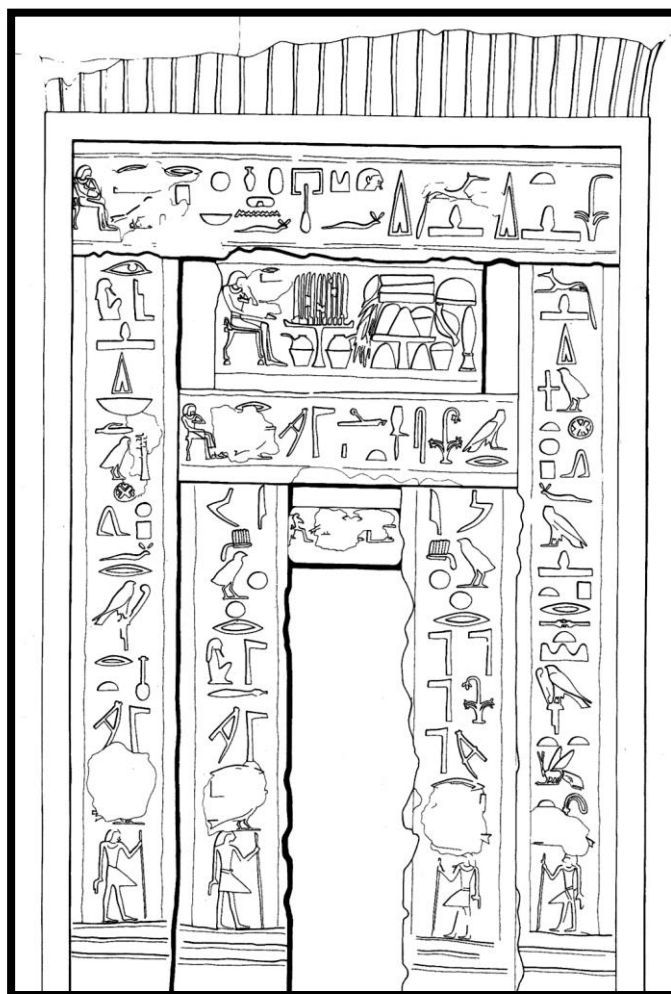


Figure 52: The false door of Rewer with his name removed from all areas (El-Fikey, 1980: Plate 5).

By examining the false door of Rewer, we can see that this was not just mindless vandalism. It is only his name that has been chiselled out, the rest of the inscription remains intact (see figure 52). Rewer is a possible candidate for the vizier whose name is erased on the Dahshur decree, and it is questioned if he had any involvement in the trial of the unnamed Queen that Weni of Abydos arbitrated.⁶⁵⁷ During the reign of Pepy I, Weni states that he initially had judicial duties alongside the vizier, however, regarding the trial of the Queen, he records that he heard matters alone and in secret.⁶⁵⁸ As Rewer was a vizier under Pepy I, the deliberate damage to his tomb coupled with the

⁶⁵⁷ See Bárta, 2020b: 365, El-Fikey, 1980: 44-46, Kanawati, 2003:115-117, 171-173 & 177, and Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 41-46, 82-91 & 96-98. See also chapter 3.1.3 for Weni's role in jurisdiction.

⁶⁵⁸ *Urk I*, 100, 12 – 101, 7.

viziers name erased from the Dahshur decree, may be indicative of his involvement with the corrupt Queen.⁶⁵⁹ With Rewer disgraced, Weni stepped into the role of the vizier, an office he would later hold himself.

Hesi a vizier of the 6th dynasty also suffered deliberate damage to his tomb.⁶⁶⁰ His name was removed, and his figures were chiselled out and even plastered over in some areas (see figure 53).⁶⁶¹

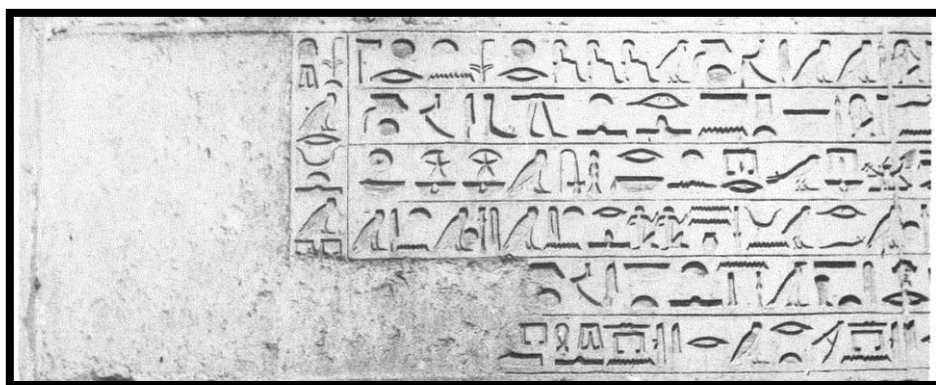


Figure 53: Scene from Hesi's tomb where his name and figure have been completely obliterated (Kanawati, 1999: plate 7 (bottom image)).

Hesi's tomb was later reused by a man called Seshemnefer who made a point of including in his inscription;

The sole companion and lector priest Seshemnefer, an offering which the King gives: A tomb (*ḥtp di nsw is*) (Kanawati, 1999: plate 50).

Seshemnefer wants to demonstrate that he came by the ownership of this tomb honestly and ethically. We can take from his statement that if it was the King that gifted his tomb, it was also the

⁶⁵⁹ For Rewer's titles, see El-Fikey, 1980: 11.

⁶⁶⁰ For Hesi's biography, see chapter 3.1, Kanawati, 2003: 57-63, and Kanawati & Swinton, 2018: 41-46.

⁶⁶¹ See Kanawati, 1999, *The Tety Cemetery at Saqqara V: The Tomb of Hesi*, and Kanawati, 2003: 57-63, 152-153 & 165-166.

King that took it away from Hesi.⁶⁶² The removal of names and the confiscation of the tomb indicates that Rewer and Hesi were disgraced, although the specific reasons were not given.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² Kanawati, 2003: 57-63.

⁶⁶³ Rewer and Hesi were not alone regarding the treatment of their tombs, many other tombs were also defaced during the Old Kingdom, see Kanawati 2003: 25-137 and Myśliwiec, 2010: 315 – 318.

4.4 Conclusion

Hereditary succession was not a guarantee that an office would remain within a family for the duration of the family line. Family tomb complexes and affirmations that eldest sons interred their father was not unique to Djau and Sabni. However, Djau and Sabni go far beyond the usual repertoire of an heir fulfilling his duties to his father as his successor. The paternal orientated biography, the decree, and the joint tomb are reactive strategies to an issue that threatened their succession or the inheritance of future generations. There is a real need to connect themselves to their fathers and demonstrate that they carried out everything that was expected of a rightful heir.

The mention of the decree illustrates that Sabni and Djau derive from the inheriting line of the family. Djau comes from a family that has its roots in a complex family dynamic, with his father being one of two eldest sons. The decree confirming his father's office, reflected contestation from the other family group headed by Ibi the other eldest son. Djau needed confirmation that his father was the legitimate office holder, which in turn, would recognise him as rightful heir.

Sabni's purpose for highlighting his father may be due to the letter of complaint that accuses him of theft. The letter cannot be linked with the Sabni in this chapter with real certainty, but the fact Sabni reiterates that his expedition was conducted by his own means, and he never stole any of the goods from the expedition that were destined for the Residence, suggests that an accusation of theft was certainly a concern for him.

With Nepotism monopolising offices and the benefits attached, jealousy and resentment were no doubt embedded in official culture. Slander is a formulaic motif in Old Kingdom biographies, but the sentiment still holds weight and goes far beyond a general denial of gossip and rudeness. The theme of slander and good speech can be viewed as a declaration by the tomb owner that his career was achieved through honest means and not through underhanded tactics such as ruining the reputation of another man to usurp his office. Pepyankhheryib demonstrates that slander was linked to office holding as he makes sure to record that he stayed in his office until his end.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this thesis was to develop a study regarding the acquisition of office in the Old Kingdom, using 6th Dynasty tomb biographies as the core material. The ritual, education, and training, related to career progression has been discussed previously, but are often simply footnoted or referred to as part of a wider discussion, for instance, concerning political reforms, or childhood. Therefore, the aim was to challenge these pre-existing discussions, and to build on them more comprehensively than the work of previous scholarship.

The *ts mdh* rite is only presented in the biographies with four words; *ink id/hwn ts mdh* - “I was a youth who tied the *mdh*” with no narrative context other than it is employed in conjunction with the career of the tomb owner (see chapter 1.1). Despite this issue, this thesis has provided an extensive study of *ts mdh* rite. Both the physical and symbolic attributes surrounding this rite have been determined. The *mdh* was tied onto the boy’s head during this ceremony rather than it being an item of clothing, such as a girdle or kilt, or the removal of hair (see chapter 1.4). This rite is complex and multifaceted in meaning, going beyond the simple physical action of tying a cloth (*mdh*) onto a boy’s head. This was a ceremonial rite, hence the use of the ritualistic wording of *mdh*, which is employed in the pyramid texts, coffin texts, and funerary rituals (see chapter 1.3-1.4). This is the reason that *mdh* is scant in the textual record, as it was a part of ritualistic language.

The age the rite was carried out was flexible given the variances in terms - *id*, *hwn*, and *hrd*- for the word youth involved in the *ts mdh* and so the rite was based on social developmental attributes as opposed to a specific age (see chapter 1.9). The chronological sequence for these developmental phases is *hrd* – *id* – *hwn*. *hrd* marked the stage where the child began their education and spent more time away from the feminine influences at home (see chapter 1.9.1). The *id* were well under way with their education and training and held titles that were not attached to specific offices, but to certain institutions such as a temple or Palace (see chapter 1.9.2). *hwn* held

appointments and had their own titles attached to office but were not at the highest level that they could reach (see chapter 1.9.3).

Symbolically, the *ṯs mdh* rite marked the separation from the feminine influences in a boy's life, and the transition into manhood where he was expected to conform to gender appropriate social behaviour (see chapter 1.7). The use of the verb *ṯs* is significant within the context of the rite, with *ṯs* not only conveying the attachment of a garment to the boy but also the binding of the boy to his new-found masculine status (see chapter 1.8). The connection of circumcision to this rite is speculative, but a comparison from modern Egypt demonstrates the link between boys wearing headdresses and the circumcision rite (see chapter 1.5-1.7). The wearing of the headdress denoted the boy's femininity and allowed him to act outside his expected social behaviour for one last time. Once he was ready for the circumcision, the headdress was removed, and he had to conform to masculine behaviour and not react to the pain.

The discussions pertaining to the appointment of office tend to be piecemeal with the hereditary nature of inheriting office, access to education, and social mobility referred to in wider discussions regarding the politics and administration in the Old Kingdom. This thesis has brought together these topics to provide a cohesive study concerning the preparation for office, and the nature of promotion. Political reforms have been discussed in this thesis, but as a background to how changes in government impacted on education and training (see chapter 2.3). This research has determined that education for office holding had several pathways. The child could be taken to the Residence for an education at Court or learn their trade on the job. Education at court was reserved for the children of officials that were the highest echelon, as a strategy to instil loyalty and make King's men out of the next generation of officials (see chapter 2.1-2.6). There was also a training regime that saw younger males under the tutelage of elder males in the family, where they would observe and conduct ever increasing responsibilities (see chapter 2.7-2.8). In both branches of training not only was the boy trained for office but also in etiquette and decorum according to his

class. The two avenues of training were not mutually exclusive, and the earlier offices and responsibilities given to an official was to prepare him for the highest office that he would inherit from his father, so despite the fact he was mature and held titles, he was still effectively in training.

The theme of meritocracy presents a real problem when studying promotions (see chapter 2 introduction). The Old Kingdom biographies are so entrenched in the ideology of the King as the bestower of titles it is difficult to drill down to what was reality. Despite this, there is enough scope to establish that offices were passed down from father to son. The real issue at hand is the balance between the hereditary factor and how much stock is in the meritocratic system. The overall system for promotion was that the eldest son inherited the titles from his father, and the King gave his approval for the transmission to take place as a form of Royal favour (see chapter 2.9). There are grains of truth in the ideology regarding promotion in that Royal approval was an element of succession, however, an official was always in line for his promotions through his paternal bloodline.

Social mobility is difficult to determine in the Old Kingdom (see chapter 2.10). It is apparent in the New Kingdom that the status of a man could rise through military service or craft work, and in close service to the King, but in the Old Kingdom every official portrays himself as a self-made man, so the reality of social mobility is lost in the ideology. The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates that offices and even trade jobs were considered a family business. Not only was the eldest son educated in the field of the father's profession but also the younger sons. It was imperative for a family to retain the office by training all the males and have them working within the same arena. This strategy meant there was always someone ready to inherit the office should the eldest son die. By keeping training and education within a single family, offices were restricted, meaning the opportunity for social mobility would be limited. This is highlighted best with the Senedjemib family who retained the role of vizier for four generations (see chapter 2.10). Social mobility in lower and local levels of office have been highlighted in this thesis with provincial officials in higher offices promoting *mr* to *ḥkꜣ*. With the distance between the Residence and the provinces,

it makes sense that an official had the authority to appoint positions on a lower level when dealing with local business. The time it would take to run every decision by the King and Court would be an impossible way to carry out affairs in the provinces.

Previous scholarship has attempted to devise a curriculum vitae for high-ranking offices by employing titles to construct a career pathway with the view that men who were viziers, for instance, would have to follow a specific set of promotions until reaching the viziership. An alternate theory is illustrated in this work. As we are dealing with a culture who practised hereditary succession, the highest office in the family is already predetermined to the heir. Consequently, early appointments can be considered as training regimes leading up to the highest available title (see chapter 3). Weni, as an overseer of the *hnty-š* of the Palace, carried out various missions that extended far beyond the duties of an *hnty-š*, but not for a man who would one day assume the role of vizier. It was not so much that future viziers had to achieve a set pattern of titles to assume the office of vizier, it was about gaining experience, and carrying out jobs that would be beneficial to that position.

The negative side of promotion has been highlighted in this paper. It is difficult to find reality in idealised sources that are devised to only portray their protagonists in a positive light. Regardless of this obstacle, my work has identified several issues that an Old Kingdom official faced when dealing with promotion. There are inferences within the biographies that succession into office did not always run smoothly. Elder sons bolstered their positions through stating they buried their father, an act that was carried out by the heir. Djau and Sabni (chapter 4.1 and 4.2) go beyond the simple statement regarding the interment of a father. The whole narrative of their biographical content is based on their father's burial along with the reference to a decree sent by the King to confirm the titles of their father posthumously, and of course the joint tomb. These motifs all appearing in the same text infers that succession was the issue at hand.

Complex family dynamics had the potential to interfere with the course of succession (see chapter 4.1). If an official remarried or practised polygamy and had more children, we have a household with children from two or more maternal lines. With this, came the issue of two eldest sons born to one father. This problem was compounded by maternal ambition, with mothers vying for the higher positions for their sons. This resulted in the father of the family creating *imyt-pr* documents or establishing his true heir by inscribing his wishes for succession on his tomb wall.

Hereditary succession restricted the mobility of titles from outside the family who held them. If a family were amassing power and wealth from these offices, or the successor is corrupt or not up to the job, this would cause jealousy and resentment to those who deemed themselves more worthy (See chapter 4.2). Pepyankhheryib records in his biography, an event where he was clearly slandered during his time in office, which led to him being placed before the Magistrates, and his office put in jeopardy. Such a negative event is not found in other Old Kingdom biographies, with any misdemeanours of the tomb owner being buried with him. This occurrence troubled Pepyankhheryib enough to break from tradition and record this negative event in his life in stone for posterity. His needed to clear his name in this life and the next, demonstrating that reputation was key, and any adverse occurrences attached to a person resulted in the loss of office. In the case of Pepyankhheryib, slander was the strategy to oust him from office, it may have been warranted, but the outcome was in his favour. The common occurrence of the practice of good speech running through Old Kingdom tomb biographies was not just about common courtesy, it was a statement to declare that a person never enhanced his own career by slandering others.

The King might not have decided who a man's successor was, but he had the authority to remove a man from his office as well as barring any future heirs from this title (See chapter 4.3). Any crime committed against the Crown meant the forfeit of office and this served as a warning in the decrees issued by the King. The defacement of tombs demonstrate that this was not just an idle threat, and a corrupt official lost his office, life, and his afterlife. Hereditary succession was fallible,

getting the promotion was the easy part, keeping the office was an entirely different matter. Royal favour allowed the son to succeed his father, but Royal disfavour stripped a man from his offices all together, marked archaeologically by examples of *Damnatio Memoriae*.

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