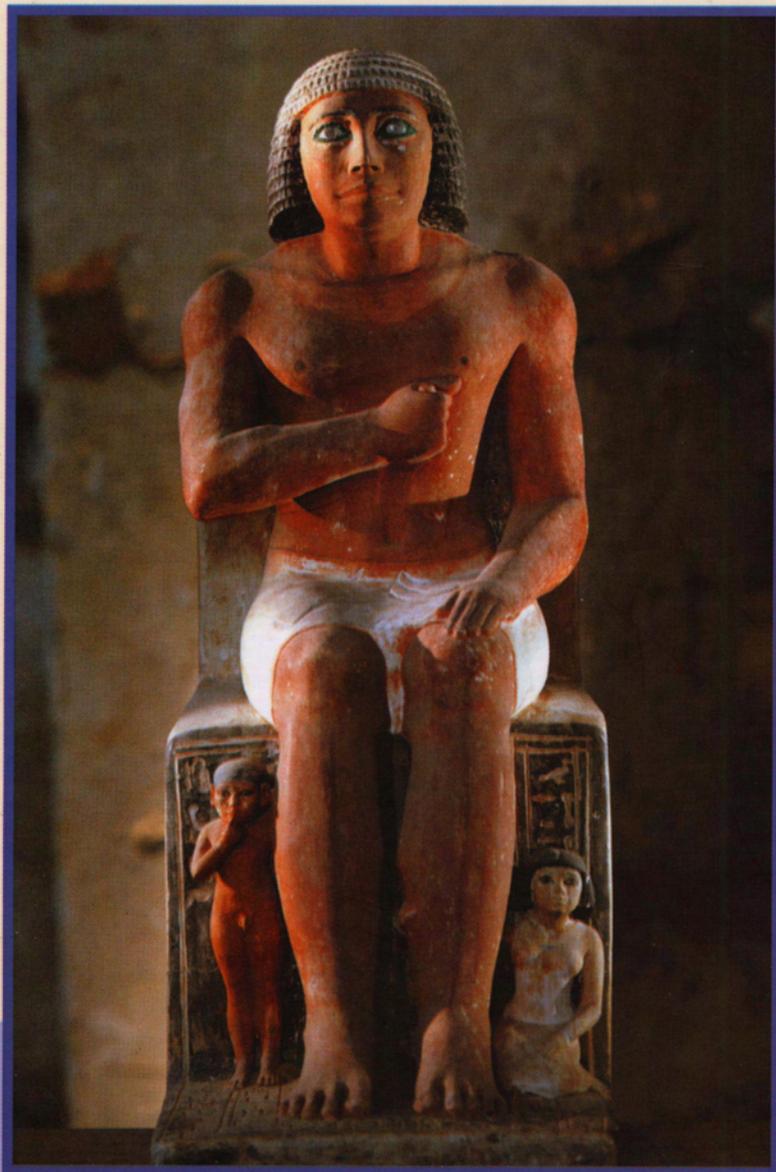


CAHIER N° 34

STUDIES IN HONOR OF
ALI RADWAN

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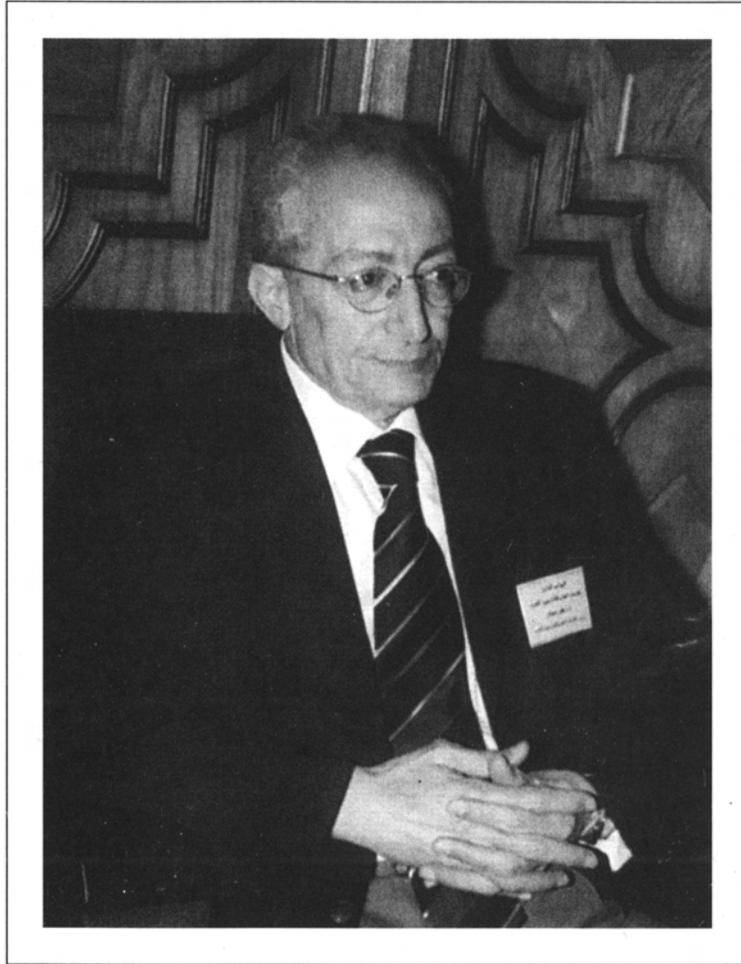
SUPPLÉMENT AUX ANNALES DU SERVICE DES
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Cover Illustration: The statue of Kai and his son and daughter.



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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

HAIKAL Fayza	
<i>TWO SMALL OBJECTS FROM KING FAROUK'S COLLECTION IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM</i>	9
HANDOUSSA Tohfa	
<i>STELA OF AMONMES</i>	17
HAWASS Zahi	
<i>UNIQUE STATUES FROM GIZA V THE EXCEPTIONAL STATUE OF THE PRIEST KAI AND HIS FAMILY</i>	25
HEMA Rehab A.	
<i>INDIVIDUALISM BETWEEN IDEALISM AND REALISM</i>	39
KAMEL Salwa	
<i>LES FORMES NON TRADITIONNELLES DE QUELQUES DIEUX EGYPTIENS</i>	47
KANAWATI Naguib	
<i>DECORATION OF BURIAL CHAMBERS, SARCOPHAGI AND COFFINS IN THE OLD KINGDOM</i>	55
KAPLONY Peter	
<i>DIE APOLOGIE DES SCHÖPFERS (CT SPRUCH 1130)-NEUE ASPEKTE</i>	73
KESSLER Dieter	
<i>ZUR FUNKTION DER HORUSSTELLEN UND HEILSTATUEN VOR DEN SANKTUAREN UND KAPELLEN</i>	81
KLEMM Rosemarie and Dietrich	
<i>FATIRA (ABU ZABAL) AND GHOZZA - TWO NEW KINGDOM AND PTOLEMAIC GOLD WORKING SITES IN THE EASTERN DESERT OF EGYPT</i>	95
KRZYZANIAK Lech	
<i>NEW ROCK ART SITES IN THE DAKHLEH OASIS</i>	113
KURTH Dieter	
<i>VISIONES TEMPLI</i>	117
LESKO Barbara S.	
<i>CLUES AND QUESTIONS OF MEANING IN EGYPTIAN ART</i>	127
MIGAHID Abd-el-Gawad	
<i>EINE SPÄTDEMOTISCHE LISTE ÜBER BEVÖLKERUNGSSTATISTIK (P. VINDOB. D 6799)</i>	133

MOSTAFA M. M. Farid	
<i>THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY 'A' AND A RELATED TEXT (BLOCK 52) FROM THE TOMB OF SHEMAI AT KOM EL-KOFFAR /QIFT</i>	161
MYŚLIWIEC Karol	
<i>FEFI AND TEMI: POSTHUMOUS NEIGHBOURS (SIXTH DYNASTY, SAQQARA)</i>	197
NIWIŃSKI Andrzej	
<i>THE THREE PHASES OF ROBBERIES IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS AND NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE TOMB ROBBERS' TECHNIQUE OBTAINED DURING WORKS OF THE POLISH-EGYPTIAN CLIFF MISSION AT DEIR EL-BAHARI</i>	213
O'CONNOR David	
<i>THE OWNERSHIP OF ELITE TOMBS AT SAQQARA IN THE FIRST DYNASTY</i>	223
POLZ Daniel	
<i>THE ROYAL AND PRIVATE NECROPOLIS OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH DYNASTIES AT DRA' ABU EL-NAGA</i>	233
RAUE Dietrich	
<i>DIE SIEBEN HATHOREN VON PRT</i>	247
RÖSSLER-KÖHLER Ursula	
<i>KÖNIGLICHE ORNATSTÜCKE AUS DER RAMESSIDENZEIT? - EINE NEUE QUELLE ZU KÖNIG RAMSES VII</i>	263
SAAD ALLAH Mohamed Ali	
<i>KING IW-WPT AND THE TWENTY-THIRD DYNASTY</i>	275
SADEK Ashraf Alexandre	
<i>UN ASPECT DE LA RELIGION POPULAIRE AU NOUVEL- EMPIRE ÉGYPTIEN: LA QUÊTE DU VISAGE DIVIN</i>	279
SAIED Ahmed	
<i>DER SONNENKULT UND DER SONNENGOTT IN DER VOR- UND FRÜHGESCHICHTE ÄGYPTENS</i>	287
SATZINGER Helmut	
<i>DENKMAL FÜR EINEN SCHRIFTGELEHRTEN</i>	295



SCHULZ Regine und SEIDEL Matthias	
<i>DIE FINGERRINGE DES TUT-ANCH-AMUN</i>	301
SELIM Hassan	
<i>TWO UNPUBLISHED EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY STELAE FROM THE REIGN OF THUTMOSES III AT CAIRO MUSEUM TN. 20.3.25.3 AND TN. 21.3.25.14</i>	329
SHEHAB EL-DIN Tahia	
<i>THE MODERN ARABIC EQUIVALENT OF THE EGYPTIAN INTERROGATIVE PARTICLE Jh</i>	341
SOUROUZIAN Hourig	
<i>ON THE SOLARISATION OF THE EGYPTIAN KING</i>	347
STADELMANN Rainer	
<i>A NEW LOOK AT THE TOMBS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND DYNASTIES AT ABYDOS AND SAKKARA AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE PYRAMID COMPLEX</i>	361
SWELIM Nabil	
<i>LAYER MONUMENTS AND THE RIVER</i>	377
TAWFIK Tarek Sayed	
<i>SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE STELAE OF THE NEW KINGDOM NECROPOLIS AT SAQQARA</i>	383
VACHALA Břetislav	
<i>THE CZECH PARTICIPATION IN THE UNESCO CAMPAIGN IN NUBIA, AN OUTLINE OF RESULTS</i>	389
WESTENDORF Wolfhart	
<i>EINE STRITTIGE PASSAGE IM FALL 28 DES PAPYRUS SMITH</i>	393
YOUSSEF Ahmed Abdel-Hamid	
<i>THE CORONATION OF KING HAREMHEB RE-READ</i>	397
ZIEGLER Christiane	
<i>RÉUNIS POUR L'ÉTERNITÉ: LES VASES CANOPES DU PRÊTRE EMBAUMEUR TY</i>	399

DECORATION OF BURIAL CHAMBERS, SARCOPHAGI AND COFFINS IN THE OLD KINGDOM

*Naguib KANAWATI**

Until late in the Fifth Dynasty reign of Djedkare/Isesi, walls of burial chambers were bare of any decoration. In fact many burial chambers were so irregularly and roughly cut that they were often described as being incomplete or unfinished.¹ The use of such terms implies that the shape and smoothness of all or part of the chamber's surfaces did not reach the level of regularity originally planned. Yet the subterranean sections - shafts and burial chambers - of any mastaba² were almost certainly the first to be executed, since it would have been more practical to work on them before the construction of the walls of the mastaba and the chapel, which, once in place, would make the introduction of a usually large stone sarcophagus very difficult and in some instances almost impossible. The 'unfinished' appearance of the surfaces of many burial chambers may well have been intentional. If the work on burial chambers was interrupted after the initial cutting and the introduction of the sarcophagi was intended to be completed following the building and decoration of the superstructure, then we have to assume that many tomb owners died prematurely, just immediately after finishing the decoration of their chapels. However, there are too many cases of unfinished burial chambers for premature death to be an explanation. Furthermore, the simple evening-out of wall surfaces in burial chambers would have been a fairly inexpensive operation which sons of important tomb owners would have presumably been willing to undertake for their fathers.³ However, the unfinished conditions are not restricted to burial chambers; many chapels from all periods have small sections which appear to have been deliberately left unfinished. This applies to the cutting of walls in rock-cut tombs or the dressing of stones in mastabas as well as to the scenes in the chapel. It is possible that such a practice was for magical or superstitious reasons aimed at delaying the possible day of death, and although such incompleteness could be found in any depicted theme, many cases are curiously attested in scenes of the funerary procession and related activities.⁴ The tomb of Nikauisesi in the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara presents an interesting case in support of the above argument. Nikauisesi held the very distinguished office of overseer of Upper Egypt under Teti. His mastaba occupies an important site in the cemetery, immediately to the north of those of the viziers Kagemni and Mereruka, and is built with good quality and well dressed blocks of limestone. The chapel has four rooms, not only fully decorated in relief, but also coloured. Yet one small section of the decoration was left unfinished, which happened to be on the thickness of the door of the room containing the mouth of the shaft leading to the burial chamber. There, Nikauisesi is depicted facing inwards and leaning on his staff, with his forward leg bent but with both

* The expertise of Prof. Ali Radwan is broad and varied but art has been one of his special interests. The following article is presented to him in recognition of his many contributions in our beloved area of studies.

¹ For example, A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants* (Boston, 1995), 114; N. Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, 7 vols. (Sydney, Warminster, 1996-2001), vol. 1, 42; vol. 7, 19.

² The situation is different in rock-cut tombs where shafts open into the floor of the chapel and accordingly had to be cut later. This, however, does not affect our argument.

³ Kanawati, *The Tomb and Beyond: burial customs of Egyptian officials* (Warminster, 2001), 12-13.

⁴ Kanawati, *The Tomb and Beyond*, 122.

feet flat on the ground, a posture frequently attested in scenes showing the tomb owner in a journey to the west.⁵ It is interesting that this is the only figure in the whole tomb which is only partly carved, and obviously unfinished, yet it was coloured. Considering the limited amount of work necessary for the completion of this figure and its location in a visible place in close proximity to the entrance of the chapel, and bearing in mind that colours were applied only after the cutting of the relief, and that the owner's son proudly added his figure and the date of burial to a neighbouring scene, the conclusion that this figure of Nikauisesi was deliberately left unfinished is inescapable. The walls of Nikauisesi's burial chamber are roughly cut with little evidence of smoothing and its floor and ceiling are also uneven. While the inner walls of the massive limestone sarcophagus and the under side of its lid have been smoothed, the external surfaces of the sarcophagus and the lid are very rough.⁶

The reasons for neglecting to smooth the surfaces of many burial chambers and for the total lack of decoration there until late Fifth Dynasty are uncertain, but may be related to the purpose and function of the burial chamber itself as well as to those of tomb scenes. Usually positioned at considerable depth, this chamber was not easily accessible for public viewing even during its preparation, and once sealed after the interment, the only person who could see it was supposed to be the deceased himself. Thus, unlike the scenes and inscriptions in the chapel, the smooth cutting and decoration of the burial chamber was not expected to impress visitors to the tomb, whether contemporaries or those of future generations. For this same reason we frequently find that the art on the façade, the outer room, the offering chamber, and particularly in the more conspicuous registers at eye-level, is of better quality than that found elsewhere in the chapel. Possibly with the same principle in mind, little effort was made to render the burial chambers more presentable, and when these were finally decorated late in the Fifth Dynasty and thereafter, the standard of art of such decoration was usually rather moderate.

Theoretically, the burial chamber was not considered as a place where the deceased would spend most of his/her time; it was merely a safe place for the protection of the corpse. In this respect it was analogous to the serdab, which was for the protection of the deceased's statues, the substitutes for the body. Both burial chambers and serdabs were only accessible to the deceased, or more precisely to his/her *ka*, and both were undecorated, at least until late Fifth Dynasty. This does not apply only to private tombs, but also to royal resting places, and it might not be a mere coincidence that the first known decorated royal burial chamber, that of Unis, belongs also to the end of the Fifth Dynasty.

It is generally assumed that statues were provided in tombs as substitutes for the body, should this decay or be somewhat destroyed. But, while there is no doubt that the Egyptian believed that the *ka* can dwell in a statue, it is less certain if the latter was actually regarded as a possible 'substitute' for the body, or as a complementary extension of it. Wrapped in bandages, the corpse was placed in the sleeping position inside a sarcophagus, with heavy lid on top and frequently gypsum plaster sealing it. The body/corpse was not supposed to leave the sarcophagus at any time. Statues, on the other hand, whether cut in the native rock, i.e., engaged to the chapel walls, or placed in the serdab, are always in a standing or a seated posture and usually represent the tomb owner formally dressed and adorned. Moreover, statues frequently show the tomb owner with his family (wife and/or children), a group of individuals not found together in burial chambers. It may therefore be conjectured that

⁵ See Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom* (London, 1987), 127-28.

⁶ Kanawati, et al, *Teti Cemetery* 6, 32-33, pl. 34 and *passim*.

the *ka*, the life force, which, unlike the body, was believed to be able to freely move through any medium, rested in the actual body at night in the darkness of the burial chamber, and spent the day in the chapel, the house of the *ka*. There, it was able to enjoy the light, watch the wall scenes depicting its owner's life and familiar surroundings and perhaps to re-live such moments by assuming his/her represented forms. Not only was it possible for the *ka* to dwell in a statue, to rest, to enjoy the day and to receive offering, but it could also be physically seen in a three dimensional human form, by family members and visitors to the tomb, even if only through the serdab slit.

In accordance with the above discussion the smoothness and decoration of the walls of the burial chamber were unnecessary, and so these chambers remained completely bare and frequently rough until the end of the Fifth Dynasty, even those belonging to important officials who owned extensively decorated chapels. What brought about the change at the end of the Fifth Dynasty when some burial chambers were decorated is uncertain, but most probably it was not the result of a major change in religious beliefs. If so, one would expect all, or most, burial chambers from this date onwards to be decorated, yet only a selected few were, and these were not always the most important officials of their time.

The earliest decorated burial chambers are the following:

- 1 - Kaemankh⁷
- 2 - Rawer III⁸
- 3 - Kakherptah/Fetekti⁹
- 4 - Senedjemib/Inti¹⁰
- 5 - Seshemnefer IV¹¹

All five tombs are found at Giza, and all belonged most probably to the reign of Djedkare/Isesi, or immediately after. It is regrettable that no systematic excavations have been conducted in Djedkare's cemetery, as these may bring to light more evidence which has bearing on the problem under discussion. Perhaps the most disputed date of the above tombs is that of Kaemankh. After studying some of the architectural and artistic features of the tomb, Junker placed it in Dynasty 6,¹² which was accepted by some scholars¹³ although others preferred a date in Dynasty 5.¹⁴ In a recent discussion of the date of this tomb I have considered those of other tombs in the near vicinity which share similar architectural features with Kaemankh's, and like the latter were built in passages between Fourth Dynasty core mastabas. Consideration was also given to the type of Kaemankh's chapel, the type of his and his wife's false doors, the owner's clothing and ornaments, the type of chairs depicted,

⁷ H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza*, 12 vols (Vienna, 1929-55), vol. 4 passim; Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*, 2 vols (Warminster, 2001-2002), vol. 1, pls 34-37 and 15-18 on issue of dating I. For recent discussion of dating see Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*, 15-18.

⁸ S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza*, 10 vols (Oxford-Cairo, 1929-60), vol. 5, 296-97. For dating see N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1985), 114-15 [92].

⁹ Junker, *Giza* 8, fig. 56, pl. 21. For dating see Kanawati, *The Egyptian Administration in the Old Kingdom* (Warminster, 1977), 25, 155 [357]; N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées d'Ancien Empire: le problème de la datation* (Brussels, 1989), 229.

¹⁰ E. Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex* (Boston, 2001), 1, pl. 53 a-b, figs 71-23 (issue of dating). For dating see Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex*, 23ff.; Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt in the*

Old Kingdom, 132-33 [120]; Kanawati, *Egyptian Administration*, 154 [294].

¹¹ Junker, *Giza* 11, fig. 53, pl. 16. For dating see Cherpion, *Mastaba et Mypogées*, 229; Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian tombs of the Old Kingdom*, 270 [235]; Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, 22, 22.

¹² Junker, *Giza* 4, 1-4.

¹³ For example K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago, 1960), 141 [520]; Strudwick, 154; Harpur, 7 n. 7; A. O. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 1997), 119-20.

¹⁴ C. Sourdive, *La main dans l'Égypte pharaonique* (Berne, 1984), 139 [028]; P. Der Manuelian, in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids: Metropolitan Museum of Art Catalogue* (New York, 1999), 146, where he states that this is one of the earliest decorated burial chambers.

the details of the offering tables, of the spear fishing scene, of the represented games, beds, dancers, boats and the painting of the *zšš wꜥd* theme. The evidence for dating this tomb is very consistent and strongly suggests a date in the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty, probably under Djedkare/Isesi.¹⁵

Of the five abovementioned tombs, three represented human figures in their burial chambers (Kaemankh, Rawer III and Kakherptah/Fetekti), while the other two only inscribed an offering list (Senedjemib/Inti and Seshemnefer IV). The most completely decorated and best preserved burial chamber is that of Kaemankh, where the artist seems to have considered its walls as an extension of those of the chapel. Scenes of offering bearers, agricultural pursuits, animal husbandry, storage of food and other commodities, making bread and beer, bed making, cooking fowl, river transport, even music and dancing (Figs 1-2) are depicted, some duplicating those in the chapel. It is possible that the burial chamber of Rawer III contained a similar repertoire of scenes, but these are very poorly preserved. The remaining scenes, however, show offering bearers, offering table and butchers at work. In addition to an inscribed offering list, the burial chamber of Kakherptah/Fetekti shows a figure of the tomb owner seated at an offering table. All scenes were absent in the burial chambers of Senedjemib/Inti and Seshemnefer IV, which contain only an inscribed offering list. No evidence exists in the tombs of this period of a deliberate attempt to suppress the use of any human or animal figures used in the inscriptions, and the jackal, for instance, is attested in texts of three of the above mentioned burial chambers.¹⁶

With regard to the preparation of walls to receive the decoration, it was noticed that Kaemankh's walls were smoothed, coated with a layer of thin gypsum plaster and decorated in paint. No photographs of Rawer III's walls are available, but the excavator's description suggests that they were prepared in the same way as that used in Kaemankh's burial chamber. He writes 'its walls are dressed to an almost incredible smoothness in order to receive the painted scenes with which they are decorated'.¹⁷ The limited decorated area in Kakherptah/Fetekti's burial chamber appears also to have been smoothed before it was plastered and painted. The walls of the other two burial chambers in this group (Senedjemib/Inti and Seshemnefer IV) appear to have been less dressed before receiving the plaster and painting.¹⁸

Decorated burial chambers and sarcophagi from the reign of Unis are as follows:

- 1 - Niankhba¹⁹
- 2 - Hetep²⁰
- 3 - Ihy (reused by Idut)²¹

The burial chambers of Niankhba and Ihy are both decorated in painting on plaster and are now in a very poor state of preservation. The depicted scenes represent offerings of food and drink, vessels on stands, jars of oils, wooden chests containing personal possessions, slaughtered animals and offering lists (Fig. 3). The burial chamber of Akhethetep/Hemi (reused by Nebkauhor) in the Unis Cemetery was also coated with a layer of plaster, but never decorated.²² Finally, Hetep's burial chamber, which almost certainly dates to the

¹⁵ Kanawati, *Tomb at Giza* 1, 15-18.

¹⁶ Kanawati, *Tomb at Giza* 1, pls 17, 37b, 15-18; Junker, *Giza* 8, fig. 56, pl. 21; Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, pl. 53.

¹⁷ Hassan, *Giza* 5, 296-97.

¹⁸ Junker, *Giza* 11, pl. 16, Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, pl. 53 a-b.

¹⁹ Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara*, 3 vols (Cairo, 1975), vol. 3, 45-48, pls 26-30. For dating see Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt in the*

Old Kingdom, 102 [70].

²⁰ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, 57-58, fig. 31, pls 42-44.

²¹ R. Macramallah, *Le mastaba d'Idout* (Cairo, 1935), 31-36, pls 21-26. For dating see Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 63 [15].

²² Hassan, *Saqqara* 1, 57. For dating see Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 56-57 [3].

reign of Unis,²³ was lined with local limestone but left undecorated. The sarcophagus, however, was elaborately decorated with a palace façade motif, although unfinished. Its lid was extensively inscribed. The decoration of the burial chambers during Unis' reign seems to have continued the accepted customs in the latter part of Djedkare's reign. However, no representations of living creatures - humans or animals - are found in the scenes. Yet no attempt was made to suppress the use of such figures in hieroglyphs, and the gods, for example Osiris²⁴ and Anubis,²⁵ were written with the appropriate determinatives. In fact the recumbent jackal/dog representing Anubis was consistently written at a much larger scale than the rest of the text on the sarcophagus of Hetep.²⁶

The following decorated burial chambers are dated to Teti's reign:

- 1 - Kagemni²⁷
- 2 - Ankhmahor²⁸
- 3 - Mereruka²⁹
- 4 - Khentika³⁰
- 5 - Mehu³¹
- 6 - Remni³²

The burial chambers of the first four tombs are lined with good quality limestone blocks and extensively decorated. All the scenes represent items of food and drink in addition to some valuable possessions of the tomb owners. Each also contained an offering list. Mehu's burial chamber is similarly decorated, but its walls were treated differently. Instead of applying the plaster directly to the wall surface as in tombs from the reigns of Djedkare and Unis, or lining the walls with limestone blocks as was customary from the end of Unis' reign onwards, the walls of Mehu's burial chamber were lined with mud brick which received a thick layer of plaster on which the painting was applied. This appears as a transitional stage between the earlier and later techniques. Although Mehu held a priesthood of Pepy I and accordingly could not be dated earlier than his reign, the building of his tomb could have started earlier and extended over a long period.³³ It is possible that the mud brick lining of his burial chamber was the result of a lesson gained from the decoration of the adjacent tomb of Ihy. As the quality of rock is extremely poor in this area, the plaster did not adhere well to the walls of Ihy's burial chamber and the roof was very flaky, which led the builders to construct a pillar of stone pieces in the center of this very large chamber.³⁴ In Mehu's case the room was much narrower and the plaster was applied to the mud brick, not the rock surface. As the husband of a princess, perhaps a daughter of Unis, Mehu may have been allocated the site for his tomb by this king, started the building under Teti and

²³ The location, building materials and design, particularly of the sloping passage which is similar for example to that of Niankhba (See Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, 45 and 57), leave little doubt as to the date of this tomb. The shape of the sarcophagus lid is also very similar to those of Iyefert and Unisankh (personal excavations and examination). For dating of these two officials see Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 58-59 [6], 57, respectively.

²⁴ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, 46.

²⁵ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, fig. 31, pls 43-44.

²⁶ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3. For other examples of large figures of Anubis see L. Holden, 'An Anubis figure in the Boston of fine Arts', in W. K. Simpson and W. M. Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Sudan* (Boston, 1981), 99-103. However none these examples appears in a burial chamber.

²⁷ C. M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, 2 vols (Cairo, 1926), vol. 1, 117-26; vol. 2, pl. 5: A-C. For a study of the suppressions

and modifications of signs see 1, Firth-Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* 1, 171-177.

²⁸ Firth-Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* 2, pls 6, 58: 1-3; Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery* 2, pls 23-29, 63-70.

²⁹ Firth-Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* 2, pls 2-4; P. Duell, *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, 2 vols (Chicago, 1938), pls 200-211.

³⁰ T. G. H. James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953), pls 34-40.

³¹ H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz, 1998), pls 79, 98-99.

³² Unpublished. Recently discovered in the Teti Cemetery by the Australian Centre for Egyptology.

³³ Strudwick, *Administratoin of Egypt in the Old kingdom*, 101-102 [69].

³⁴ Personal examination.

completed it under Pepy I. He probably served the last two kings. Two tombs in this group include particularly interesting features.

In addition to the piles of food and drink, Ankhmahor depicted in his burial chamber an offering table and a chair. The latter is, however, empty, but the identity of its prospective occupant is clearly indicated by the inscriptions above it.³⁵ Remni who, unlike the other four viziers, was a relatively modest official, occupying the office of overseer of the department of palace guards,³⁶ decorated only two walls of his small burial chamber with paint over a thin layer of gypsum plaster applied to the rock surface, an older and certainly cheaper technique which came to be replaced by the more durable stone lining of the chamber. On the south wall Remni painted the usual food and drink, but two registers on the east wall are occupied by scenes of river transport, showing boats with the sails up and down. The only other depiction of boats in a burial chamber is in that of Kaemankh,³⁷ yet a major difference exists between the two representations. The boats of Kaemankh are manned by a complete crew. Not a single individual, including the tomb owner himself, was depicted on those of Remni. Astonishingly, one living creature was painted on each boat, a calf; perhaps this was considered totally harmless (Fig. 4).

From the beginning of Teti's reign a new development is observed in the inscriptions of the burial chambers and sarcophagi; the seated god determinative of Osiris and the recumbent jackal/dog determinative of Anubis were eliminated, thus the names were written as  and . This feature is found throughout the reign, as in the tombs of the viziers Neferseshemre,³⁸ Ankhmahor,³⁹ Mereruka,⁴⁰ Khentika,⁴¹ and in those of lesser officials such as Semdent⁴² and Khentika's son, Khentika,⁴³ although the latter probably belongs to the reign of Pepy I. It is interesting that after writing the name of Anubis as  in two titles inscribed on Mereruka's sarcophagus, the recumbent figure of the jackal was erased and replaced by the phonetic writing .⁴⁴ In some inscriptions the tomb owners went a step further by completely avoiding the names of these two deities, referring to them instead by their known epithets. Thus, while Ankhmahor refers to himself as 'the honoured one before Osiris'  and 'the honoured one before Anubis' , in one inscription he describes his standing with Anubis as 'the honoured one before him who is on his hill, lord of the sacred land'.⁴⁵ Mehu records the offering formula as 'an offering which the king gives and an offering which the lord of the burial gives ...', the latter almost certainly referring to Anubis.⁴⁶ In the offering formulae inscribed on the sarcophagus of Mereruka's mother, Nedjetempet, the names of Anubis and Osiris are avoided, the former referred to as 'the foremost of the divine booth, who is in the embalming place, who is on his hill, lord of the sacred land', while the latter is described as 'the lord of Busiris'.⁴⁷ In the inscriptions of his burial chamber and sarcophagus Kagemni also consistently refers to these two deities by their epithets, whether in the offering formulae or in mentioning his honour before them,⁴⁸ yet curiously on his canopic jars Osiris is written   and Anubis merely .⁴⁹ One wonders if this was the result of the fact that the beautiful calcite canopic jars were produced by a workshop not

³⁵ Kanawati et al, *Teti Cemetery 2*, pls 28, 68.

³⁶ For this translation of the title *jmj-r st hntj-š pr-š*, see Kanawati, *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I* (London, 2002), 14ff.

³⁷ Junker, Giza 4, pl. 7.

³⁸ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 2*, pl. 58:6.

³⁹ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 2*, 101-102.

⁴⁰ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 2*, 143-44, 149; vol. 2, pl. 60:4, 7; Duell, *Mereruka*, pls 201, 204, 207.

⁴¹ James, *Khentika*, pl. 35.

⁴² A. B. Lloyd, et al., *Saqqāra Tombs II: The Mastabas of Meru,*

Semdent, Khui and Others (London, 1990), 2, pl. 18.

⁴³ James, *Khentika*, pl. 40.

⁴⁴ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 2*, pl. 60:4.

⁴⁵ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 2*, pl. 58:2; Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery 2*, pl. 69.

⁴⁶ Altenmüller, *Mehu*, 217-18.

⁴⁷ Kanawati, et al., *Teti Cemetery 1*, pl. 43.

⁴⁸ Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries 1*, 117-25; *TPC 2*, pl. 60:1-2.

⁴⁹ Firth and Gunn, *TPC 1*, 126.

solely specialized in funerary objects and most probably different from that responsible for the decoration of the burial chamber. These determinatives are also found in all inscribed vases and other smaller objects from the tombs of Kagemni and Mereruka.⁵⁰

In the first half of Teti's reign the viziers Neferseshemre⁵¹ and Kagemni⁵² wrote *ꜥꜣ* 'work' in the title 'overseer of all works of the king' with the usual determinative . Kagemni also inscribed the title *jmj-r w'btj* 'overseer of the two workshops'⁵³ with the sign of a man receiving purification ,⁵⁴ he included a number of human figures in the offering list, and, like Mehu,⁵⁵ added to the offering formulae the wish to be buried at a very good old age, writing 'old age' *ꜥꜣwt* as .⁵⁶ While his name is repeatedly written in the burial chamber and on the sarcophagus without the determinative of the seated man of rank , this determinative follows his name on a small calcite vase.⁵⁷ However this, like his above mentioned canopic jars, might have been manufactured by a separate workshop.

Around the middle of Teti's reign Ankhmahor wrote the title 'overseer of all works of the king' in the burial chamber and on the sarcophagus without the determinative .⁵⁸ He also eliminated all human figures from the offering list and did not refer to the burial at a very good old age. Mereruka, who probably followed Ankhmahor, completely avoided the inclusion of the title 'overseer of all works of the king' in his burial chamber, despite the importance of this title, which he certainly held,⁵⁹ and the large number of titles recorded in this chamber.⁶⁰ It is interesting that in Mereruka's very unusual title 'overseer of the two sides of the boat of physicians of the palace',⁶¹ the word physicians is written .⁶² Perhaps instructions to eliminate human figures from the inscriptions of the burial chamber were specifically given with regard to certain titles as well as names of deities in formulae, and accordingly this unusual title escaped attention. No human figures are used in the inscriptions of the burial chamber of Khentika, who most probably followed Mereruka, and the title of 'overseer of all works of the king' is also absent there, although the tomb owner certainly held it.⁶³ The same situation is found in the burial chamber of the near contemporary official Kaaper.⁶⁴

The reign of Pepy I:

As tombs of viziers and other officials of Pepy I are situated in various cemeteries and not concentrated around his own pyramid, it is difficult to date most of them with certainty.⁶⁵ Here, I shall consider only tombs which are rather securely dated to this reign.

- 1 - Inumin⁶⁶
- 2 - Mereri⁶⁷
- 3 - Tjetju⁶⁸
- 4 - Idu II⁶⁹
- 5 - Niankhepepy / Sebekhetep / Hepi⁷⁰
- 6 - Niankhepepy / Ptahhetep⁷¹

⁵⁰ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 2, pl. 65.

⁵¹ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 2, pl. 58:5.

⁵² Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 2, pl. 60:1.

⁵³ For the reading of the title see D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford, 2000), 87-88 [374].

⁵⁴ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 2, pl. 60:1.

⁵⁵ Altenmüller, *Mehu*, 217.

⁵⁶ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 1, 118.

⁵⁷ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 1, 126; *TPC* 2, pl. 15:A7.

⁵⁸ Kanawati, *et al.*, *Teti Cemetery* 2, pls. 63, 68, 69.

⁵⁹ Duell, *Mereruka*, *passim*.

⁶⁰ Duell, *Mereruka*, *passim*, pls 200-211.

⁶¹ For various readings see Jones, *Index* 272 [980].

⁶² Duell, *Mereruka*, pl. 210B; Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 2, pl. 60:3.

⁶³ James, *Khentika*, *passim*.

⁶⁴ Kanawati, *et al.*, *Teti Cemetery* 1, pl. 55, and for the title 'overseer of all works of the king'; Kanawati, *et al.*, *Teti Cemetery* 1, pl. 5a.

⁶⁵ Kanawati, *Governmental Reforms in Old Kingdom Egypt* (Warminster, 1980), 34; Strudwick, *Administration in Egypt*, 69.

⁶⁶ Unpublished. Recently discovered by the Australian Centre for Egyptology in the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara.

⁶⁷ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, 35-37, pls 18-22.

⁶⁸ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 1, 156.

⁶⁹ Junker, *Giza* 8, 96-106.

⁷⁰ See Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 42-44, and unpublished data.

⁷¹ Hassan, *Saqqara* 2, 17-23, pls 12-20; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 39-42. The reading of the name as Niheteptah is also possible.

In an inscription from Inumin's chapel the cartouche of Nefersahor, a name which Pepy I used very early in his reign, was chiseled out and replaced in red paint by the later name, Meryre.⁷² Inumin succeeded Nikauisesi as overseer of Upper Egypt towards the end of Teti's reign,⁷³ and later became vizier, for the South, early under Pepy I. It is likely that his tenure of office and that of Khentika overlapped to some extent. The walls of Inumin's burial chamber were lined with limestone blocks and decorated with coloured relief of modest quality. The decoration is restricted to representations of various items of food and drink, slaughtered animals, chests of valuables and a palace façade motif, with total avoidance of inscriptions, except for an offering list on the east wall and the name and highest titles of the owner on the internal sides of the stone sarcophagus. The absence of inscriptions eliminated the problem of writing the names of deities, but a new solution for dealing with human figures in hieroglyphs was introduced in the offering list. Here, as in the contemporary tomb of Khentika,⁷⁴ the figures of men in hieroglyphs are truncated and reduced to the arms and head, with the rest of the body missing. A comparison between the reasonably well preserved offering lists in the two tombs with those in earlier tombs shows that human figures were fully written in the Fifth Dynasty lists,⁷⁵ eliminated during the reign of Teti,⁷⁶ and a truncated form was added from the beginning of Pepy I's reign. Thus, the sign  in the item *mw wꜣt* 'water for libation' was reduced to  in Khentika⁷⁷ and to  in Inumin; the sign  in the items *fꜣjt šns* 'a serving of šns-bread' and *fꜣjt* 'serving bowl' was reduced to  in Khentika and to  in Inumin and the sign  in the item *šbw šns* 'main meal šns-bread' is missing in Khentika and reduced to  in Inumin.

The date of Mereri has been discussed by Strudwick who agrees that his false door has affinities with examples from the reign of Pepy I and bears no resemblance to those from the reign of Pepy II at South Saqqara. However, because of the presence of reused paving blocks, one of which bears Teti's Horus name and another a priestly title in his pyramid, he dates the tomb to a period after the reign of Pepy I, thus to the reign of Merenre - early reign of Pepy II.⁷⁸ The problem with this date is that the destruction of Teti's temple and the tombs of his officials was also unlikely to occur under Merenre and Pepy II, the direct descendants of Teti. If there was a deliberate destruction to some monuments in the Teti cemetery during the Sixth Dynasty the most likely reign would be that of Userkare,⁷⁹ which suggests a date for the reuse of the blocks in the reign of Pepy I. This would agree with the location of the tomb,⁸⁰ its relatively small size and the type of its false door. The burial chamber is lined with limestone blocks decorated with black paint. It has an offering list, but this is in bad condition and is poorly published with the inscriptions hardly visible. It is interesting, however, that while Mereri writes his title of vizier in the usual way   in the chapel, he writes it   in the burial chamber.⁸¹ The reading of  is uncertain,⁸² but it is important to notice the elimination of the jackal sign for *wꜣb* in the burial chamber. In fact it is astonishing that while the recumbent jackal of Anubis was suppressed in the inscriptions of burial chambers as early as the reign of Teti, the standing jackal of *wꜣb*

⁷² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 69-70, fig. 3.1.

⁷³ The date of Nikauisesi is fairly certain, see Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery* 6, 17-23.

⁷⁴ James, *Khentika*, 32, 63, pl. 36.

⁷⁵ See Kaemankh (Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza* 1, pl. 34); Kakherptah (Junker, *Giza* 8, pl. 21); *Senedjemib* (Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, fig. 71), *Seshemnefer* IV (Junker, *Giza* 11, fig. 53).

⁷⁶ See Ankhmahor (Kanawati, et al., *Teti Cemetery* 2, pl. 63); Mereruka (Duell, *Mereruka*, pls. 201, 205).

⁷⁷ James, *Khentika*, 32.

⁷⁸ Strudwick, *Administration in Egypt*, 99-100 [67].

⁷⁹ For a study of this turbulent period, see Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 157ff.

⁸⁰ Other officials of Pepy I are buried in the vicinity, see below.

⁸¹ Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara* 3, 36-37.

⁸² Probably *sšmtj* (E. Brovarski in D. P. Silverman (ed.), *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (Chicago, 1994) 29; see also Jones, Index II? 1001 [3708]). Strudwick's explanation of the title as that of 'a subordinate vizier' (320 n. 2) is hardly valid since in the case of Mereri the title appears only in the burial chamber, while the usual *wꜣjtj wꜣb wꜣjtj* appears in the chapel.

'judge' continued to be used in the title 'he of the curtain, judge and vizier'. Perhaps tomb owners were so proud of this most elevated title that they were prepared to take a risk. In his title 'overseer of all works of the king' Mereri wrote *k3t* without the determinative . Tjetju, who occupied the vizierate late in the reign of Pepy I,⁸³ wrote the name of Anubis without the jackal determinative in the offering formula on his sarcophagus and completely avoided the writing of titles which usually include human or animal determinatives, such as 'he of the curtain, judge and vizier', 'overseer of all works of the king', and others.⁸⁴

In order to date Idu II⁸⁵ we have to discuss the date of Idu I/Nefer⁸⁶ as their tombs are very close to each other in the Western Cemetery at Giza, and with the similarity of names Idu II was probably related or a descendant of Idu I. Idu I held the vizierate and is generally dated to the reign of Pepy I or Pepy II.⁸⁷ If this date were correct it would certainly contradict the practice of suppressing human and animal figures in the inscriptions of the burial chambers and sarcophagi outlined above, since on his sarcophagus Anubis is written as  and Osiris as , *w'3b* as  and the name Idu with the determinative .⁸⁸ Perhaps the date of Idu I should be reconsidered. With the beginning of Unis' reign, Saqqara became the main burial ground for viziers, although some might have followed their kings to Abusir. The only viziers other than Idu I/Nefer buried at Giza in the succeeding period of the Old Kingdom are Khnumenti and Senedjemib/Mehi, both sons of the vizier Senedjemib/Inti,⁸⁹ and Meryre-meryankhptah/Impy and Sabuptah/Ibebi, both sons of the well known official of Pepy I, Nekhbu.⁹⁰ In all four cases the burial either formed a part of a family complex or was simply a shaft in the father's mastaba. This is not unparalleled elsewhere. At Saqqara the vizier, Ptahhetep added a chapel in the tomb of his father Akhthetep,⁹¹ the viziers Ankhmeryre and his son Hetepka added sections in the chapel of Mehu, the former's father and latter's grandfather.⁹² The vizier, Meryteti, also added a chapel within the mastaba of his father Mereruka,⁹³ and other lesser officials did the same in the Teti cemetery, as for example Ishfi in the tomb of Ankhmahor,⁹⁴ Neferseshemptah in the tomb of his father Neferseshemptah,⁹⁵ and Khentika in the tomb of his father Khentika.⁹⁶ The case of Idu I/Nefer is however different, for his is an independent mastaba located in the vicinity of the Senedjemib family complex and immediately next to the mastaba of Kakherptah, both date probably to the reign of Djedkare. All three mastabas have sloping passages leading to their burial chambers, a style which went out of fashion at Giza and Saqqara in the Sixth Dynasty. There is nothing in the archaeological or inscriptional evidence of Idu/Nefer's tomb that would exclude a date at the end of the Fifth Dynasty, but the details of his false door, chair and offering table are more akin to those of Senedjemib/Mehi than to those of Senedjemib/Inti.⁹⁷ A date at the very end of Djedkare's reign or in that of Unis may be suggested. The tomb of Idu II is formed only of a shaft and a small serdab built against the mastaba of Idu I,⁹⁸ in whose chapel a man named Idu is depicted in a prominent position facing Idu I and his wife. Junker has already speculated about the possibility of this figure

⁸³ For dating see Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 130, 142-43, 179, 182. The suggestion that he belonged to the Seventh to Tenth Dynasties (Strudwick, 160-61 [160]) is unjustified.

⁸⁴ Firth and Gunn, *TPC* 1, 151-56.

⁸⁵ Junker, *Giza* 8, 90-107, pls 16-18.

⁸⁶ Junker, *Giza* 8, 67-90, pls 11-15.

⁸⁷ Baer, *RT*, 62 [78]; Kanawati, *Egyptian Administration*, 152 [52]; Strudwick, *Administration*, 68-69 [22].

⁸⁸ Junker, *Giza* 8, 90.

⁸⁹ Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, fig. 3 and passim; Strudwick, *Administration*, 128 [113], 133-34 [121].

⁹⁰ Strudwick, *Administration*, 96 [62], 130-31 [117].

⁹¹ N. de G. Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhthetep at Saqqarah*, 2 vols (London, 1900-1901).

⁹² Altenmüller, *Menu*, 63ff., 72ff., pls 81ff.; Strudwick, *Administration*, 77 [33], 153 [149].

⁹³ Personal examination.

⁹⁴ Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery* 2, pls 31, 62.

⁹⁵ Personal examination.

⁹⁶ James, *Khentika*, pl. 40.

⁹⁷ Compare Junker, vol. 8, figs 32, 34, 35 with Brovarski, *Senedjemib* 1, figs. 124-29.

⁹⁸ Junker, *Giza* 8, figs 25, 39.

being the owner of Idu II's burial.⁹⁹ This seems likely, and if so a date in the reign of Teti, or more probably Pepy I, is possible for Idu II, which also agrees with his very poor burial. Idu II bore the titles of 'royal chamberlain of the Great House', 'scribe of the royal records in the presence' and 'inspector of scribes of the royal document', which according to my earlier study would place him among the middle class of officials, a class which by the end of Pepy I's reign was unable, as is apparently the case with Idu II, to construct independent tombs.¹⁰⁰ In the inscriptions on his wooden coffin Idu II writes the names of Anubis and Osiris with no determinatives, truncates the determinative  to  after his name and  to  in the item *hms* 'sit down' in the offering list, and consistently writes the letter  either with the head cut off or totally missing.¹⁰¹

The last two cases-Niankhpepy/Sebekhetep and Niankhpepy/Ptahhetep-are of particular interest for establishing the date in which such changes were introduced into the inscriptions of the burial chambers. The two tombs belong to a group of smaller tombs in the Unis cemetery excavated by Selim Hassan and re-cleared and studied by the present writer. Although the chapel of Niankhpepy/Sebekhetep was constructed with stone blocks above ground, and that of Niankhpepy/Ptahhetep was cut into the rock immediately below ground level and is reached by a flight of steps, the shafts of both tombs share a similar feature. Halfway down the shaft is a projection in the rock on all sides leaving a circular opening¹⁰² which possibly was closed by a stone plug before the upper section of the shaft was filled. Both tomb owners held the position of 'overseer of the palace guards',¹⁰³ almost certainly under Pepy I, and both acquired, at a later stage of their life, the name Niankhpepy. On his sarcophagus the first man was consistently called Sebekhetep, with the beautiful name Hepi, but on his false door in the chapel he carries the names Niankhpepy and Hepi. It appears that the subterranean part of the tomb was completed before he was granted/acquired the name Niankhpepy, probably early under Pepy I.¹⁰⁴ The second man had his name Ptahhetep chiselled out from all the inscriptions of the chapel and replaced by that of Niankhpepy. This is not a case of usurpation of a tomb, for there is no attempt at erasing or adding any title of the tomb owner, or altering the names of the wife and sons. It is simply that Ptahhetep wished to emphasise his new name. No stone sarcophagus was added to the burial chamber, just a burial pit in which was later placed a wooden coffin, consistently inscribed with the name of Niankhpepy, with no apparent alteration. It is reasonable to think that the coffin was prepared after the tomb was completed, and certainly after Ptahhetep changed his name to Niankhpepy. If the name Niankhpepy, perhaps commemorating a certain event in the reign of this monarch, was simultaneously granted to, or acquired by, the two men who held similar positions, then the inscriptions on the sarcophagus of the first were made earlier than those on the coffin of the second, but both probably early under Pepy I. On a largely unfinished false door, Niankhpepy/Ptahhetep consistently wrote his name as Niankhmeryre.¹⁰⁵ As this false door appears to have been the last part of the tomb to receive decoration, and as the name Meryre replaced Pepy I's name of Nefersahor early in his reign,¹⁰⁶ the decoration of both tombs was probably mostly undertaken before Pepy I adopted the new name. In the inscriptions on the sarcophagus of Niankhpepy/Sebekhetep, determinatives after the names of Osiris and Anubis are omitted and so is the crocodile in the name Sebekhetep.

⁹⁹ Junker, *Giza* 8, 91, fig. 35.

¹⁰⁰ Kanawati, *Egyptian Administration*, 23, 40, 73-74.

¹⁰¹ Junker, *Giza* 8, figs. 41-46.

¹⁰² See Hassan, *Saqqara* 2, fig. 8.

¹⁰³ For this title see Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 14-24.

¹⁰⁴ Unpublished data recently excavated by the Australian Centre for Egyptology.

¹⁰⁵ Hassan, *Saqqara* 2, fig. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172, fig. 3.1.

The word *imnt* 'west' is written as  instead of . On Niankhpepy/Ptahhetep's coffin, Osiris and Anubis are also written with no determinative. Human figures are eliminated in an offering list and truncated to  in a short biographical text, but appear once in the title  'noble of the king'. On an alabaster headrest found in the coffin, human figures are attested in the titles  'noble of the king', and  'senior lector priest', and  is found twice as a determinative after the name Niankhpepy. The use of human figures in the inscription of the headrest is probably due to the fact that such objects were manufactured in a separate workshop from that responsible for the decoration of burial chambers, sarcophagi and coffins (see the case of Kagemni, above). Probably for this same reason the inscriptions on four limestone statuettes found at the entrance of Niankhpepy's burial chamber show the determinatives of Anubis, Osiris and the seated figure in the title 'noble of the king'.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the writing of the title  on the coffin might have been a slip by the scribe, also attested in one of Mereruka's less usual titles (see above). The inscriptions of both Niankhpepy/Sebekhetep and Niankhpepy/Ptahhetep do not show any truncation to the hieroglyphic signs representing creatures other than humans.

During the reign of Pepy II and later, burial chambers were usually lined with limestone blocks and decorated in painted relief, frequently of mediocre quality. The following are some of the burial chambers of this period:

- 1 - Nihebsed-Neferkare¹⁰⁸
- 2 - Khaabau-Khenemu¹⁰⁹
- 3 - Teti¹¹⁰
- 4 - Idi¹¹¹
- 5 - Nesti¹¹²
- 6 - Seni¹¹³
- 7 - Penu¹¹⁴
- 8 - Senti¹¹⁵
- 9 - Shy¹¹⁶
- 10 - Mehi¹¹⁷
- 11 - Shemai¹¹⁸
- 12 - Sebeku¹¹⁹
- 13 - Wadjet¹²⁰

The trend in all these tombs is clear, but not without irregularities. The names of Anubis and Osiris are consistently written phonetically and without the determinative, but also Hathor is written  or  in the title 'priest/priestess of Hathor' (nos 5, 11, 13) and the festival of Thoth is written  (nos 6, 7). With no specific examples referring to Hathor and Thot from the reign of Pepy I we are not sure, however, when such phonetic writing of their names started in burial chambers. Human figures were regularly truncated, thus the name of Idi was written as  (no. 4) and Shemai as  (no. 11). *Lwt* 'old age' was written  (nos 2, 3) and *ꜥ nswt smsw* 'eldest son of the king' (no. 3) was also written as . The title *jmj jz* 'he who is in the jz-bureau' has the determinative  (no. 2). In the offering list *hms* 'sit down' was written with the determinative  (nos 2, 7) and 'n

¹⁰⁷ Hassan, *Saqqara 2*, 17-23, pls 6-21.

¹⁰⁸ G. Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepy II*, III, (Cairo, 1940), 57.

¹⁰⁹ Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepy II*, III, 64.

¹¹⁰ Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepy II*, III, 70-73.

¹¹¹ G. Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepy II* (Cairo, 1929), 14-20.

¹¹² Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 36-37.

¹¹³ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 37-40.

¹¹⁴ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 42-47.

¹¹⁵ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 48-51.

¹¹⁶ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 60-61.

¹¹⁷ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 72-74.

¹¹⁸ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 76.

¹¹⁹ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 78.

¹²⁰ Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains*, 81.

fjt 'a serving bowl' with  (no. 12). While *mw zjt* 'water for libation' is usually written with the determinative ,  is curiously attested (no. 7). To avoid writing  the title *špst nswt* 'noble woman of the king' is written phonetically as  (no. 8). The  and  were written with the head cut or missing, but in many cases they were left intact. *Imnt* 'west' was regularly written  without the falcon, which was optional under Pepy I (compare Mereri with Idu II), and the same for *jrp hmw* 'h₃mw-wine'  which is now written without the usual caught fish. The full form is found, for example, in the burial chambers of Ankhmahor (reign of Teti) and Inumin (Pepy I), but missing in the tombs of Mereruka (Teti) and Khentika (Teti-Pepy I).

Having examined the decoration and inscriptions in burial chambers and on sarcophagi and coffins from the Memphite cemeteries, we now look at some of the evidence from the provincial cemeteries. The coffin of Nenkhefetka/Tjy at Deshasha is usually dated to the end of the Fifth Dynasty.¹²¹ On it, the determinatives of both Anubis and Osiris are eliminated which suggests a date in the reign of Teti and following, yet human figures are intact in the offering list. As these were eliminated in the reign of Teti and truncated in the reign of Pepy I and after, Nenkhefetka may fit at the end of Unis-beginning of Teti. The coffin of Meri, with the gods' determinatives eliminated, Hathor written as  and the west as ,¹²² probably belonged to the reign of Pepy II or later.

The tomb of a lady named Henenet at Sheikh Said offers little evidence for a precise date. Her false door with a torus moulding and a cavetto cornice¹²³ points to a date in the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty or after. However, the offering list and offering table scene in which Henenet is depicted in her burial chamber are problematical. Bolshakov suggests that she was almost a contemporary of Ankhmahor who represented an empty chair in his burial chamber,¹²⁴ and this was accepted by the present writer on the ground that provincial art frequently lags behind that of the capital.¹²⁵ A careful examination of the imposing position of the tomb, the type of Henenet's chair and the details of the offering list makes an earlier date much more likely. Not only is Henenet's figure shown at the offering table, but human determinatives were neither eliminated nor truncated in the offering list.¹²⁶ This suggests an early date, perhaps contemporary with Kakherptah, who also depicted himself before an offering table, in the reign of Djedkare.

Pepyankh-heryib of Meir is now dated to the period Merenre-early Pepy II.¹²⁷ His tomb has two burial chambers, one for him and the second for his wife.¹²⁸ Apart from representations of stacks of food cut and prepared, granaries, chests, jewellery, linen and palace façades, the walls contain offering formulae and an offering list. In the former, Anubis is consistently written with no determinative and in the latter human determinative figures are truncated. Thus  in *mw zjt* 'water for libation';  in *hms* 'sit down',  in *šns fjt* 'šns-bread, a serving' and  in *šns n šbw* 'šns-bread for main meal'. These features would date the tomb to the beginning of Pepy I's reign at the earliest. However, it is interesting to notice that after inscribing the offering list and the formulae in the burial chamber, a deliberate attempt seems to have been made to mutilate the heads of the horned viper  and the cobra  and to damage the fish in the mouth of the heron . As such mutilation

¹²¹ W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh 1897* (London, 1898), pl. 29; N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom: I Chronology and Administration* (Sydney, 1992), 44.

¹²² Petrie, *Deshasheh*, pl. 28. The so-called 'board', on which men performing various activities are painted is very unusual and its exact association with the burial chamber, if any, is unclear.

¹²³ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Said* (London, 1901),

pl. 25.

¹²⁴ Bolshakov, 119.

¹²⁵ Kanawati, *Giza* 1, 21.

¹²⁶ Davies, *Sheikh Said*, pl. 26.

¹²⁷ Kanawati and McFarlane, *Akhmim* 1, 300, and passim.

¹²⁸ A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, 6 vols (London, 1914-53), vol. 4, pls 18-21.

was introduced and soon became common in burial chambers during Pepy I's reign, the original decoration of our two burial chambers, with no mutilated signs, was unlikely to have taken place much later than that date, even allowing for a time lag between the introduction of a concept in the capital and its appearance in the provinces. The decoration of these burial chambers certainly lends more support to a date closer to Merenre's reign than to the end of that of Pepy II.¹²⁹

A number of inscribed wooden coffins are known to have come from Akhmim¹³⁰ and their chronological development is currently being studied. Suffice here to show some of the similar features that the following coffins share:

- 1 - Tjeti/Kaihep¹³¹
- 2 - Nefer-tjentet¹³²
- 3 - Seni¹³³
- 4 - Ankhnes¹³⁴
- 5 - Bawi¹³⁵
- 6 - Iuew-heryib¹³⁶

On all the above coffins, the name of Anubis is followed by the recumbent jackal determinative, and on two, those of Tjeti and Seni, Osiris is followed by the seated god. The viper and cobra are not truncated, although some show lines, as if having a collar below the head. Human figures are fully drawn in some items of the offering lists, which these tombs all have. Above all, each offering list has a line of multiple kneeling figures representing bearers of the listed items. Other coffins from the same site show some of the above features, but gradually the names of deities were written without determinatives, the heads of the vipers and cobras were missing and human figures became rare and were ultimately eliminated or truncated.¹³⁷ The dates of the coffins and indeed the tombs of El-Hawawish (Akhmim) are disputed. While the majority of these are placed in the Sixth Dynasty by the present writer,¹³⁸ some scholars prefer a date in the First Intermediate Period.¹³⁹ Tjeti/Kaihep and Nefer-tjentet in particular were almost certainly husband and wife and owners of tomb M8 dated by biographical inscription to the reigns of Pepy I and Merenre.¹⁴⁰ The coffin of Iuew-heryib probably belongs to the owner of tomb Q13 at El-Hawawish, of whose name only ...-heryib remains.¹⁴¹ The location of the tomb next to Q15 and their similar size suggest a close date. Q15 belongs to Qereri, whose biographical inscription clearly states that he served under Meryre/Pepy I.¹⁴² The coffin of Ankhnes probably belonged to Pepyankhnes, owner of tomb L23,¹⁴³ as no similar name appeared in other tombs at El-Hawawish and it would be expected for the owner of such a large tomb to also own a decorated coffin. This is particularly true since only three women are known to have possessed independent tombs on this mountain. The name Pepyankhnes was also held by two sisters, wives of Pepy I, whose mother Nebet was the vizier at the neighbouring

¹²⁹ For such a late date see Baer, 289 [133]; Kanawati, *Egyptian Administration*, 153 [88]; Strudwick, 201; Harpur, 280 [650].

¹³⁰ See N. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish: The Cemetery of Akhmim*, 10 vols (Sydney, 1980-1992), passim.

¹³¹ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 3, figs 15-17.

¹³² Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 6, fig. 32.

¹³³ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 7, figs 38, 41.

¹³⁴ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 7, figs 38, 41.

¹³⁵ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 9, fig. 30.

¹³⁶ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 9, figs 32-33; vol. 10, figs 10-11.

¹³⁷ As in the item *hms* 'sit down'  in the offering list of Henti (ibid 9, fig. 31).

¹³⁸ See the abovementioned excavation reports and Kanawati and

McFarlane, *Akhmim* 1, passim.

¹³⁹ For example, E. Brovarski in *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, I (Cairo, 1985), 132; H. G. Fischer, *Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period* (New York, 1989), 26, 69 n.149.

¹⁴⁰ A. McFarlane, 'The First Nomarch at Akhmim: The Identification of a Sixth Dynasty Biographical Inscription', *GM* 100 (1987); Ziegler, *Catalogue des stèles, peintures et reliefs égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire et de la Première Période Intermédiaire* (Paris, 1990), 270.

¹⁴¹ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 6, 45.

¹⁴² Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 6, 47-51, fig. 20.

¹⁴³ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 9, 9-12, figs 1-2.

Abydos. Whether our Ankhnes was related to the royal in-laws, or simply named after the two sisters, a close date to the reign of Pepy I seems likely. The architectural and artistic details in tomb L23 may well support such a date. The evidence from the abovementioned coffins makes it hardly likely that they belonged to the Heracleopolitan Period. It is true that some of the signs, for example those used for the word *imnt* 'west', are very unusual, but that is probably because coffins were manufactured and decorated by special workshops. If some of the characteristic signs of the coffins started to appear in the inscriptions of chapels it was probably at a later date and we should not attribute the same date to the appearance of a sign in chapels and on coffins. The majority of the coffins from Akhmim probably belong to the Sixth Dynasty and immediately following.

In a very detailed study, Brovanski has examined the date of the vizier Iuew of Abydos and convincingly concluded that he 'may have held the vizierate at the end of Pepy I's reign but may also have served Merenre as vizier'.¹⁴⁴ In the inscriptions of his burial chamber, Iuew wrote the names of both Anubis and Osiris without determinatives, and even avoided writing 𓂏 in his title $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏} \text{𓂏}$ and instead used 𓂏 as did the vizier Mereri of Saqqara during Pepy I's reign.¹⁴⁵ The date of Iuew indirectly lends support for the dating of the above mentioned coffins from Akhmim to the first half of the Sixth Dynasty. Considering the close proximity of Abydos and Akhmim, it would be highly unlikely that the use of determinatives regarded as dangerous were carefully avoided from the inscriptions in the burial chambers of one region, yet used in their complete forms in those of the other. Furthermore, the biographical text of Tjeti/Kaihep clearly indicates that he was admitted to the palace,¹⁴⁶ and his titles 'overseer of the royal harem' and 'high priest of Re'¹⁴⁷ certainly indicated that he lived in the capital and, accordingly, was aware of burial traditions of the time. In fact the biography of Qar of Edfu clearly indicates that the children of provincial governors were educated in the capital at this particular time.¹⁴⁸ If so, one would expect any development in funerary practices in the capital to spread to the provinces shortly after its introduction.

A discussion of the dating of various provincial tombs is beyond the scope of the present article, but we can consider one example to demonstrate the need for further studies in dating techniques. Meni/Menankhpepy was dated by Fischer to the Ninth Dynasty or later,¹⁴⁹ yet McFarlane prefers a date in the period late Pepy I-Merenre. She draws attention to the fact that an offering table bearing his two names, similar titles and the epithet 'the honoured one before Hathor lady of Dendera' probably belonged to him and was found at Saqqara. This would indicate that he may have resided at the capital, as did many other senior provincial officials during this particular period. Meni held offices in the pyramids of both Pepy I and Merenre, rarely held together in Upper Egypt, and always by officials of a date probably in mid-Dynasty 6. McFarlane is also correct in stating that 'there is nothing in the decoration of *Mnj*'s burial chamber or false door which would exclude a date in the mid-Sixth Dynasty'.¹⁵⁰ In fact one would find it hard to explain why an administrator buried at Dendera during the First Intermediate Period would insist not only on recording

¹⁴⁴ In *For his Ka*, 24-33. It is interesting that Iuew was also dated to the First Intermediate Period by S. Hodjash and O. Berlev in *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow* (Leningrad, 1982), 58, no.20.

¹⁴⁵ Hassan, *Saqqara* 3, 36-37.

¹⁴⁶ McFarlane, *GM* 100, 63ff.; Ziegler, *Catalogue des stèles, peintures et reliefs égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire et de la Première Période Intermédiaire* 270ff.

¹⁴⁷ Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 3, 7.

¹⁴⁸ Sethe, *Urk I* (Leipzig, 1932-33), 254:1-4.

¹⁴⁹ H. G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C. Down to the Theban Domination of Upper Egypt* (New York, 1968), 170-75. See also Brovanski in *For his Ka*, 32 n. 56.

¹⁵⁰ In Kanawati and McFarlane, *Akhmim* 1, 262-63. Some false doors recently discovered in the Teti Cemetery, and probably belonging to the end of Teti's reign or to that of Pepy I, bear similarities to Meni's false door (personal excavations).

positions held in the pyramids of Pepy I and Merenre, but also listing them, as is usual in the Old Kingdom, ahead of all his other titles. Furthermore, since these offices were almost certainly held at Memphis, we may wonder why a provincial administrator, or a potential one, would have come, or be sent, to Memphis when this was no longer the capital. The phonetic writing without determinatives of the names of deities, the total elimination of human figures in hieroglyphs and the full writing of the viper and cobra may well support a date in the middle of the Sixth Dynasty or later.

Many other coffins from Abydos and other provinces,¹⁵¹ and many tombs from various sites, have been dated to the First Intermediate Period,¹⁵² frequently on purely palaeographic evidence. The danger in such a methodology is that if characteristic features of a given period were based on wrongly dated tombs, they automatically lead to erroneous dating of other tombs. The argument is circular, and the data accumulates and becomes difficult to untangle.

¹⁵¹ For example, H. Willems, *Chests of Life* (Leiden, 1988), passim.

¹⁵² For example, Brovarski in *For his Ka*, 32 n. 56.



Fig. 1. Musicians in the burial chamber of Kaemankh.

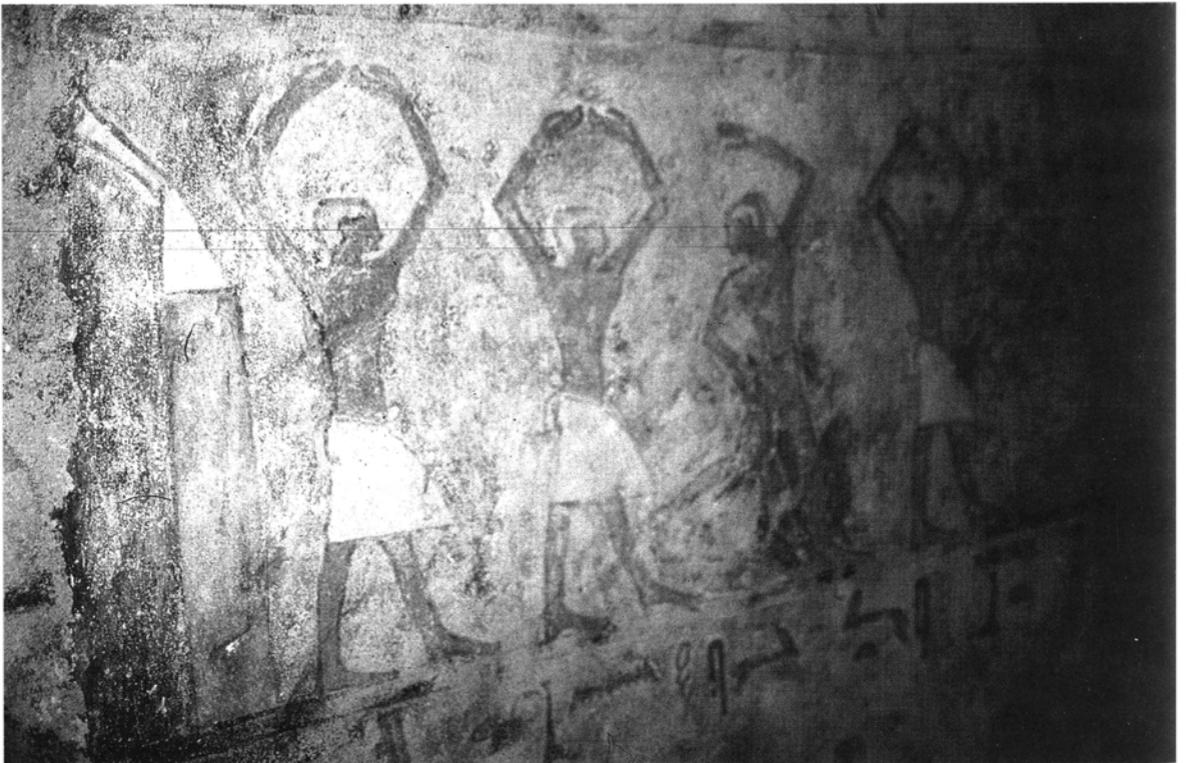


Fig. 2. Dancers in the burial chamber of Kaemankh.

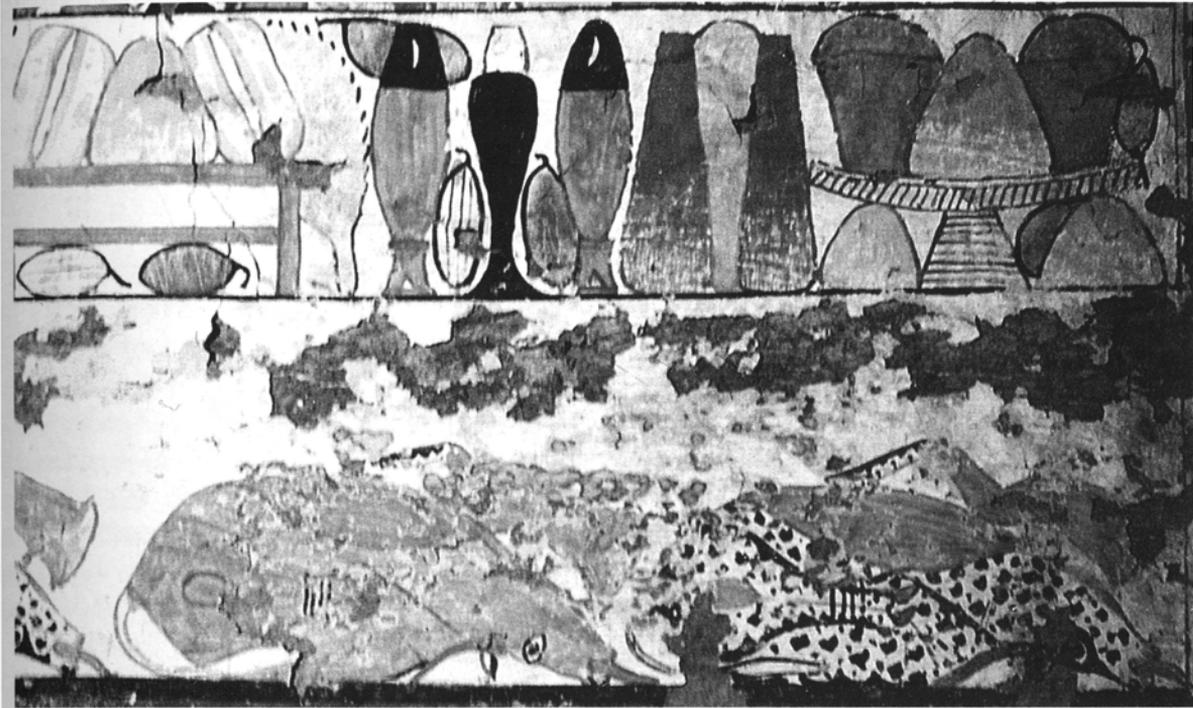


Fig. 3. Food supplies in the burial chamber of Ihy.

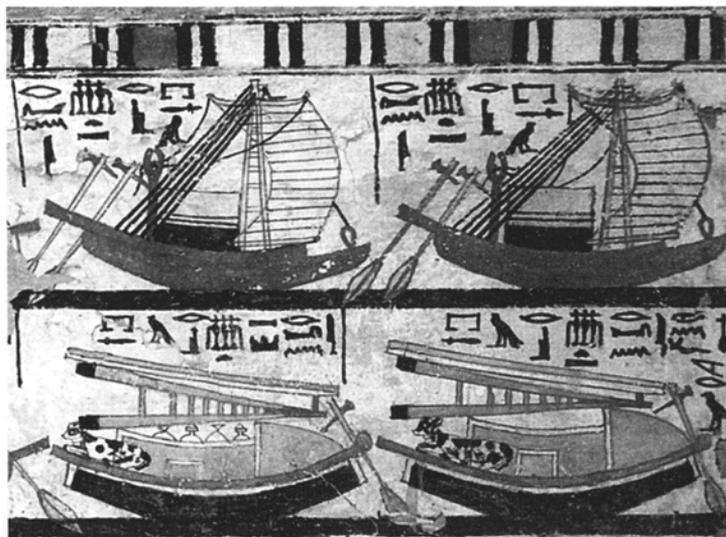


Fig. 4. Representation of boats in the burial chamber of Remni.