A watercolor illustration of an ancient Egyptian temple interior. The scene is framed by two large, decorated columns on either side. In the center, a sarcophagus lies on the floor, partially covered by a white cloth. A small window in the background shows a glimpse of the outdoors. The overall style is soft and painterly, with a warm, aged color palette.

Studies in Honor of
William Kelly Simpson

VOLUME 2

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

*Studies in Honor of
William Kelly Simpson*

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*Edited by
Peter Der Manuelian
and Rita E. Freed*

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Giza mastaba chapel of Merib (G 2100-1), north entrance thickness
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Presenting the Scroll: Papyrus Documents in Tomb Scenes of the Old Kingdom



PETER DER MANUELIAN

AS THE FOLLOWING REMARKS ON DOCUMENT PRESENTATION CAME together, I reflected on the score of monographic “documents” that William Kelly Simpson has produced for the Egyptological community. His books include excavation reports from the Nubian salvage campaign, several volumes of hieratic papyri translations, syntheses on the significance and monuments of Abydos, textbooks on Egyptian history and literature, and completions of Reisner’s Old Kingdom mastaba excavations at Giza. The last-mentioned category is the subject of the following remarks. The honoree will recognize many scenes from Old Kingdom private tombs that he published in his own *Giza Mastabas* volumes. May they bring back pleasant memories.

Among the more interesting aspects of a society’s experience is its concept of documentation and communication. How information is recorded and then shared among individuals cannot be observed in many ancient civilizations, but in the Egyptian case, the well-preserved material culture reveals much on the subject. In the private tomb decoration repertoire from the Old Kingdom there occurs a scene where an official presents the tomb owner with a document concerning some aspect of his estate (fig. 1).¹ This is one of many scenes that at first glance appear identical from tomb to tomb, but upon closer examination reveal a wide variety.

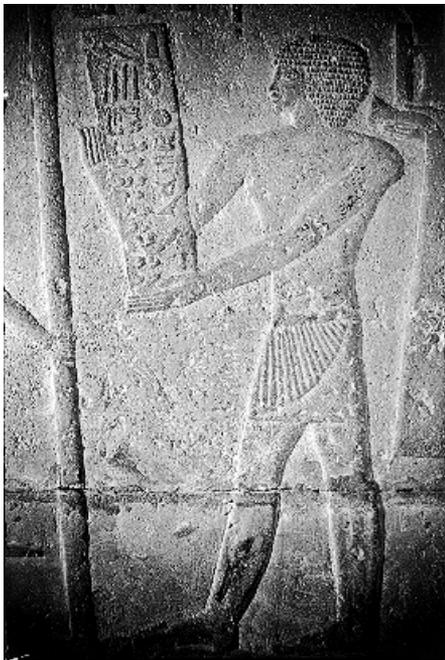


Fig. 1. Document presenter from the north entrance thickness of the tomb of Merib at Giza (c. 2100–1). Photograph by K.-H. Priese.

¹ These scenes are not to be confused with representations of offering rituals, where priests sometimes recite formulae from a papyrus document in front of them (e.g., Nyhetep-Ptah, Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 71 b = A. Badawy, *The Tomb of Nyhetep-Ptah at Giza and the Tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara* [Berkeley, 1978], pl. 7). For remarks on documents in general in ancient Egypt, see J. Černý, *Paper and Books in Ancient Egypt; an inaugural lecture delivered at University College London, 29 May 1947* (London, 1952), Wolfgang Helck, *Altägyptische Aktenkunde des 3. und 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, MÄS 31 (Berlin, 1974), and P. Der Manuelian, “An Essay in Document Transmission: *Ni-k3-nḥ* and the earliest *ḥryw rnpt*,” *JNES* 45 (1986), pp. 1–18. The subject of literacy among the Egyptian population has been discussed by John Baines and C.J. Eyre, “Four notes on literacy,” *GM* 61 (1983), pp. 65–96, with bibliography, and by John Baines, “Literacy and ancient Egyptian Society,” *Man*, N.S. 18 (1983), pp. 572–99.

In an attempt to understand this scene better, as one small aspect of information exchange in ancient Egypt, a corpus of over eighty examples from Giza, Saqqara, and a few provincial cemeteries was gathered for analysis.² The results summarized below focus on the location of the document presentation scene in decorated private tombs of the Old Kingdom, the composition of the scene, including the titles and association of the document presenter to the tomb owner, the texts and grammatical forms found in the accompanying captions, the form and contents of the papyrus document, the poses of the presenter and discussion of the chronological development of the scene.³

LOCATION OF THE PRESENTATION SCENE

The document presentation scene can appear almost anywhere in the tomb where a large scale figure of the deceased is to be found. Often the scene occurs on the entrance thicknesses of the chapel doorways, but examples inside the chapel are also frequent. Chapel wall occurrences are not limited to any particular wall, but occur on any of the four walls, north, south, east or west.

THE RECIPIENT TOMB OWNER

In none of the examples gathered was the document presenter female, but the recipient tomb owner is in at least four cases a woman. Two of these are among the earliest known examples of the scene.⁴ Her pose is always a standing one, with both feet together. She is attested crossing one arm across the breast (Hemet-re), or sniffing a blossom with one hand, the other hand either remaining empty (Meresankh III) or holding a bird (Idut). By far the most common pose shown for the male recipient

² For permission to consult the expedition records of the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition to Giza I thank Rita Freed, curator of the Museum's Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art. I am also grateful to Henry G. Fischer and Edward Brovarski for very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

³ The present study is limited to document presenters only. It omits scenes of officials actually inscribing their papyri, or carrying other forms of scribal equipment. For more general remarks on administrative and other duties in the Old Kingdom, see Christopher J. Eyre, "Work and the Organisation of Work in the Old Kingdom," in Marvin A. Powell, ed., *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, CT, 1987), pp. 5–47. On the of scribal profession, cf. Patrizia Piacentini, "Les scribes dans la société égyptienne de l'Ancien Empire," *Abstracts of Papers. Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995* (Oxford, 1995), p. 141.

⁴ Meresankh III (G 7530–7540): Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, Giza Mastabas 1 (Boston, 1974), pl. 2c, fig. 3b; Hemet-re: Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 6*, pt. 3, 1934–1935 (Cairo, 1950), p. 56, fig. 40; Idut: R. Macramallah, *Le Mastaba d'Idout* (Cairo, 1935), pl. 20; Khentkaues, Junker, *Giza 7*, p. 73, fig. 31 (upper portion of the figure damaged). For discussions of women and literacy, see John Baines and C.J. Eyre, "Literacy in Ancient Egypt," *GM 61* (1983), pp. 81–85.

tomb owner is standing, with a staff in the “front” hand and a handkerchief in the “back” hand. While the presenter always extends the document to a single individual, more than one person is often present at the occasion. The tomb owner can appear alone, with a child at smaller scale holding onto his staff, or with a spouse and/or children shown “behind.” Often the recipient sits, either on a simple chair with lion’s or bull’s legs, in an elaborate booth,⁵ or even in a sedan chair.⁶ The number of people shown seems to depend, not on the nature of the scene and appropriate or inappropriate individuals present, but on the amount of available space on the tomb wall.

Like many scenes in the Old Kingdom repertoire, the document presentation scene is very frequently unaccompanied by hieroglyphic captions.⁷ It must have been understood, therefore, that the document presenter offered a list of produce or other such items for the benefit of the tomb owner(s). The presence or absence of a specific hieroglyphic caption is unrelated to the presence or absence of a more general, overall scene description relating directly to the large scale figure of the tomb owner. The most common text for overall captions relates the following general theme: *mꜣꜣ (sš n) nḏt-ḥr/prt-ḥrw innt m niwwt n pr dt...* “Overseeing the (document of) offerings which are brought from the towns of the funerary estate....”⁸

TITLES OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTERS

A number of titles occur near the document presenters, very few of which in the corpus under review stipulate any filial relation to the

⁵ Werirni: N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Saïd* (London, 1901), pls. 15–16; Isi: Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrâwi 2* (London, 1902), pl. 19; a standing couple appears in a booth in the Saqqara tomb of Neferiretnef: B. van de Walle, *La chapelle funéraire de Neferirtenef* (Brussels, 1978), pl. 12; the tomb owner is seated alone in Pepi-anekh-hery-ib: A.M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir 4* (London, 1924), pl. 15.

⁶ Khnumenty (G 2374), room 1, east wall; Brovarski, *Giza Mastabas*, forthcoming. I am grateful to the author for sharing this unpublished material.

⁷ For earlier lists of the presentation scene, Siegfried Schott et al., *Bücher und Bibliotheken im alten Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 1990), p. 332, no. 1503; Luise Klebs, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches (2980–2475 v. Chr.)* (Heidelberg, 1915; reprint Hildesheim, 1982), p. 23 (“VI. Bericht der Beamten”), and p. 19, fig. 8, p. 24, fig. 12.

⁸ Compare the following variations: Merib, Giza G 2100–1: Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 22c; Sekhemankhtah, Giza G 7152: Alexander Badawy, *The Tombs of Iteti, Sekhemankh-Ptah, and Kaemnofret at Giza* (Berkeley, 1976), fig. 29 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 91c; Iymery, Giza G 6020: Kent Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000, Giza Mastabas 5* (Boston, 1994), figs. 26–27, pl. 12b = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 49a; Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, Saqqara: A.M. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz am Rhein, 1977), fig. 13. For an interesting reversal in the tomb of Ptah-hotep at Saqqara, where the phrases are oriented towards the individuals “seeing” (*mꜣꜣ*) and “bringing” (*int*), see the discussion below on reversals.

deceased. Our survey indicates that document presentation was not a function particularly reserved for family members as was, for example, the role of se(te)m priest.⁹ Attested titles of the document presenters gathered include:

TITLE	TRANSLATION
<i>imy-r pr</i>	steward ^a
<i>imy-r hm(w)-k3</i>	overseer of funerary priests ^b
<i>iry-prt</i>	hereditary prince ^c
<i>iry md3t</i>	document keeper ^d
<i>htmy st3-hb</i>	sealer of the festival perfume ^e
<i>hry-hb smsw</i>	eldest lector priest ^f
<i>s3 nswt</i>	king's son ^g
<i>s3=f smsw mry=f hry-tp nswt</i>	his eldest and beloved son, at the head of the king ^h
<i>s3b imy-r s3</i>	magistrate, overseer of scribes ⁱ
<i>s3b s3</i>	magistrate, scribe ^j
<i>s3b shd s3</i>	magistrate, inspector of scribes ^k
<i>s3b s3 shd hmw-k3</i>	magistrate, scribe, inspector of funerary priests ^l
<i>sn-dt s3b s3</i>	estate brother, magistrate, scribe ^m
<i>shd s3 r nswt (s3) rprw imy-r hm(w)-k3</i>	inspector of royal document scribes, (scribe) of workcrews, overseer of funerary priests ⁿ
<i>s3</i>	scribe ^o
<i>s3 r nswt s3=f</i>	royal document scribe, his son ^p
<i>s3 hm-k3 pr-r3</i>	scribe of funerary priest(s) of the palace ^q
<i>s3 hm-k3</i>	scribe, funerary priest ^r
<i>3ps-nswt smr pr</i>	king's nobleman, companion of the house ^s
<i>3ps-nswt shd hm(w)-ntr</i>	king's nobleman, inspector of funerary priests ^t
<i>...-ntr shd s3</i>	... (priest?), inspector of scribes ^u

⁹ A few instances of sons of the tomb owner presenting documents do occur: Nofer's son Setka (G 4761): Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 36, fig. 5; Khaf-khufu I's sons Wetka and Iunka (G 7130–7140): W.K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, Giza Mastabas 3 (Boston, 1978), pp. 12–13, pl. 17b, fig. 29; and Nisut-nefer's son Kaherisetef (G 4970): Junker, *Giza* 3, p. 169, fig. 30; Badawy, *The Tomb of Nyhetep-Ptah*, p. 32, fig. 41, pl. 54 (erased). Cf. Luise Klebs on the issue of sons presenting documents, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches*, p. 23: "Das Verzeichnis aller dieser Dinge ist auf eine große Papyrusrolle geschrieben und wird dem Herrn von einem Schreiber oder Beamten oder auch von einem seiner Söhne überreicht oder zum Lesen vorgehalten...."

^a Werirni: Davies, *Sheikh Saïd*, pl. 16; Perneb (Saqqara; now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art): Caroline Ransom-Williams, *The Decoration of the Tomb of Per-Neb* (New York, 1932), pl. 6, W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt* 1 (New York, 1953), p. 92, fig. 51; Hemetre (Giza): Hassan, *Giza 1934–35*, p. 56, fig. 40; Seneb (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 5, p. 89, fig. 22; Khunes (Zawiyet el-Meitin): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 105a, 107; Rashepses (Saqqara): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 64a; Kagemni (Saqqara): F. von Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gem-ni-kai* 1 (Berlin, 1905), pls. 12–13; Ti (Saqqara): Henri Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti. La chapelle* (Cairo, 1965, 1966), pls. 44, 167; Mereruka (Saqqara): Prentice Duell et. al., *The Mastaba of Mereruka* 1 (Chicago, 1938), pl. 51; Fetekta (South Abusir): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 96; Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, p. 20, fig. 12; Kaninisut (Giza; now in Vienna): Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 153, fig. 19; Tjenti (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 30, idem, *Ergänzungsband*, pl. 26; Idut (Giza): Macramallah, *Idut*, pl. 20; Za-ib (Giza): A.M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, Giza Mastabas 6 (Boston, 1995), p. 110, pls. 68b and 172c; P. Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut* (Mainz am Rhein, 1993), p. 66, pl. 38.

^b Khentkaues (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 7, p. 73, fig. 31; Iymery (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, figs. 26–27, pl. 12b; Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, pl. 2c, figs. 3b and 12.

^c Irenre (complex of Khentkaus [Abusir]): M. Verner, *Abusir III, The Pyramid Complex of Khentkaus* (Prague, 1995), pp. 70, 86 (90/A/78).

^d Neferherentah (Giza, G 4311): unpublished, MFA 37–7–21, Expedition photograph B 8903; and our figs. 5 (no. 8) and 8.

^e Merib (Giza, G 2100–1): K.-H. Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib* (Berlin, 1984), pp. 46, 48; Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 128, fig. 11; Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 22 b.

^f Qar (Giza): W.K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu*, Giza Mastabas 2 (Boston, 1976), p. 9 and fig. 28.

^g Khaf-khufu I (Giza): William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, Giza Mastabas 3 (Boston, 1978), pp. 12–13, pl. 17b, fig. 29.

^h Ptah-hotep I (Saqqara): Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1937–1938*, vol. 2, *Mastabas of Nyrankh-Pepy and Others* (Cairo, 1975), p. 49, pl. 44; M.A. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1 (London, 1905), pl. 9; Henry G. Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, Part 1, *Reversals* (New York, 1977), pp. 73 and 75, fig. 76.

ⁱ Kagemni (Saqqara): von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai* 1, pl. 13; Senedjemib-Mehi (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 74c, and Brovarski, Giza Mastabas, forthcoming.

^j Ptah-hotep (Saqqara Ls 31): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 102a.

^k Nofer I (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 37, fig. 5.

^l Seshem-nofer IV (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 11, p. 209, fig. 80.

^m Khnum-hotep (Giza, Fakhry no. 8): unpublished; MFA Expedition photograph A 7177; *PM* 3, p. 213.

ⁿ Ti (Saqqara): Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pls. 19, 27.

^o Neferiretenef (Saqqara): van de Walle, *Neferiretenef*, pl. 12; Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, p. 20, fig. 12; Hemre-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 18 (figure above, damaged).

^p Nisut-nefer (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 3, p. 119, fig. 30.

^q Idut (Giza): Macramallah, *Idut*, pl. 11.

^r Iymery (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 39, text 2.100; Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 51 (no text copied).

^s Hemre-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 18 (figure below, damaged).

^t Pepiankh-hery-ib (Meir): Blackman, *Meir* 4, pl. 16.

^u Sekhemka (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 89c (copy inaccurate?).

COSTUME AND EQUIPMENT OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTERS

The presenting official always wears a kilt, either short (plain or pleated) or longer with triangular tab in front. Occasionally he carries scribal equipment under one arm, and/or has one or more pens tucked behind his ear. The presenter appears first in any line of procession marching toward the tomb owner, since the document presentation requires the latter's direct attention.¹⁰ Where more than one official presents a document, the individuals appear first and second in line.¹¹ In cases where the document is merely being carried (rather than extended towards the tomb owner), the bearers can take their place further back in the line.¹²

Some uncertainty arises as to the medium used for the document. While the majority of the texts seem to be written on papyrus, some poses (see pose 5 described below) suggest a stiff tablet or writing board is the only logical object represented. Furthermore, if one examines the numerous scenes of seated scribes busily writing, one notes that they hold their document cradled in one arm. Unless we are to posit the use of a supporting board, like the modern clipboard, this position is theoretically impossible for writing on papyrus, which, due to its flimsy nature, must be stretched over the lap of a cross-legged scribe. Does this mean that all such scribal writing scenes involve writing boards and not papyrus, and if a document presenter is shown in the same scene, must he be presenting a stiff tablet, rather than a papyrus, to the recipient tomb owner?

A few examples speak against such an interpretation. The tomb of Nefer and Kahay at Saqqara shows seated scribes writing, and the cradled document of the first scribe is a partially unrolled papyrus. The scribe has even allowed one end to dangle carelessly on the ground.¹³ The document presenter in front of the seated scribes holds a curving

¹⁰ This rule proves that a certain individual standing behind the deceased tomb owner Werimi at Sheikh Saïd most likely carries a rectangular bolt of cloth rather than a papyrus document. A different individual holds a text in front of the tomb owner. The cloth was correctly identified by Davies, *Sheikh Saïd*, pls. 15 (cloth bearer) and 16 (document presenter). For another scene of handing the tomb owner a linen sheet held by two men in different registers, see the Saqqara tomb of Akhet-hotep, Christiane Ziegler, *Le mastaba d'Akhet-hotep* (Paris, 1993), pp. 34, 117.

¹¹ Two examples appear in the tombs of Khaf-khufu I at Giza: W.K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, pp. 12–13, pl. 17b, fig. 29, and Khunes at Zawiyet el-Meitin: Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 105a.

¹² One example seems to show a scribe extending, rather than merely carrying, a document, but appearing second in line behind a companion who extends a vessel to the tomb owner. See A. El-Khouli and N. Kanawati, *The Old Kingdom Tombs of El-Hammamiya* (Sydney, 1990), pl. 44.

¹³ A.M. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay*, Old Kingdom Tombs at the Causeway of King Unas at Saqqara, AV 5 (Mainz am Rhein, 1971), pl. 24a.

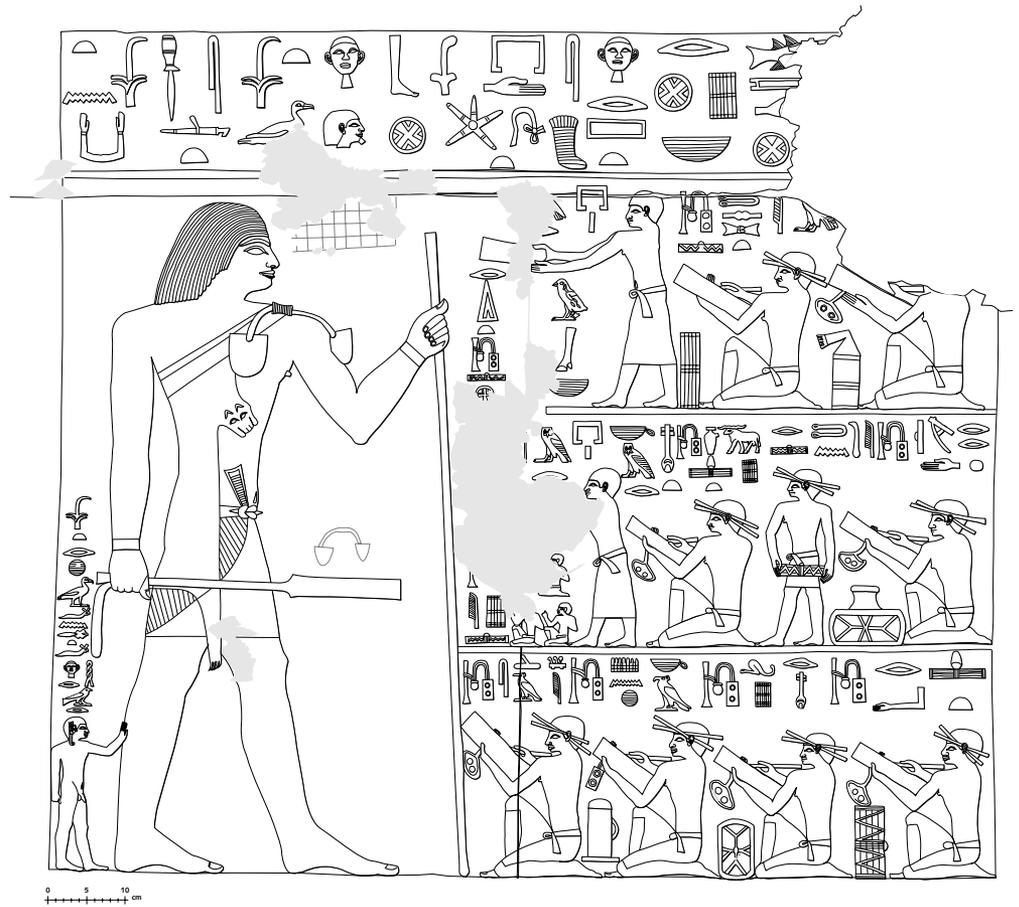


Fig. 2. Uncollated digital drawing of the north wall of the tomb of Kaninisut at Giza (G 2155), now in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, ÄS 8006.

form, most likely an unrolled papyrus rather than a stiff writing tablet. In the chapel of Kaninisut from Giza (G 2155), now in Vienna, the north wall shows several seated scribes, each cradling his document in one arm. But between them stands another scribe with a rolled up, bound, and sealed papyrus document, the tie strings clearly showing that this is no tablet (fig. 2). A third example, from the Giza tomb of Kanefer (G 2150, fig. 3 no. 1) reveals a seated scribe once again writing on a tablet(?) cradled in one arm, yet just in front of him a document presenter extends what must be a papyrus to the deceased.¹⁴ The lines of the two end rolls are clearly indicated, and the document is not rectangular but

¹⁴ G.A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis 1* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), p. 441, fig. 262.

is actually wider (i.e., unrolled unevenly) at one end than the other. Such an unevenly unrolled papyrus may also be found in the Giza tomb of Khafre-ankh (G 7948; see fig. 3 no. 2, and fig. 9), and nearby seated scribes actually hold the ends of several partially and fully unrolled papyri, which dip and sag, proving they are not stiff tablets.¹⁵

These examples show that there was more than one way to sit while inscribing a papyrus; it need not be placed solely on the tightly stretched, pleated kilt of a cross-legged scribe. Either some sort of supporting “clipboard” was indeed used by the seated scribes,¹⁶ or, if the “traditional” (cross-legged) scribal pose was too awkward to represent in two-dimensional wall reliefs, the pose in fig. 2 may be a modified one used for purposes of representation.¹⁷

POSES OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTERS

One wonders if a distinction is to be made between document *reciters* and document *presenters*. Perhaps the official in some cases recites the document to the tomb owner and retains possession of it, while in other cases he actually hands the papyrus over to him or her.¹⁸ Several examples even orient the descriptive caption *mꜣꜣ sš...*, “Viewing the document...” to the document presenter, instead of the recipient tomb owner (see below, reversals). The variety of poses seems to suggest both interpretations, reciting, and presenting, are possible. The verb most often used in the accompanying captions is *rdi.t*, which suggests that the

¹⁵ LG 75 = G 7948; cf. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 9a (= MFA Expedition photographs A 7390 [Jan. 18, 1936] and A 7398 [Jan. 21, 1936], both unpublished).

¹⁶ Could such a clipboard be represented by the double line in the document penned by a scribe in the Kanefer scene (Giza G 2150, cf. Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* 1, p. 441, fig. 261)?

¹⁷ For examples of frontal cross-legged representations, see A.M. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz am Rhein, 1977), pl. 54a, fig. 24 (Dynasty 5, Niuserre to Menkhaufhor), John D. Cooney, “Three Early Saite Tomb Reliefs,” *JNES* 9 (1950), pl. 16 (Dynasty 26). On the difficulty of interpreting cross-legged poses in general, see Heinrich Schäfer, *Von ägyptischer Kunst*, 4th edition, (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 253–56, fig. 268 = *Principles of Egyptian Art* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 251–53, with references to Junker, *Giza* 3, pp. 105–109 and idem, *Giza* 11, pp. 88–89. A frontal view of a seated man bundling flax with splayed legs appears in the Saqqara tomb of Kaemnofret; cf. William Kelly Simpson, *The Offering Chapel of Kayemnofret in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1992), pl. 21b; a full frontal standing figure of Redi-nes from Giza (G 5032, MFA 21.961) with splayed feet is represented in the author’s “The Giza Mastaba Niche and full frontal figure of Redi-nes in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,” in D.P. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, SAOC 55 (Chicago, 1994), pp. 55–78, esp. figs. 4.6–7, 4.12–13. For a semi-frontal view of a squatting boy in the Saqqara tomb of Nfr cf. H.G. Fischer in *BiOr* 31 (1974), p. 67, fig. 2.

¹⁸ Examples of presenters actually placing the document into the hands of the tomb owner include Pepiankh-hery-ib (Meir D 2): Blackman, *Meir* 4, pl. 15 (showing two documents, or one document passed hand to hand?); Werirenptah: T.G.H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae etc.*, Part 1, 2nd edition (London, 1961), pl. 29; Kahif (Giza G 2136): Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 115, fig. 34, pl. 6a.

official physically hands the document over to the tomb owner. Other verbs used to describe the scene are *ꜣw.t* “extending,” or “spreading out” and *šr.(t)* “proffering.” In terms of document reciters, both Old and Middle Kingdom examples exist that use the verb *šd.t*, “reading.”¹⁹ It is doubtful that *rdi* has a more general meaning, denoting the presentation of *information* as well as of objects such as papyri. If the document presenter keeps the document himself, then the phrase *rdi sš* would have to refer to presenting the *contents* of the document, i.e., the information. The caption *rdit sš* would therefore have to mean something like “reporting to” the tomb owner.

From the various poses one might conclude that the presenter in some cases reads the document aloud to the deceased, in other cases unrolls it to show it to and discuss it with the deceased, and in still others, merely hands it over sealed for the deceased’s subsequent inspection. Perhaps we should understand the scene as a frozen moment in time, and the varying poses might simply indicate different gestures in the same chronological process of unrolling, perhaps reading aloud, and eventually handing over the papyrus for the tomb owner’s perusal.

The present corpus has revealed five basic attitudes for the document presenter in private tombs of the Old Kingdom. In the hopes of distinguishing them from each other, I have given them the following loosely descriptive names, referring to the action suggested by the position of the document: “extending/spreading out,” “cradling,” “holding,” “proclaiming,” and “proffering” the document.

Pose 1: *extending/spreading out* the document (22 examples)

The presenter extends the document with both hands. The near arm (that is, the arm from the shoulder nearest the document) reaches out, bending downward at the elbow, while the hand usually grasps the document along its top edge (fig. 3).²⁰ The far arm (from the shoulder “farther” from the document) reaches out and downward to hold the document at its bottom edge.²¹ The pose often appears too awkward for the official to be reading the text, and this suggests he is in the process of handing the papyrus over to the tomb owner. One example shows the document actually placed in the outstretched hands of the tomb owner

¹⁹ See the Saqqara tomb of Ankhmahor Sesi: *Urk.* 1, 203.7 = Jean Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah* (Brussels, 1907), pl. 49.63 = Schott, *Bücher und Bibliotheken*, p. 332 § 1503: *šd.t n=f sš n kṛst=f dyt n=f m ḥtp di nswt*, “Reciting to him the document for his burial equipment which was given to him as a *ḥtp-di-nswt*.” Cf. also the Giza tomb of Qar: Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu*, Giza Mastabas 2 (Boston, 1976), p. 9 and fig. 28. From the Middle Kingdom, cf. Blackman, *Meir* 3, pl. 23 (tomb B4, Ukh-hotep, son of Ukh-hotep and Mersi): *šd.t sš in ḥry-ḥb ḥry-tp sš mdꜣwt Ḥnw sꜣ Wḥ-ḥtp*, “Reading the document by the chief lector priest, scribe of the books, Henu’s son Ukh-hotep.”

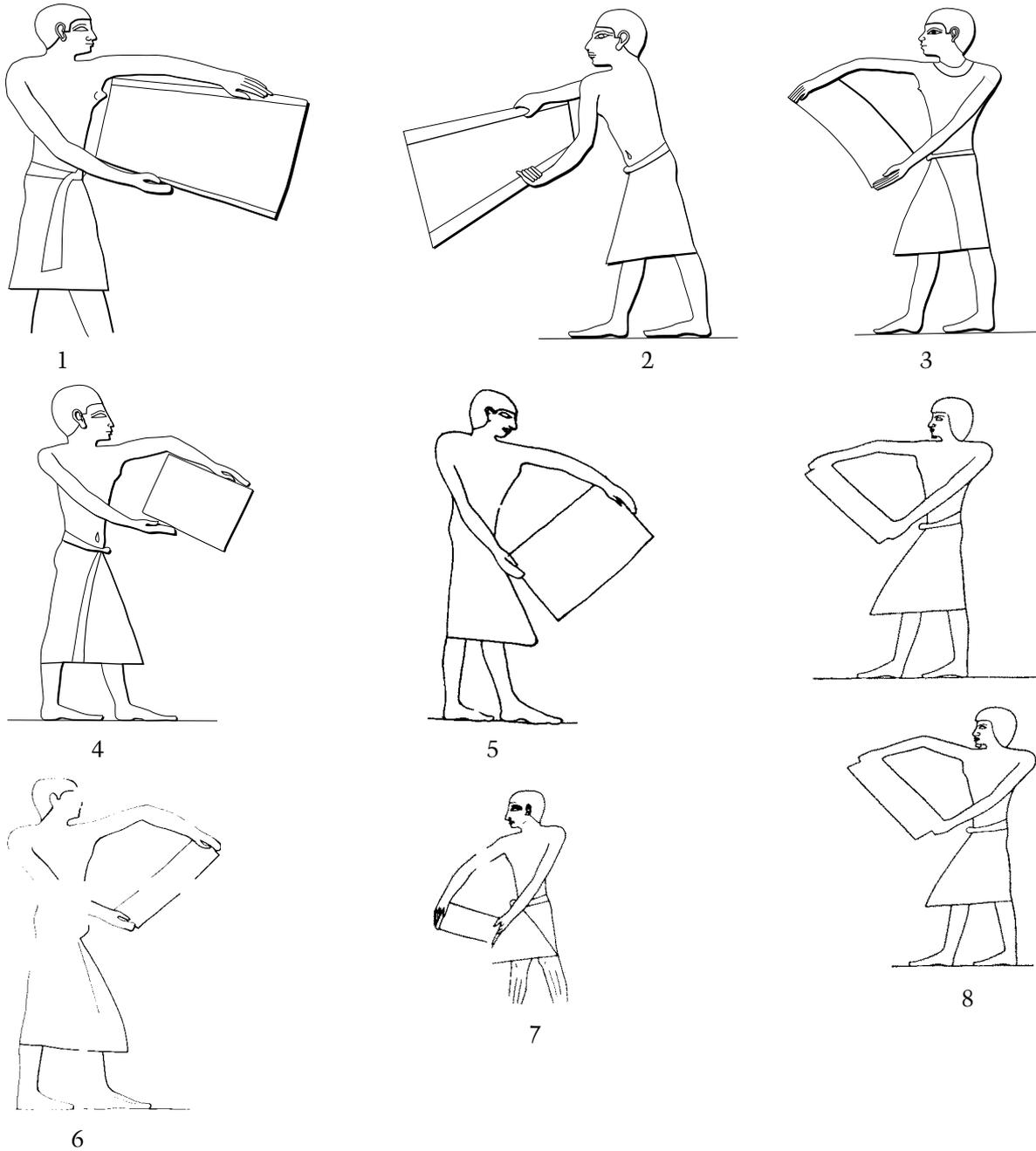


Fig. 3. Pose 1: "extending/spreading out" the document. (1) Kanefer (Giza): Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* 1, p. 441, fig. 262. (2) Khafre-ankh (Giza): fig. 9; Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 9a (= MFA Expedition photographs A 7390 [Jan. 18, 1936] and A 7398 [Jan. 21, 1936], both unpublished). (3) Nefer and Kahay (Saqqara): Moussa and Altenmüller, *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay*, fig. 13. (4) Nikaure (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 15. (6) Neferbauptah (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 11. (7) Neferiretenef (Saqqara): van de Walle, *Neferirtenef*, pl. 12. (8) Nofer I (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 37, fig. 5.

(additional examples occur under the other poses described below).²² In another case, the tomb owner extends his left hand, palm open, to receive the document.²³

To look beyond the Old Kingdom for a moment, a three-dimensional wooden example on model “yacht T” from the Dynasty 11 tomb of Meket-re at Thebes (MMA 20.3.4) is instructive in explaining pose 1. In three dimensions, the presenter’s arms are at equal height; the papyrus is unrolled and oriented so that the seated Meket-re can read “a thousand of bread and beer, a thousand of oxen and fowl.”²⁴

Pose 2: *cradling* the document (24 examples)

In this case the far arm again reaches down to hold the papyrus at the bottom, similar to pose 1. The near arm, however, stretches down, then up towards the papyrus, bending upward at the elbow (fig. 4). The arm often disappears behind the document, with the hand reappearing on the far side, either to hold or cradle the papyrus. The near arm’s hand is usually placed halfway up the document. The pose is much more conducive to reading the document aloud, but is equally suited to handing it over to the tomb owner. In what one might term variants A and B of pose 2, the papyrus can be either unfurled (A, 17 examples) or rolled up and sealed (B, 8 examples).²⁵

Pose 3: *holding* the document (14 examples of pose A; 4 of pose B)

This pose resembles pose 2 with the exception that the near arm holds the papyrus at the top (fig. 5). The presenter thus no longer cradles it but

²⁰ Additional examples of pose 1, not shown in fig. 3, may be found in the tombs of Wer-irni: Davies, *Sheikh Said*, pl. 16; Khentkaues (Giza): Junker, *Giza 7*, p. 73, fig. 31; Neferbauphtah and Iymery (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, figs. 9 (= Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 56a) and 27 (= Fischer, *Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, Part 1, *Reversals*, p. 72, fig. 74, and Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 49a); Rashepses (Saqqara): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 61a; Perneb (Saqqara): Ransom-Williams, *The Decoration of the Tomb of Per-Neb*, pl. 6, and Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt 1*, p. 92, fig. 51, and H.G. Fischer, in *Kunst des Alten Reiches* (Mainz am Rhein, 1995), p. 83, fig. 2; Werkhu (Giza): Hassan, *Giza 5*, p. 248, fig. 106 = Lepsius, *Ergänzungsband*, pl. 38; Hemet-re (Giza): Junker, *Giza 6*, pl. 56, fig. 40; Ptah-hotep (Saqqara, Ls 31): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 102a; and Rawer (Giza), Lepsius, *Ergänzungsband*, pl. 25; P. Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut* (Mainz am Rhein, 1993), p. 66, pls. II.3 and 38.

²¹ An unusual example from the tomb of Shetwi at Giza shows the presenter holding the papyrus from the top with the near arm, but apparently gesturing at it with the free hand of his outstretched far arm, cf. Junker, *Giza 9*, p. 187, fig. 86.

²² James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae etc.*, Part 1, 2nd edition, pl. 29.2, no. 718 (Werirenptah from Saqqara, temp. Neferirkare or later, *PM 3*, 2nd ed., p. 699).

²³ Moussa and Altenmüller, *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay*, pl. 24a.

²⁴ See H.E. Winlock, *Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, MA, 1955), p. 60, pls. 45 (bottom), 49 (right), and 50 (top, center). For an inscribed, unrolled papyrus on the lap of Amenhotep, son of Hapu(?) (OIM 14321), see E. Teeter, “Amunhotep son of Hapu at Medinet Habu,” *JEA* 81 (1995), pp. 232–36, pl. 22



Fig. 4. Pose 2: "cradling" the document. (1) Khaf-khufu I (Giza): Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, pp. 12–13, pl. 17b, fig. 29. (2) Merib (Giza): Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib*, pp. 23, 32, 58; Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 22b. (3) Duaenre (Giza): unpublished, MFA Expedition photographs B 7990 [January 10, 1932] and A 3654 [September 20, 1925]. (4) Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, p. 20, fig. 12, pl. 12c. (5) Khunes (Zawiyet el-Meitin): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 105a. (6) Nefer-ked (Giza): unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 6481 [April 10, 1932], A 6482 [April 11, 1932]. (7) Wehemka (Giza): after Kayser, *Die Mastaba des Uhemka*, pp. 36–37. (8) Seneb (Giza): Junker, *Giza 5*, p. 89, fig. 22. (9) Nofer I (Giza): Junker, *Giza 6*, p. 36, fig. 5. (10) Iymery (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 39 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 51.

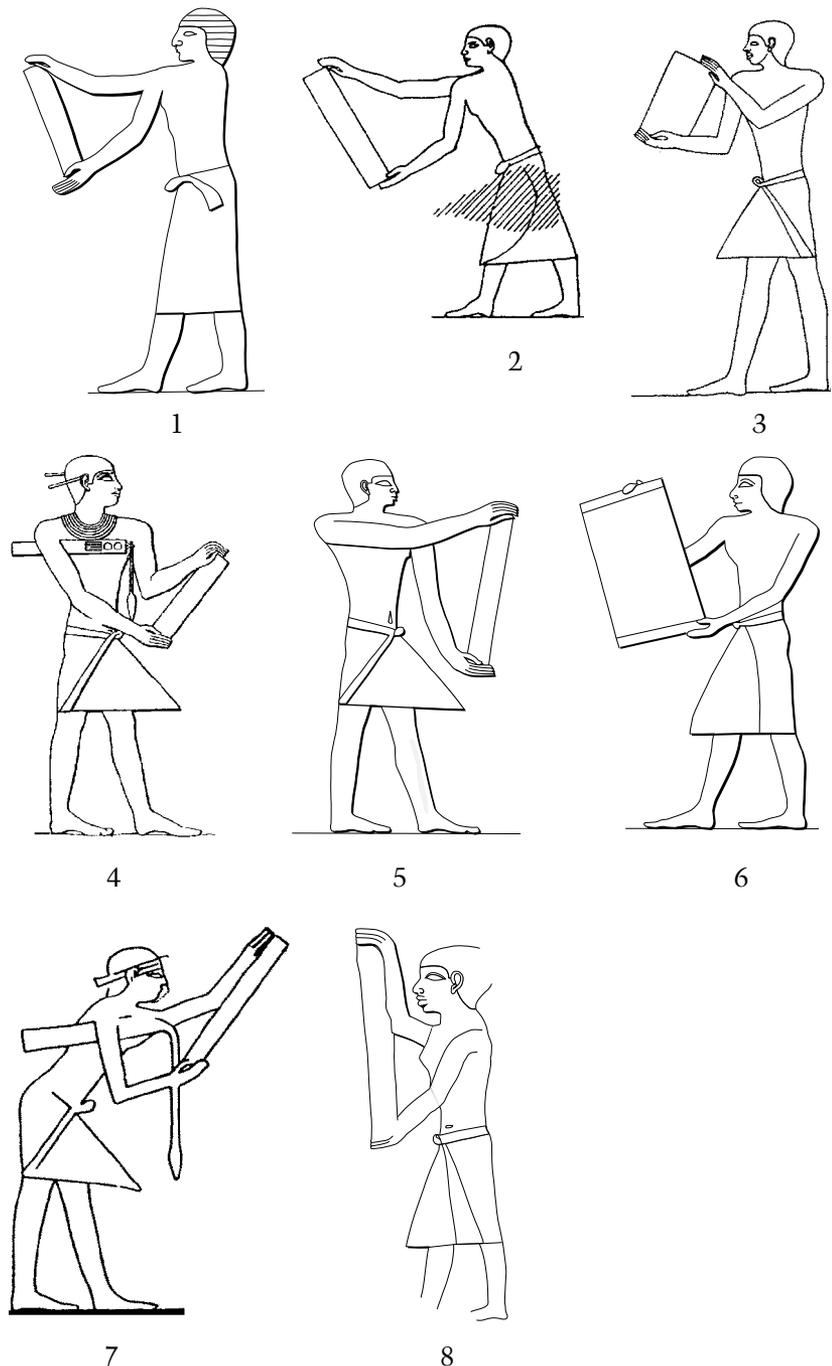


Fig. 5. Pose 3: "holding" the document. (1) Seshat-hotep (Giza): after Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 183, fig. 29. (2) Nisut-nefer (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 3, p. 169, fig. 30. (3) Seshemnofer IV (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 11, p. 209, fig. 80. (4) Ptah-hotep (Saqqara): Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1937-1938*, vol. 2, *Mastabas of Nyankh-Pepy and Others* (Cairo, 1975), p. 49, pl. 44; Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1, pl. 9. (5) Kagemni (Saqqara): von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai* 1, pl. 13. (6) Sekhemka (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 89c. (7) Pepiankh-hery-ib (Meir): Blackman, *Meir* 4, pl. 16. (8) Neferherentah (Giza), unpublished: MFA Expedition photograph B 8903 (December 11, 1937).

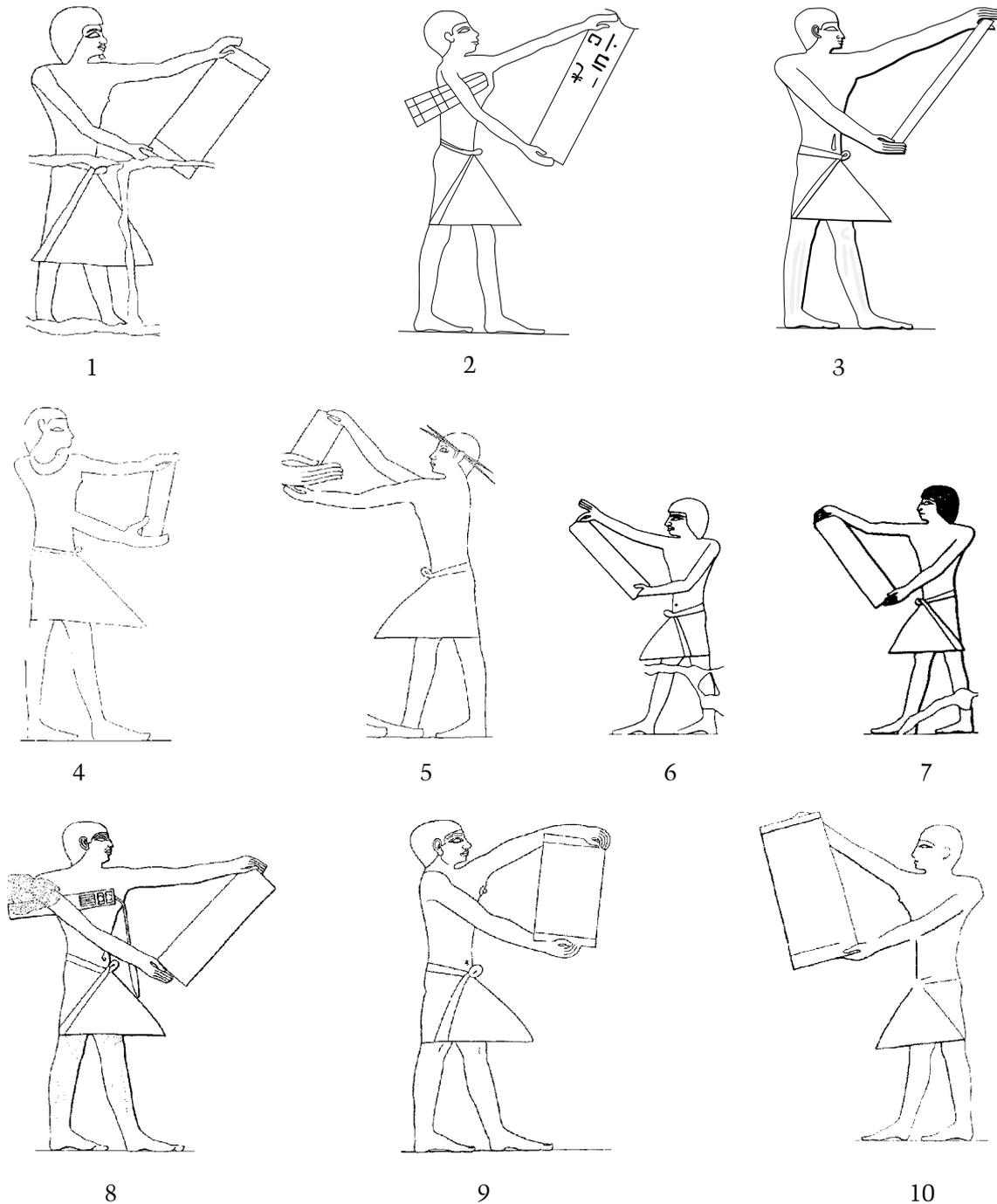


Fig. 6. Pose 4: "proclaiming" the document. (1) Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, pl. 2c, fig. 3b. (2) Fetekta (South Abusir): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 96. (3) Kagemni (Saqqara): von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai 1*, pl. 12. (4) Hemre-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrāwi 2*, pl. 18. (5) Kahif (Giza): Junker, *Giza 6*, p. 115, fig. 34, pl. 6a. (6) Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (Saqqara): Moussa and Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchkhnum und Chnumhotep*, scene 15.2, p. 103, pl. 34 and fig. 13. (7) Idut (Giza): Macramallah, *Idut*, pl. 20. (8) Mereruka (Saqqara): Duell et. al., *Mereruka*, pl. 51. (9) Ti (Saqqara): Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 167. (10) Ti (Saqqara): *ibid.*, pl. 27.

actually holds it firmly. The official could either be reading or handing it over, but the document remains held rather close to his body. Once again, one might distinguish between 3A, where the papyrus is unfurled, and 3B, where it is rolled up. One example may show the document in motion(?), first in the hands of the presenter, then in the outstretched hands of the recipient tomb owner.²⁶ For exceptions to the pose described above, i.e., with the near arm at the bottom of the document and the far arm at the top, compare the figures in the tombs of Seshem-nofer IV (pose 3A) and Kagemni (pose 3B).²⁷

Pose 4: *proclaiming* the document (16 examples)

This pose shows the near arm extended straight and upward, holding onto the top of the papyrus document (fig. 6). The far arm reaches downward once again to grasp the bottom of the papyrus. The presenter seems to keep the document as far away from his body as possible. He holds it completely unrolled, at its maximum length, giving it to the tomb owner. One tomb shows the official delicately pinching the papyrus at the top between his thumb and forefinger, with the remaining fingers clearly delineated separately,²⁸ while another depicts the same hand with fingers curled protectively over the top front edge of the papyrus.²⁹

²⁵ In the tomb of Nofer (I), presenter figures hold a rolled up document on the south thickness and an open one on the north thickness; Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 36, fig. 5. Additional examples of pose 2, not shown in fig. 4, may be found in the tombs of Inti (Deshasheh): W.M.F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pl. 13 = N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane, *Deshasha. The Tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others* (Sydney, 1993), p. 25, pl. 28; Hemre-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 18; Duaenre (Giza): unpublished, MFA Expedition photographs A 6762, B 5768, A 6759; Khnumhotep (Giza): A. Fakhry, *Sept tombeaux à l'est de la grande pyramide de Guizeh* (Cairo, 1935), figs. 7, MFA Expedition photographs A 7177 (July 19, 1933), A 6965 (May 28, 1932); Setju (Giza G 4710 = LG 49), unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 7925 (February 21, 1938), A 7140 (June 30, 1933); Tjenti (Giza, LG 77), unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 7452–53 (February 3, 1936); Ipy (Giza, LG 80), unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 7465–66 (February 19, 1936); Iymery (Giza): Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 39 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 51; Khunes (Zawiyet el-Meitin): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 107; and Khentkaus (Abusir), M. Verner, *Abusir 3, The Pyramid Complex of Khentkaus* (Prague, 1995), pp. 70, 86 (90/A/78); Qar (Giza): Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu*, p. 9, fig. 28; Nebet (Saqqara): Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut*, p. 70, pl. 17 (twice).

²⁶ Pepiankh-hery-ib (Meir D 2): Blackman, *Meir* 4, pl. 15; see above, note 18.

²⁷ Seshem-nofer IV: Junker, *Giza* 11, p. 209, fig. 80; Kagemni: von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai* 1, p. 13. Additional examples of pose 3, not shown in fig. 5, may be found in the tombs of Rashepses (Saqqara): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 64a; Khnumenty (Giza): Brovarski, *Giza Mastabas*, forthcoming; and Niuty (Giza): Lepsius, *Ergänzungsband*, pl. 30; Nebet (Saqqara): Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut*, p. 70, pl. 19 (three examples) and p. 66, pls. II.3 and 38.

²⁸ Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (Saqqara): Moussa and Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchkhnum und Chnumhotep*, scene 15.2, p. 103, pl. 34 and fig. 13. The thumb is also visible on a figure in the Giza tomb of Za-ib (G 2092+2093): A.M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, Giza Mastabas 6 (Boston, 1995), p. 110, pls. 68b and 172c.

Pose 5: *proffering* the document (4 examples in two tombs)

This is the only pose that suggests a medium other than papyrus for the document presented (fig. 7). The presenter extends both arms fully out in front of him and grasps the document with both hands from the bottom (or is it the side?). Actual papyrus would droop downward when held only at one end; hence the document may represent a writing board or tablet, rigid enough to withstand being held at the edge. Note, however, the discussion above under costume and equipment of the presenter, with fig. 2 indicating papyrus documents all around the document presenter. The official can hardly be reading the document aloud in this pose, thus he must be giving it to the tomb owner.

VARIANT POSES AND MISCELLANEOUS EXAMPLES

Several scenes display interesting variants on typical Egyptian representational perspective, with torsos and arms in three-quarter or true profile view. Most of these examples are found when the presenter faces left in the scene towards the rightward-facing tomb owner. Some of them may also be ascribed to (often late Old Kingdom) provincial variations, created at a distance from the prevailing court styles of the earlier Old Kingdom. Examples of poses with one shoulder shown in three-quarter perspective occur in the tombs of Werirenptah, Iymery, Werkhu, Hemre-Isi, Pepiankh-hery-ib, and Ti.³⁰ Both shoulders appear bent forward towards the document, often with one arm obscured behind the other, in the tombs of Khafre-ankh, Pepiankh-hery-ib, Seshat-hotep, Nisut-nefer, Kahif, and Kaninisut.³¹ The most striking example is on a loose block from the tomb of Neferherenptah at Giza (G 4311; fig. 8). The pre-

²⁹ Ti (Saqqara): Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 167. Additional examples of pose 4, not shown in fig. 6, may be found in the tombs of Senedjemib-Mehi (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 74c; and Kaemnofret (Giza), unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 7375 (January 9, 1936), A 7334 (January 3, 1936); Nebet (Saqqara): Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut*, p. 60, pls. I.4 and 13, p. 63, pl. 14, and p. 70, pl. 17.

³⁰ Werirenptah (Saqqara): James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae etc.*, Part 1, 2nd edition, pl. 29.2, no. 718; temp. Neferirkare or later, *PM 3*, 2nd ed., p. 699; Iymery: Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, figs. 26–27, pl. 12b = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 49a; Werkhu: Hassan, *Giza 5*, p. 248, fig. 106; Hemre-Isi: Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi 2*, pl. 19; Pepiankh-hery-ib: Blackman, *Meir 4*, pl. 16; Ti: Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 167. For an unusual Middle Kingdom example in the tomb of Khnumhotep (tomb 3) showing the *ss r nswt Nfr-htp* with two documents, one of them rolled, see P.E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan 1* (London, 1893), pl. 30.

³¹ Khafre-ankh: Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 9 = Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom*, p. 526, fig. 183; Pepiankh-hery-ib: Blackman, *Meir 4*, pl. 15; Seshat-hotep: Junker, *Giza 2*, p. 183, fig. 29; Nisut-nefer: Junker, *Giza 3*, p. 169, fig. 30; Kahif: Junker, *Giza 6*, p. 114, fig. 34, pl. 9; Kaninisut: Junker, *Giza 2*, p. 153, fig. 19.

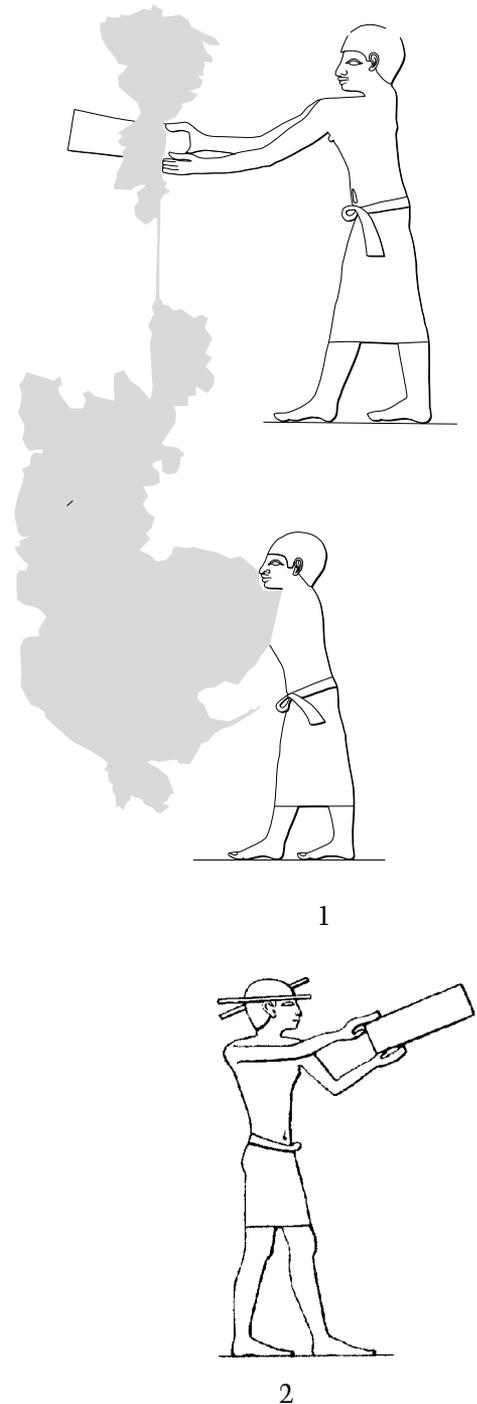


Fig. 7. Pose 5: “proffering” the document. (1) Kaninisut (Giza): fig. 2 and Junker, *Giza 2*, p. 153, fig. 19. (2) Tjenti (Giza): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 30, idem, *Ergänzungsband*, pl. 26.



Fig. 8. Digital drawing of loose block 37-7-21 from the tomb of Neferherentpah at Giza (G 4311; actually found in G 4341), based on MFA Expedition photograph B 8903 (December 11, 1937).

senter, a document keeper (*iry-mdꜣt*) appears in partial profile, with the left shoulder delineated and the breast protruding.

A few examples of officials seated while presenting documents are worth mentioning. In the tomb of Ptahhotep at Saqqara, a seated presenter places the document directly into the hands of the tomb owner.³² In the Giza tomb of Merib, an official sits holding a rolled up document with the caption (oriented to the tomb owner): *mꜣꜣ sš wꜣb-rd*, “Viewing the document of the reversion offerings.”³³ This same caption is oriented, not to the tomb owner but, unusually, to the document presenter, in the Giza tombs of both Seshat-hotep and Nisut-nefer (see the caption translations below).

THE ORIENTATION OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTED

An interesting question arises as to the orientation of the text on the papyrus document. Are the inscriptions written horizontally or vertically? It appears as if the papyrus is almost always a vertical one, with the text in columns rather than horizontal lines. Actual examples, such as the Hekanakhte letters, confirm such an orientation.³⁴ But it is possible that Egyptian representational perspective clouds the issue here, and one wonders if the scene is carved with one arm shown “above” the other in order not to obscure either part of the document or the hands of the presenter.

The question may be answered by three examples that actually preserve hieroglyphs on the papyrus document itself (Merib, Khaf-khufu I, and Fetekta; see figs. 1 and 4 [no. 2], 4 [no. 1] and 10, and 6 [no. 2]). These show the hieroglyphic text in a vertical, columnar arrangement. Note, however, by contrast that a seated scribe from the tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi shows a text being written horizontally. The caption above the scene states *sš imy-r pr imy ib nb=f Sni*, “The scribe and steward who is in the heart of his lord, Seni.” The document itself reads: *sꜣꜣ kꜣw ꜣwt 32,400*, “The production of cattle, large and small, 32,400.”³⁵

It is interesting to note several examples where the rolled ends of the papyrus are indicated in relief by additional carved lines (see fig. 9).³⁶

³² R.F.E. Paget and A.A. Pirie, *The Tomb of Ptah-hotep* (London, 1896, reprint 1989), p. 27, pl. 35.

³³ Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 22c = Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib*, pp. 32, 59. For a recently published Middle Kingdom example of a seated scribe, see Henry G. Fischer, *The Tomb of Ip at El Saff* (New York, 1995), rear wall, pls. 5 and G.

³⁴ T.G.H. James, *The Hekanakhte Papers and other early Middle Kingdom Documents* (New York, 1962). For discussions of papyrus manufacture, size, recto/verso and orientation of papyrus fibers, etc., cf. Jaroslav Černý, *Paper and Books in Ancient Egypt*; see also R. Parkinson and S. Quirke, *Papyrus* (Austin, 1995), B. André-Leicknam and C. Ziegler, *Naissance de l'écriture. cunéiformes et hiéroglyphes* (Paris, 1982), esp. pp. 340–57.



Fig. 9. Detail of the east wall of the tomb of Khafre-ankh at Giza (G 7948 = LG 75; MFA Expedition photograph A 7390, January 18, 1936).

This detail occurs, logically enough, almost exclusively in scenes where the presenter grasps the papyrus at the top and bottom, i.e., holding the two end rolls apart, exposing merely a portion of the text's contents (see poses 1, 3, and 4). One example even shows the fingers of the lower hand wrapped around the papyrus roll, which would logically be invisible in a modern perspective.³⁷ In poses where the papyrus is cradled, or held in the middle (pose 2), the end roll detail is absent from this representation.

³⁵ Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 1, pl. 11; for improvements on the translation, see Henry G. Fischer, "Notes, Mostly Textual, on Davies' *Deir el Gebrâwi*," *JARCE* 13 (1976), pp. 11–13. In the tomb of Pepiankh-hery-ib at Meir, there occurs a similar scene, although there is no text visible on the document itself; cf. Blackman, *Meir* 5, pl. 15. The caption above the scene reads: *sš m ʿwy ḥmt n ḥrt ibd 84*, "Registering the handiwork of female servants for the whole month, 84" (following Fischer, *JARCE* 13 [1976], p. 11).

³⁶ Cf. Khafre-ankh (G 7948 = LG 75): our fig. 9, and Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 9a, unpublished MFA Expedition photographs A 7390, 7398; Kanefer (Giza, G 2150): Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* 1, p. 441, fig. 262; Meresankh III (Giza, G 7530–40): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, pl. 2c, fig. 3b; Shetwi (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 9, p. 187, fig. 86; Perneb (Saqqara; now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art): Ransom-Williams, *The Decoration of the Tomb of Per-Neb*, pl. 6, Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt* 1, p. 92, fig. 51; Werkhu (Giza, LG 95): Hassan, *Giza* 5, p. 248, fig. 106; Hemet-re (Giza): Junker, *Giza* 6, pl. 56, fig. 40; Pepiankh-hery-ib (Meir): Blackman, *Meir* 4, pl. 15; Sekhemka (Giza, LG 51 = G 4411): Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 89c; Ti (Saqqara): Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pls. 19 and 167.

³⁷ Cf. Schäfer, *Von ägyptischer Kunst*, 4th edition, p. 147, fig. 126, p. 254 = *Principles of Egyptian Art*, p. 143, fig. 126, p. 253.

Fig. 10. North entrance thickness of the tomb of Khufu-khaf I at Giza (G 7130–7140; MFA Expedition photograph A 6747, December 20, 1931).



THE CONTENTS OF THE DOCUMENT

As noted above, the document presentation scene often occurs with no identifying caption whatsoever. In other cases, nothing more is stated other than the fact that the papyrus is offered *r m33*, “for inspection.”³⁸

In only three examples is the papyrus actually inscribed; a fourth shows a seated scribe writing the text. From Giza, two of the examples

³⁸ See the tomb of Ti at Saqqara, Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 167.

show carved numbers on the document itself, and a third, damaged scene from Saqqara contains painted signs. Other examples may once have contained texts in paint only, which has since disappeared. Below is given a list of the contents of the documents, wherever they are specifically stated in our corpus. The first three entries, Merib, Khaf-khufu I and Fetekta, contain inscriptions directly on the documents.

Merib (Giza; figs. 1 and 4 [no. 2]). The document is presented by the sealer of the festival perfume, but more than just unguents are listed in the text:

200,000 t 40,000 ḥnkt 3,300 pꜣt 500 šꜣtt 500 iwꜣ 400 mꜣ-ḥꜣ 200 sr 400 tꜣp

Bread: 200,000, beer: 40,000, cakes: 3,300, *shatjet*-food: 500, oxen: 500, oryx: 400, *ser-geese*: 200, *tjerep-geese*: 400³⁹

Khaf-khufu I (Giza; figs. 4 [no. 1] and 10). The overall caption to the scene mentions viewing the invocation offerings. Since no other scene is present on this jamb, one can assume the documents contain lists of *pꜣt-ḥꜣw*:⁴⁰

Document of Wetka: tꜣ [...] [ḥnktꜣ] 200,000 pꜣt 200,000 [...] 400 tꜣpꜣ 300 [...] 600ꜣ

Bread: [...], [beer?] 200,000, cakes 200,000, [...] 400, *tjerep-geese*? 300, [...] 600?

Document of Iunka: tꜣ 30,000 ḥnkt 30,000 pꜣt 20,000 ḥnkt 20,000 [...] 400ꜣ [...] srꜣ 200ꜣ [...] 200 [...] 200 tꜣpꜣ 200 sꜣ 200

Bread: 30,000, beer 30,000, cakes 20,000, beer 20,000 [...] 400ꜣ, *ser-geese*? 200ꜣ [...] 200, [...] 200, *tjerep-geese*? 200, *se-geese*? 200

Fetekta, (South Abusir; fig. 6 [no. 2]): [...] pꜣ [...] nswt [...], [...] estate [...] king [...] ⁴¹

Ibi, Deir el-Gebrawi: sꜣꜣ kꜣw ꜣwt 32,400, The production of cattle, large and small, 32,400⁴²

Khentkaues (Giza), Ptah-hotep (Saqqara), Sekhemka (Giza): nꜣt-ḥꜣ, offerings⁴³

Seshat-hotep (Giza), Nisut-nefer (Giza), Merib (Giza): wꜣb-rd, reversion offerings⁴⁴

Kaninisut (Giza): sꜣ n niwt n pꜣ-dt, document of towns of the funerary estate⁴⁵

Meresankh III (Giza): sꜣ n ḥmw-kꜣ, document of funerary priests⁴⁶

Shetwi (Giza): sꜣ r mꜣꜣ pꜣt-ḥꜣw, inspection of the invocation offerings⁴⁷

³⁹ Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib*, pp. 23, 32, 58 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 22b.

⁴⁰ The document numbers, difficult to read in the drawing, are not translated in Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, pp. 12–13, pl. 17b, fig. 29. No MFA Expedition photographs of the scene taken straight on exist for “remote collation;” the scene needs additional study at Giza.

⁴¹ Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 96. On the recently rediscovered tomb: M. Verner, “The Tomb of Fetekta and a Late Dyn. 5–Early Dyn. 6 Cemetery in South Abusir,” *MDAIK* 50 (1994), pp. 294–305.

⁴² Davies, *Deir el-Gebrawi* 1, pl. 11; Fischer, *JARCE* 13 (1976), pp. 11–13.

⁴³ Khentkaues: Junker, *Giza* 7, p. 73, fig. 31; Ptah-hotep: Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1937–1938*, vol. 2, *Mastabas of Nyankh-Pepy and Others*, p. 49, pl. 44; Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1, pl. 9; Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs, Part 1, Reversals*, pp. 73 and 75, fig. 76; Sekhemka: Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 89c.

⁴⁴ Seshat-hotep: Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 183, fig. 29; Nisut-nefer: Junker, *Giza* 3, p. 169, fig. 30; Merib: Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib*, pp. 23, 32, 58 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 22b.

⁴⁵ Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 153, fig. 19.

⁴⁶ Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, p. 9, pl. 2c, fig. 3b.

Qar (Giza): *s3hw ʿs3w*, numerous glorifications⁴⁸

Kagemni (Saqqara): three captions list livestock: *mḏt sš n ʿwt*, document of the list of goats,

mḏt n iw3 imy mḏt document of oxen in the stall, and

mḏt n wnḏw, document of short-horned cattle

Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (Saqqara): *sš n iḥt bnrt*, document of sweet things⁴⁹

TEXTS ACCOMPANYING THE PRESENTATION SCENE

About twenty-six examples were gathered where the action of presentation itself is described with a caption. With a few notable exceptions, the phrase most often begins with an infinitival form of the verb *rdi*, and varies from a few words to an entire descriptive sentence. Attested forms of the verb(s) include *di*, *di.t*, *rdi* and *rdi.t*. Other initial narrative infinitives include *3wt* “extending/spreading out,” *sḥ.(t)* “proffering,” and *šd.t* “reciting.”

The orientation arrows used below always refer to the direction in which the hieroglyphs face, for example, ← indicates .⁵⁰ In the following passages, additional texts containing names and titles are omitted (for the titles of the document presenters, see the discussion above).

Pose 1: Rashepses, Saqqara LS 16 (Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 64a)



di sš

Presenting the document

Pose 1: Kaemnofret, Giza LG 63 (Badawy, *The Tombs of Iteti, Sekhemʿnkh-Ptah, and Kaemnofret at Giza*, fig. 29 = Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 91c)



rdi[...] sš [...]

Presenting the document [...]

Pose 1: Khentkaues, Giza (Junker, *Giza* 7, p. 73, fig. 31)



rdit sš n nḏt-ḥr

Presenting the document of offerings

Pose 1: Shetwi, Giza (Junker, *Giza* 9, p. 187, fig. 86)



⁴⁷ Junker, *Giza* 9, p. 187, fig. 86.

⁴⁸ Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu*, p. 9 and fig. 28.

⁴⁹ Moussa and Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, scene 15.2, p. 103, pl. 34 and fig. 13

⁵⁰ On the confusion in the use of orientation arrows, see Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, Part 1, *Reversals*, p. 5.

(1) Presenting the document of the funerary priests (2) for inspection, by (3) the overseer of funerary priest(s), Khemetnu

Pose 4: Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, Saqqara (Moussa and Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, scene 15.2, p. 103, pl. 34 and fig. 13)



sš n iht bnrt

Document of sweet things

Pose 4: Ti, Saqqara (Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 167)



rdit (r) mꜣ

Presenting (for)⁵³ inspection

Pose 4: Ti, Saqqara, (Wild, *Tombeau de Ti*, pl. 44)



rdi sš r mꜣꜣ

Presenting the document for inspection

This is the only example so far to show the *sš* sign oriented correctly in a left-to-right inscription. This indicates that Gunn was correct in noticing the Egyptians' confusion or reluctance to reverse the scribal hieroglyph in texts written from left to right.⁵⁴

Pose 4: Mereruka, Saqqara (Duell et. al., *Mereruka* 1, pl. 51)



ꜣwt sš

Extending/spreading out the document

Pose 4: Kagemni, Saqqara (von Bissing, *Gem-ni-kai* 1, pl. 12 = Wreszinski, *Atlas* 3, pl. 87)



sir mdꜣst sš n ꜣwt

Proffering the document of the list of goats

This passage must contain both the words *mdꜣst* and *sš* since *mdꜣst* is never written with  as a determinative.⁵⁵

Pose 4: Hemre-Isi, Deir el-Gebrawi (Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 19; Fischer, *JARCE* 13 [1976], p. 13)



sir mdꜣst sš

Proffering the document of the list

As Fischer has noted, *ssꜣ* here must be a mistake for *sir*.

⁵³ The arrangement for the signs allows for the interpretation of a dittography, a second *r* serving as the preposition.

⁵⁴ C.M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* 1 (Cairo, 1926), p. 147, n. 1.

⁵⁵ On the verb *sir*, see *Wb.* 4, 32.14; Fischer, *JARCE* 13 (1976), p. 13 with n. 10 (for this reference I am grateful to Edward Brovanski), citing Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire*, pp. 114–15; Hans Kayser, *Die Mastaba des Uhemka. Ein Grab in der Wüste* (Hannover, 1964), pp. 36–37.

Pose 4: Za-ib, Giza G 2092+2093: A.M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, Giza Mastabas 6 (Boston, 1995), p. 110, pls. 68b and 172c



... r mꜣꜣ imy-r pr...

... for inspection (by) the steward...

Pose 5: Kaninisut, Giza G 2155 (Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 153, fig. 19)



rdit sꜣ niwwt n[t pr dt s]ꜣ ip rmtw

Presenting the document of the towns of [the funerary estate, and the list of the census of people

Pose 5: Tjenti, Giza G 4920 = LG 47 (Lepsius, *Denkmaeler* 2, pl. 30; Lepsius, *Ergänz.* pl. 26; Junker, *Giza* 3, pp. 38–39; [MFA Expedition photograph A 7178]; Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* 1, pp. 214(10), 312(n)



rdi sꜣ r mꜣꜣ [...] pr dt

Presenting the document for inspection [...] of the funerary estate

Note here the scribal equipment sign precedes the full spelling of sꜣ.

Pose uncertain (figure erased): Ankhmahor Sesi, Saqqara (Badawy, *The Tomb of Nyhetep-Ptah at Giza and the Tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara*, p. 32, fig. 41, pl. 54 (erased); *Urk.* 1, 203.7 = Jean Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah*, pl. 49.63; Schott, *Bücher und Bibliotheken*, p. 332, § 1503



(1) šd.t n=f sꜣ (2) n kꜣrst=f dyt (3) n=f m ḥtp di nswt

(1) Reciting to him the document (2) for his burial equipment which was given (3) to him as a ḥtp-di-nswt

REVERSALS

We have already discussed variations on the pose of the document presenter. What we might term “reversals” in the presentation scene often consist of the mꜣꜣ sꜣ texts (“Viewing the document...”) that should face the same direction as the tomb owner instead facing the same direction as the presenting official.⁵⁶ Additional reversals involve the scribal palette . Gunn noted that  is often reversed  in texts written from left to right (i.e., the opposite of the hieratic *Vorlage*), since the scribe neglected to make the customary reversal.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Wehemka (Giza D 117): Kayser, *Die Mastaba des Uhemka*, p. 37 (mꜣꜣ sꜣ); Nisut-nefer (Giza G 4970): Junker, *Giza* 3, p. 169, fig. 30 (mꜣꜣ sꜣ n wꜣb-rd); Seshat-hotep (Giza G 5150 = LG 36): Junker, *Giza* 2, p. 183, fig. 29 (mꜣꜣ sꜣ n wꜣb-rd); Duaenre (Giza G 5110): unpublished, MFA Expedition photographs B 7990 [January 10, 1932] and A 3654 [September 20, 1925].

⁵⁷ C.M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* 1 (Cairo, 1926), p. 147 n. 1. Examples in our corpus may be found in the tombs of Merib, Meresankh III, Khaf-khufu I, Seshat-hotep, Nisut-nefer, Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, and Kaninisut (see the translations above in the section on texts accompanying the presentation scene).

In order to avoid possible confusion, it should be mentioned that no reversal of administrative duties exists in the tomb of Meresankh III. In the caption "Presenting the document of the funerary priests for inspection by the overseer of funerary priests, Khemetnu," the phrase "by the overseer of funerary priests, Khemetnu" (*in imy-r hmw-k3 Hmt-n(w)*) refers of course to the presenting, not the inspecting. It is Meresankh III herself (and not Khemetnu) who will do the inspecting (fig. 11).⁵⁸

Occasionally, different portions of the hieroglyphic caption are reversed in accordance with the individuals and actions they refer to. Noteworthy examples may be found in the tombs of Kahif at Giza and Ptah-hotep at Saqqara.⁵⁹ But an additional example cited in the literature is actually no example at all, but rather is based on a Lepsius copy error. At Giza, Iymery's presentation scene shows the verb *m33* ("viewing") oriented with the tomb owner; the verb *innt* describing the articles being brought appears reversed in orientation with the offering bearers who do the "bringing." In fact, no reversal of the verb *ini* sign is present; the  sign faces right along with the rest of the inscription.⁶⁰

CHRONOLOGY OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTATION SCENE

To judge from the corpus assembled here, the earliest examples of the presentation scene occur in the tombs Khaf-khufu I (G 7130–7140, Khafre), Nikaure (LG 87, Khafre to Shepseskaf),⁶¹ Hemet-re (Giza central field, Khafre to Userkaf), Meresankh III (G 7530–7540, Shepseskaf), Duaenre (G 5110; Shepseskaf), and Merib (G 2100-1, Shepseskaf to Unas).

A survey of the corpus by date indicates that the documentation scene occurs most frequently in the second half of Dynasty 5. In fact, the tomb with the greatest number of document presenters (11 examples) comes from the double mastaba of Nebet and Khenut (temp. Unas).⁶²

⁵⁸ The full caption reads: *rdi.t s3 n hmw-k3 r m33 in imy-r hmw-k3 Hmt-n(w)*, "Presenting the document of the funerary priests for inspection, by the overseer of funerary priests, Khemetnu."

⁵⁹ Kahif: north wall of chapel (Pepi II), Junker, *Giza 6*, p. 127, fig. 40; Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, Part 1, *Reversals*, pp. 73–74, fig. 75; Ptah-hotep I: south wall (middle or late reign of Isesi); cf. Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1937–1938*, vol. 2, *Mastabas of Nyankh-Pepy and Others*, p. 49, pl. 44; Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I*, pl. 9; Fischer, *Reversals*, pp. 73 and 75, fig. 76.

⁶⁰ The incorrect drawing, with the  sign facing left, is in Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 49a, and Fischer, *Reversals*, p. 72, fig. 74. The correct drawing may be found in Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, figs. 26–27, pl. 12b. Note that the document presenter is incorrectly drawn in all three examples, and should show two arms (not one) in pose 1. Cf. "An Old Kingdom Epigraphic Minutia (or: When a Reversal is not a reversal)," *Jubilatem Kollegi. Studies in Memory of Abdel Aziz F. Sadek, Varia Aegyptiaca 10* (San Antonio, 1996), forthcoming.

⁶¹ Lepsius, *Denkmaeler 2*, pl. 15.

Fig. 11. South entrance thickness of the tomb of Meresankh III at Giza (G 7530–7540; MFA Expedition photograph A 5593, June 5, 1930).



Pose 1 occurs particularly often in the reigns of Niuserre and later. There is no particular chronological evolution from one pose to another; all five poses occur simultaneously, at least as far as the examples gathered reveal (pose 5, for example, is very rare).

⁶² Munro, *Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut*, pls. I.4, II.3, 13, 14, 17, 19, 38.

CONCLUSIONS

The presentation of the document can occur on nearly any wall of an Old Kingdom private tomb, from entrance facades and thicknesses (jambs) to chapel walls. In other words, anywhere a large scale figure of the tomb owner is present, a documentation presentation may take place. The document presenter is always male, and may bear familial relation to the tomb owner, but is rarely explicitly labelled as anything but an official. He often bears titles associated with (royal document) scribes, stewards, magistrates and funerary priests. Captions identifying the presenter and describing the scene are often absent; only about twenty-six out of more than seventy examples of the scene bore such inscriptions, although the nature of some early publications (e.g., Lepsius, *Denkmaeler*) makes it difficult to confirm exact numbers. When captions describing either the presenter's action or the supervision of the tomb owner are present, a few interesting examples of hieroglyphic reversals occur, orienting the signs to the appropriate individuals involved.

The five poses of both presenter and tomb owner recipient display a wide variety, but the most common is pose 1, showing the presenter standing with front arm bent down at the elbow holding one end of the papyrus from above, and supporting the lower end with the back hand (fig. 3). The recipient tomb owner stands (rather than sits) most frequently with a staff in the "front" hand and a handkerchief in the "back" hand.

The document itself is inscribed in only three examples (noted above), but painted hieroglyphs might have disappeared from many examples. The contents of the document are either mentioned explicitly in the accompanying caption, must be gleaned from the surrounding offerings, or must be assumed to be generic in cases where no inscriptions are present. From the clearer examples, the papyri show a wide range of lists: invocation offerings (*prt-hrw*), reversion offerings (*wdb-rd*), *ndt-hr*-offerings, festival perfume, rosters of funerary priests, of towns of the funerary estate, of livestock, and even sweets. The earliest examples of the scene occur at Giza during the reign of Khafre, but the highpoint of attested examples comes from the reigns of Niuserre and his immediate successors, in the second half of the Fifth Dynasty.



SCHOLARS FROM AROUND THE WORLD HAVE GATHERED HERE to contribute sixty-eight articles in honor of their friend and colleague, William Kelly Simpson, one of the most distinguished Egyptologists of his generation. The topics include archaeological expedition reports, art-historical essays, philological treatises, and historical analyses. The focus is on Egypt during 3,000 years of ancient pharaonic history, but Nubian and Aegean studies are also well represented. The volume contains 232 photographs, numerous line drawings, and a comprehensive bibliography of W. K. Simpson's Egyptological writings through 1996.

