Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson

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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.
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 Bowerski for very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
⁴ Meresankh III (c. 7530–7540): Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, Giza Mastabas 1 (Boston, 1974), pl. 2a, fig. 3b; Hemet-re: Selim Hassan, Excavations at Giza 6, pt. 3, 1934–1935 [Cairo, 1956], p. 56, fig. 46; Idut: R. Macmullain, Le Mastaba d’Idout [Cairo, 1935], pl. 20, Khemskaoua, 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, or even in a sedan chair. 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. 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: ūnt səs n stf-hr/pft-hrw innt m ntswt n pr ɢt... “Overseeing the [document of] offerings which are brought from the towns of the funerary estate...”

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imy-r pr</td>
<td>steward(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imy-r hm(w)-$k</td>
<td>overseer of funerary priests(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lsy-pr</td>
<td>hereditary prince(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lry mf$z</td>
<td>document keeper(^d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lyny sit-hb</td>
<td>sealer of the festival perfume(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lry-hb smsw</td>
<td>eldest lector priest(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s isnswt</td>
<td>king's ass(^d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snf smsw mry-r lry-tp nswt</td>
<td>has eldest and beloved son, at the head of the king(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sib imy-r s$</td>
<td>magistrare, overseer of scribes(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sib s$</td>
<td>magistrare, scribe(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sib shf s$</td>
<td>magistrare, inspector of scribes(^k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sib s$ shf lmmw-$k</td>
<td>magistrare, scribe, inspector of funerary priests(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snft sib s$</td>
<td>estate brother, magistrare, scribe(^m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shf s$ nswt (s$) / prw imy-r hm(w)-$k</td>
<td>inspector of royal document scribes, [scribe] of workcrews, overseer of funerary priests(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s$</td>
<td>scribe(^o)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s$ nswt ssf</td>
<td>royal document scribe, his son(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s$ lmm-$k pr-s$</td>
<td>scribe of funerary priest(s) of the palace(^l)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s$ lmm-$k</td>
<td>scribe, funerary priest(^l)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lks-nswt snf pr</td>
<td>king's nobleman, companion of the house(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lks-nswt shf lmm(w)-ntr</td>
<td>king's nobleman, inspector of funerary priests(^x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntr shf s$</td>
<td>[scribe], inspector of scribes(^m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Werirni (Davies, Sheikh Said), pl. 16, Pernich (Saqqara, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art).
d Hemet-re (Giza): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 18 (figure above, damaged).
f Neferiretenef (Saqqara): van de Walle, *Neferirtenef*, pl. 12; Meresankh III (Giza): Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, pl. 2c, figs. 3b and 12.
g Neferherenptah (Giza, g. 4311): unpublished, MFA 37–7–21, Expedition photograph B 8903; and our figs. 5 (no. 8) and 8.
k Nofer I (Giza): Junker, *Gîza 6*, p. 37, fig. 5.
m Khnum-hotep (Giza, Fakhry no. 8): unpublished; MFA Expedition photograph A 7177.
n Hemre-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 2, pl. 18 (figure above, damaged).
p Pash-hotep (Saqqara) iii 31: Lepsius, *Denkmäler 2*, pl. 102a.
qu I (Giza): Junker, *Gîza 6*, p. 37, fig. 5.
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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 Ka-hay 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 Werini at Sheikh Said 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 Said, 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’Akhethotep (Paris, 1993), pp. 34, 117.
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.
form, most likely an unrolled papyrus rather than a stiff writing tablet. In the chapel of Kaninisut from Giza (c. 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 (c. 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

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 (c. 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 *tnwy st*, “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 *rdšt.t*, which suggests that the

15 Cf. Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 9a (= MFA Expedition photographs A 7380 [Jan. 18, 1936] and A 7389 [Jan. 21, 1936], both unpublished).
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)?
official physically hands the document over to the tomb owner. Other verbs used to describe the scene are ḫw.t "extending," or "spreading out" and s¡™.(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 rd¡ 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 rd¡ sß would have to refer to presenting the contents of the document, i.e., the information. The caption rd¡t sß 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 Ankhamhotep Sekh. Utk. 1, 203.7 = Jean Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah (Bruxelles, 1907), pl. 49 63 = Schott, Bücher und Bibliotheken, p. 332 § 1503: ḫd.t n≠f sß n ˚rst≠f dyt n≠f m ¢tp d¡ nswt, "Reciting to him the document for his burial equipment which was given to him as a ¢tp-d¡-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, Mem 3, pl. 23 (tomb 84, Ukh-hotep, son of Ukh-hotep and Mersi): ḫd.t sß in šry-hb hry-tp sß m∂£wt Ìnw s£ W∞-¢tp, "Reading the document by the chief lector priest, scribe of the books, Henu's son Ukh-hotep."
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(additional examples occur under the other poses described below). In another case, the tomb owner extends his left hand, palm open, to receive the document.

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." 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).

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-ini: Davies, Sheikh Said, pl. 16; Khentkaues-Giza: Junker, Giza 7, p. 73, fig. 31; Neferbaahtah and Iymery (Giza): Weeks, Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000 Biceps, 9 (= Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, p. 56a) and 27 (= Fischer, Orientation of Hieroglyphs, Part 1, Reversals, p. 72, fig. 74, and Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, p. 49a); Rashpes (Saqqara): Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, pl. 61a; Pernih (Saqqara): Ransom-Williams, The Decoration of the Tomb of Pac-Neb, pl. 6, and Hayes, The Sceptor of Egypt 1, p. 92, fig. 51, and H.G. Fischer, in Kestner des Alten Reiches (Mainz am Rhein, 1993), p. 83, fig. 2, Wyclifu (Giza): Hassan, Giza 5, p. 248, fig. 108 (= Lepsius, Ergänzungsbänd, pl. 58, Hemnet-re (Giza): Junker, Giza 6, pl. 56, fig. 40, Ptah-hotep (Saqqara), i.e. 31: Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, pl. 102a, and Rawen (Giza), Lepsius, Ergänzungsbänd, pl. 25, P. Münster, 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 (Wer-enenptah from Saqqara, temp. Neferirkare or later, PM 3, 2nd ed., p. 699).

23 Moussa and Ahlmann, The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay, pl. 28a.

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,[25] 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 [1], presenter figures hold a rolled up document on the south thickness and an open one on the north thickness; Junker, Giza 6, p. 56, fig. 5. Additional examples of pose 2, not shown in fig. 4, may be found in the tombs of Inti (Deshasha): W.M.F. Petrie, Deshasha (London, 1890), pl. 13 = N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane, Deshasha. The Tombs of Inti, Shedu and Others (Sydney, 1999), p. 25, pl. 28; Hemere-Isi (Deir el-Gebrawi): Davies, Deir el-Gebrawi 2, pl. 18; Duaenre (Giza) unpublished; MFA Expedition photographs A 6762, B 5766, A 6759; Khnumhotep (Giza): A. Faidley, Sept tombeaux à l’est de la grande pyramide de Caeche (Cairo, 1935), figs. 7; MFA Expedition photographs A 7177 (July 19, 1935), A 6985 (May 28, 1932), Seret; Giza: Giza 4710 + tc 49, unpublished; MFA Expedition photographs A 7032 (February 21, 1938), A 7140 (June 30, 1933); Hemere-Isi (Giza): Junker, Giza 11, p. 209; unpublished; MFA Expedition photographs A 7465–66 (February 19, 1936); Hemere-Isi (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 Khemu, 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, Gizeh IV, pl. 13. Additional examples of pose 3, not shown in fig. 5, may be found in the tombs of Rasphres (Saqqara): Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 84a, Khnumhotep (Giza): Broszski, Giza Mastabas, forthcoming, and Niusi (Giza): Lepsius, Ergänzungsband, pl. 80; Nebet (Saqqara): Munro, Der Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I. Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khemu, p. 70, pl. 19 (three examples) and p. 66, pls II.3 and 38.

28 Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (Saqqara): Mossoa and Altenmüller, Das Grab des Niankhkhnum und Khnumhotep, 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 (c. 2092-2003): 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 bot-
tom (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, how-
ever, the discussion above under costume and equipment of the present-
er, 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 represen-
tational perspective, with torsos and arms in three-quarter or true pro-
file 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 Khaïr-anhk, Pepiankh-hery-ib, Seshat-hotep, Nisut-
nefer, Kahið, and Kaninisut.31 The most striking example is on a loose
block from the tomb of Neferherenptah at Giza (c. 4511, 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, Denkmäler 2, pl.
74a, and Karamnoet (Giza), unpublished: MFA Expedition photographs A 747E (January 9,
Das Doppelgrab der Königsinnen Nebet und Khmun, p. 60, pls. 14 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, no. 718; temp. Neferirkare or later, PM 3, 2nd ed., p. 699; Iymery: Weeks,
Mastaba of Cemetery G 6000, figs. 24–27, pl. 12b – Lepsius, Denkmäler 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 Knumhotep (tomb 3) showing the sit r
nswt Nfr-¢tp with two documents, one of them rolled, see P.E. Newberry, Beni Hasa
n 1 (London, 1893), pl. 80.

31 Khafre-ankh: Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 9 – Harper, Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of
the Old Kingdom, p. 526, fig. 183; Pepiankh-hery-ib: Blackman, Meir 4, pl. 15, Seshat-
hotep: Junker, Giza 5, p. 183, fig. 29; Nisut-nefer: Junker, Giza 5, p. 169, fig. 30, Kahið:
Junker, Giza 6, p. 114, fig. 34, pl. 9, Kaninisut: Junker, Giza 2, p. 153, fig. 19.
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senter, a document keeper (íry-m∂£t) 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): miss s∂w∂b-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, Khal-khulu 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 ss ìmy- wnętrrímby nb≠f Sn¡, “The scribe and steward who is in the heart of his lord, Seni.” The document itself reads: s™™ k£w ™wt 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

33 Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, pl. 22c = Priese, Die Oplenkamer 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 saīf (New York, 1995), rear wall, pls. 5 and G.
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. 13, 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-her-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: st m nym hmr n h.l tbd 84. “Registering the handiwork of female servants for the whole month, 84” (following Fischer, JARCE 13 [1976], p. 11).

36 Cf. Khafre-ankh (c 7948 = c 75): our fig. 9, and Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, pl. 9a, unpublished MFA Expedition photographs A 7390, 7398, Kemener [Giza, c 2350]: Reisner, Giza Necropolis 1, p. 441, fig. 362, Meresankh III [Giza, c 7530-40]: Dunham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Meresankh III, pl. 2c, fig. 3b, Shetwi [Giza]: Junker, Giza 9, fig. 187, fig. 86, Fornet [Saqqara, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art]: Ransom-Williams, The Decoration of the Tomb of Per-Neb, pl. 6, Haruo, The Scepter of Egypt 1, p. 92, fig. 53, Werkhu [Giza, c 95]: Hassan, Giza 5, p. 248, fig. 106, Hemet-rc [Giza]: Junker, Giza 6, pl. 56, fig. 4b, Pepiankh-her-ih [Meir]: Blackman, Meir 4, pl. 15, Sekhemka [Giza, c 51 = c 441]: Lepsius, Denkmaeler 2, pl. 89c, Ti [Saqqara]: Wild, Tombeau de Ti, pls. 19 and 167.

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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 ‘for inspection.’

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 ¢n˚t 3,300 p£t 500 ߣ†t 500 ¡w£ 400 m£-¢∂ 200 sr 400 †rp


Document of Iunka: t? 30,000 ¢n˚t 30,000 p£t 20,000 ¢n˚t 20,000 [...], 400?, ser-geese? 200? [...], 200, [...], 200, tjerep-geese? 200, se-geese? 200

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

Ibi, Deir el-Gebrâwi; Davies, Deir el-Gebrâwi 1, pl. 11, Fischer, JARCE 13 [1976], pp. 11–13.

Khentkaues (Giza), Ptah-hotep (Saqqara), Sekhemka (Giza): n∂t-¢r, offerings

Seshat-hotep (Giza), Nisut-nefer (Giza), Merib (Giza): w∂b-rd, reversion offerings

Kaninisut (Giza): sß n n¡wt n pr-∂t, document of towns of the funerary estate

Meresankh III (Giza): sß n ¢mw-k£, document of funerary priests

Shetwi (Giza): sß r m££ prt-∞rw, inspection of the invocation offerings

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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 *rdjt*, and varies from a few words to an entire descriptive sentence. Attested forms of the verb(s) include *djt*, *djt.t*, *rdjt*, and *rdjt.t*. Other initial narrative infinitives include *rwt* “extending/spreading out,” *s Habit.Ç* “proffering,” and *ßd.t* “reciting.”

The orientation arrows used below always refer to the direction in which the hieroglyphs face, for example, 🌂 indicates 🌂. 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 16 [Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 64a]

![Image 1](image1.png)

Presenting the document

Pose 1: Kaemnofret, Giza 63 [Badawy, The Tombs of Iteti, Sekhemkhet-Ptah, and Kaemnofret at Giza, fig. 29 = Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 91c]

![Image 2](image2.png)

Presenting the document [...]

Pose 1: Khentkaues, Giza [Junker, Gîza 7, p. 73, fig. 31]

![Image 3](image3.png)

Presenting the document of offerings

Pose 1: Shetwi, Giza [Junker, Gîza 9, p. 187, fig. 86]

![Image 4](image4.png)

Presenting the document

47 Junker, Gîza 9, p. 187, fig. 86.


49 Moussa and Altenmüller, Das Grab des Niankhchemun und Khnumhotep, 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.
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Presenting the document for inspection of the invocation offerings

Pose 1: Neferbauptah, Giza c. 6010 [Weeks, Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000, fig. 9]

Presenting the document for inspection

Pose 2A: Seneb, Giza [Junker, Gîza 5, p. 89, fig. 22]

Presenting the document of the funerary estate

Pose 2A: Merib, Giza 2100–1 [Priese, Die Opferkammer des Merib, pp. 46, 48, Junker, Gîza 2, p. 128, fig. 11, Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 22 b, Harpur, Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom, p. 472, fig. 62], E. El-Metwally, Entwicklung der Grabdekoration in den altägyptischen Privatgräbern [Wiesbaden, 1992], p. 210, fig. 27

Presenting the document by the sealer of the festival perfume


(1) Presenting the document by the king's son Wetka

(2) Presenting the document by the king's son Iunka


Viewing the document

Pose 2A: Meresankh III, Giza c. 7340–7350 [Danham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, p. 20, fig. 12, pl. 12a, El-Metwally, Entwicklung der Grabdekoration in den altägyptischen Privatgräbern, p. 231, fig. 29]

(1) Viewing the document (by?) (2) the steward and overseer of funerary priest(s), (3) possessor of veneration before his lord every day, (4) the scribe Khemetnu junior.
Pose 2A: Qar (Giza: Simpson, The Mastabas of Qar and Idu, p. 9 and fig. 28).
(1) ßd t s£∞w ™ß£w (2) in hry-¢b smsw (3) ¡m£∞w ∞r n†r ™£ Q£r
Reciting numerous glorifications (2) by the eldest lector priest, (3) possessor of veneration before the great god, Qar

Pose 3A: Sekhemka, Giza c. 4411 (Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 89a)
zedi s i n nuf-¢r
Presenting the document of offerings

Pose 3A: Puahhotep I, Saqqara (Hassan, Excavations at Saqqara, 1927–1938, 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)
‡£ sß n n∂t-¢r
Presenting the document of the offerings

Pose 3A: Seshat-hotep, Giza g 5150 = lg 36 (Junker, Gîza 2, p. 183, fig. 29)
m££ sß n w∂b-rd
Viewing the document of the reversion offerings

Pose 3A: Nisut-nefer, Giza g 4970 (Junker, Gîza 3, p. 169, fig. 30)
m££ sß n w∂b-rd
Viewing the document of the reversion offerings

Pose 3B: Kagemni, Saqqara (von Bissing, Gem-ni-kai 1, pl. 13)
[1] $m£ £ ≈ s¡™ m∂£t n wn∂w
[Overseeing (?) the proffering?] of the document of short-horned cattle

Pose 4: Meresankh III, Giza c. 7340–7350 (Dunham and Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Meryankh III, p. 9, pl. 2e, fig. 3b, Urk. 1, 157.5)
(1) n‡t s i n hµw-¢r (2) n m‰ n (3) ¡m£ n hµw-¢ £ n µw
[52 On the verb s¡™, see Fischer, JARCE 13 (1976), pp. 11–13; Pierre Montet, Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombes égyptiennes de l’ancien empire (Strasbourg, 1922), pp. 114–15 (mostly citing Kagemni).

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)

Document of sweet things

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

Presenting (for) inspection

This is the only example so far to show the 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.

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

Extending/spreading out the document

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

Proffering the document of the list of goats

This passage must contain both the words m∂£t and sß since m∂£t is never written with sß as a determinative.

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

Proffering the document of the list

As Fischer has noted, sss here must be a mistake for sß.

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

54 C.M. Firth and B. Gunn, Tombs Pyramid-Cemeteries 1 [Cairo, 1926], p. 147, n. 1.

Pose 4: Za-ib, Giza (Junker, Giza 2, p. 153, fig. 19)

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

Note here the scribal equipment sign precedes the full spelling of $sß$.

Pose uncertain (figure erased): Ankhmahor Sesi, Saqqara (Badawy, The Tomb of Nyhetep-Ptah at Giza and the Tomb of ™Ankhm™ 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) Reciting to him the document (2) for his burial equipment which was given (3) to him as a $¢tp-d¡-nswt$

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 miss-s' texts ("Viewing the document...") that should face the same direction as the tomb owner instead facing the same direction as the presenting official. Additional reversals involve the scribal palette $v$. Gunn noted that $v$ 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.

56 Wاهتمامka (Giza D 117): Kayser, Die Mastaba des Ulhemka, p. 37 (miss s'); Nisut-nefer (Giza c. 4970): Junker, Giza 3, p. 169, fig. 80 (miss s' n yblv-ll); Seshat-hotep (Giza c. 5150 = 1c 56): Junker, Giza 2, p. 183, fig. 28 (miss s' n yblv-ll); Duaneer (Giza c. 5110: unpublished, MFA Expedition photographs B 7990 [January 10, 1932] and A 3654 [September 20, 1925]).

57 C.M. Firth and B. Gunn, Titii Pyramid Cemeteries 1 (Cairo, 1926), p. 147 n. 1. Examples in our corpus may be found in the tombs of Menê, Mersankh III, Khai-khuti I, Seshat-hotep, Nisut-nefer, Niankhkhu and Khnumhotep, and Kaminisut (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 inty-t hnw-kr Hrtn-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 m££ (“viewing”) oriented with the tomb owner; the verb ¡nnt describing the articles being brought appears reversed in orientation with the offering bearers who do the “bringing.” In fact, no reversal of the verb ¡nnt sign is present, the µ 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 ([c. 7130–7140, Khafre], Nikaure ([c. 87, Khafre to Shepseskaf],61 Hemet-re (Giza central field, Khafre to Userkaf), Meresankh III ([c. 7530–7540, Shepseskaf], Duaenre ([c. 5110, Shepseskaf], and Merib ([c. 2100–1, Shepseskaf to Unas).62

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 s n ¢mw-k£ r m££ ¡n ¡my-r ¢mw-k£ Ómt-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, Gîza 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 Nyâmkh-Pepy and Others, p. 49, pl. 44; Murray, Saqqara Mastabas III, pl. 9; Fischer, Reversals, pp. 73 and 75, fig. 76.

60 The incorrect drawing, with the µ sign facing left, is in Lepsius, Denkmäler 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),” Jubiläum Kolleg. Studies in Memory of Abdel Aziz F. Sadek, Varia Aegyptiaca 10 (San Antonio, 1996), forthcoming.

61 Lepsius, Denkmäler 2, pl. 15.
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).


Fig. 11. South entrance thickness of the tomb of Meresankh III at Giza (c. 7530–7540). MFA Expedition photograph A 5593, June 5, 1930.
Conclusions
The presentation of the document can occur on nearly any wall of an Old Kingdom private tomb, from entrance facades and thicknesses (jamb) 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, *Denkmäler*) 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-ḥrw*), reversion offerings (*w∂b-rd*), *n∂t-¢r* 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.