

# **Individuality in Tomb Scenes from the Old and Middle Kingdom**

Natasha Nicolette Baramilis

BA (Macquarie University) 42887984

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Research

Department of Ancient History, Faculty of Arts

Macquarie University, Sydney

November 2020

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	1
Statement of Originality .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Abbreviations .....	4
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	5
1.1 Introduction .....	5
1.2 Background .....	7
1.3 Literature Review .....	9
1.4 Methodology and Scope .....	16
Chapter 2: The Rendering of Accounts and Depictions of Punishment .....	18
2.1 The Rendering of Accounts .....	18
2.2 Punishment and Specificity .....	19
2.3 Impacts of a Changing Climate and Rising Provincial Power .....	25
2.4 Conclusion .....	27
Chapter 3: Rare Depictions of Women and Children .....	28
3.1 Females in Prominent Positions .....	28
3.2 Breastfeeding .....	31
3.3 Children's Games .....	35
3.4 Conclusion .....	40
Chapter 4: Identifying Features of Specific Individuals .....	41
4.1 Physical Deformities .....	41

4.2 Dwarfism .....	43
4.3 Fighting Boatmen and their Injuries.....	45
4.4 Foreigners – The ‘Beja’ Herdsmen and the Asiatics.....	47
4.7 Conclusion.....	52
Chapter 5: The Tomb of Khnumhotep II .....	53
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	57
Bibliography .....	60

## **Abstract**

Although scenes that decorate the walls of tombs are frequently described as typical, many contain features that allow for them to differentiate themselves from one another. Individuality is expressed through the representation of personalised features which often depict specific people who take part in specific events. In some cases, these rare features are immediately obvious and are acknowledged to be distinctive or even unique. Yet, when the minor details of seemingly typical scenes are studied, they too often reveal elements suggesting the phenomena may be more widespread than initially thought.

The research conducted for this thesis has been focussed on gathering a substantial corpus of scenes expressing individuality to explore the extent to which tomb scenes may commemorate actual events which occurred during the life of the tomb owner. A diverse range of examples, dating to the Old and Middle Kingdoms, have deliberately been selected from a wide variety of themes for the purpose of discovering the degree to which the scenes in question were present throughout tombs from the period. The thesis produced seeks to contribute to an area that has been understudied, with the aim of drawing attention to the need for ongoing research. It seeks to challenge any interpretation of scenes being dismissed as typical and stresses the importance of examining scenes in greater depth to ascertain the purpose of their inclusion in each tomb and their possible significance to each tomb owner.

## **Statement of Originality**

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

Natasha Nicolette Baramilis

9<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis would have never been produced without the support and guidance of my supervisor and mentor, Professor Naguib Kanawati. I would like to express my wholehearted thanks for every bit of patience and encouragement you have given me over the past year. The motivation I received when all felt lost will never be forgotten and I will remain forever grateful for the time you have dedicated to inspiring me to fulfil my dreams.

To my wonderful husband and my mother who sacrificed so much to assist me in achieving my goal. Thank you for all the time you have invested with looking after our beautiful Nikolena. I truly could not have accomplished this without you both behind me. Mum, please never stop pushing me.

Special thanks also to the most reliable and selfless man I know – Dad, and to the family and friends who provided assistance, distractions and encouragement. Most especially to Tanya Blake, who never failed to help me find what I was trying to say.

Finally, to my Grandfather, Papou Billy, your exceptional heart, warmth and achievements still remain long after you have gone. Thank you for the opportunities you have given me.

My Nikolena – may you never, not even one moment, doubt that you can achieve every single one of your dreams.

## Abbreviations

AH - *Agricultural History*

AJA - *American Journal of Archaeology*

AJH - *Athens Journal of History*

AJMG - *American Journal of Medical Genetics*

ASAE - *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Egypte*

BACE - *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology*

BIFAO - *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale, Le Caire*

EER - *Environment and Ecology Research*

HESPOK - *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*

IJANS - *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences*

JARCE - *Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt*

JEA - *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

JAIE - *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*

JPCS - *Journal of the Practice of Cardiovascular Sciences*

LÄ - *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*

MDAIK - *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*

MKS - *Middle Kingdom Studies*

MOM - *Maison de l'Orient*

PES - *Pražské egyptologické studie*

SAK - *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur*

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

The primary function of the tomb in Ancient Egypt was to house the body of the deceased and the necessary provisions required for successful living in the afterlife. Prior to burial, the body typically underwent a process of preservation to protect it from decomposition. Likewise, any food, clothes or possessions that may be needed were prepared, and then stored alongside the body for nourishment into eternity. Finally, the burial was sealed and hopefully allowed the tomb owner to continue their life through this correct burial practice.

Beyond this primary function, the broader purpose of the tomb is the subject of much debate. The complexity of the tomb surpasses a single concern to sustain the body within the afterlife, with lavish tombs including grand displays of architectural and artistic prowess, as well as long compositions inscribed on tomb walls - many aspects unique to a single tomb owner. What then was the purpose of these unique elements that go beyond the primary function of the tomb? Was it, as many suggest, to preserve and perpetuate an idealised image of the tomb owner and his life for eternity?<sup>1</sup> Accepting this theory is perfectly reasonable. However, it is unclear whether it takes into consideration the variation in artistic decoration tombs.

The decorative program and architectural grandeur of tombs varied greatly according to the status and wealth of the tomb owner. Its quality was wholly dependent on one's access to resources. The geographical location of the tomb was another contributing factor, as the quality of building materials would affect the tomb's design. A tomb's walls were often adorned with colourful and detailed images representing various aspects of daily life, as well as scenes associated with religious beliefs. The decorative schema was created for two audiences; the deceased and those coming to pay their respects. It was hoped that tombs would be visited and that offerings would be made, whilst spending time in the tomb.

The collection of primary subjects decorating tomb walls contain many similarities. The illustrations can be divided into themes, such as those depicting marshland and agricultural pursuits, desert hunts, animal husbandry, the manufacture and storage of food and drink,

---

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Dodson and Ikram, *The Tomb*, 13; Robins, *Art*, 102.



workshop activities, medical procedures, personal care, as well as entertainment, in the form of dance, warfare and funerary scenes.<sup>2</sup>

Although many decorated tombs depict a variety of these same primary subjects, when illustrations are studied in detail, unusual, rare and even unique images become noticeable. Additionally, archaeological missions undertaken in more recent years have published data previously overlooked or inaccurately recorded, resulting in a higher number of differences being detected. Thus, the question arises of why anomalies exist. Evidently, the tomb owner and artist possessed a degree of freedom to choose what scenes and images to represent. Yet, certainly this decision would not undermine the entire purpose of the tomb and jeopardise the tomb owner's chance to live for eternity. Perhaps the differences in tomb scenes exist because tomb paintings were created to reflect experiences the tomb owner had in life. This hypothesis would not disregard scenes with religious significance, but rather proposes that scenes of daily life appear alongside those related to religion because it was the tomb owner's choice. Religion, after all, was deeply engrained into the ancient Egyptian's psyche and was an essential part of everyday life. Therefore, it is not surprising that images relating to the subject would be selectively represented.

The theory that particular scenes may have been incorporated by the tomb owner's choice could also explain whether tombs should contain any decoration entirely. Hundreds, if not thousands, of tombs exist which are entirely void of decoration.<sup>3</sup> A vast number of these tombs incorporate complex architectural designs which would have taken extensive time and care to execute, suggesting the owners possessed considerable wealth and access to resources. While there are some cases clearly demonstrate unfinished decorative programs, perhaps explained by the premature death of the owner and a subsequent rushed burial, most tombs appear to have been left barren intentionally. The sheer number of these undecorated tombs make it doubtful that each tomb owner would have exercised such great efforts to ensure successful living in the afterlife, to so easily disregard an essential element. Moreover, undecorated tombs are situated in the same location as those with elaborate decoration, making any suggestion of a sudden lack of resources unconvincing. Given the importance of the tomb, a plausible theory for the

---

<sup>2</sup> Harpur, *Decoration*, passim.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the site of El-Hawawish contains 884 tombs, however, only 60 are decorated. Kanawati, *Mountain Speaks*, 22.

existence of undecorated tombs could perhaps be that the entirety of tomb decoration itself was optional.

As such, this research seeks to elucidate such theories by investigating the following:

1. The extent to which the tomb owner and artist were able to deviate from the standard conventions of *decorum*.<sup>4</sup>
2. Determine the significance, purpose and meaning of unusual, rare and unique attestations, including those that contain *specificity*.<sup>5</sup>
3. Assess whether the corpus of tomb scenes is a collection of pictures commemorating actual and specific events which occurred during the life of the tomb owner.

The content of this research will be restricted to investigating scenes decorating the walls of tombs from the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

## 1.2 Background

Much of what is understood about the life of ancient Egyptians was gleaned from the surviving scenes and inscriptions on tomb walls. Various depictions divulge information about the tomb owner, his family, his life experience and the world around him. However, the true purpose of the art is debated by scholars and is often based upon two opposing motives. The first, that tomb scenes commemorate events and experiences from the tomb owner's life and the second, that they are full of complex religious symbolism which empowered the tomb owner to achieve a successful transition to, and survival in, the afterlife.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that many religious scenes exist. However, it is the opinion of the present writer that this is because the tomb owner chose to illustrate what he valued. Scenes of daily life are depicted because they represent activities that the tomb owner found to be important. This could equally be the case for depictions of religion. As an essential component of Egyptian thinking, religious images, ritual and practice were of great personal significance. To draw a

---

<sup>4</sup> A term related to the rules surrounding Egyptian art, what was permissible to depict and how it should be presented.

<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, specificity is utilised with reference to Gaballa's definition of a story. That is, 'a specific event carried out by a particular characters in a particular place at a particular time'. Gaballa, *Narrative*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> For discussion and various opinions on the purpose of tomb art, see: Kanawati, *Tomb and Beyond*, 112-122; Hartwig, *Tomb Painting*, 49-50.

parallel with the modern day, the walls of a person's home are likely to be decorated with photographs of themselves enjoying activities with those closest to them. They are a selection of memories the home owner wishes to preserve. If the home owner also possesses religious beliefs, it is very likely that religious icons and paraphernalia will also be present. It is reasonable to consider that religious images may be representative of the tomb owner's beliefs, if scenes of daily life reflect their experiences.

This raises a relevant issue that has not received the attention it deserves. Namely, the selective nature of which tomb decoration is considered a reliable source of evidence. Inscriptions are demonstrative of this. On occasion when they accompany images, they provide insightful explanations and further details for what is visually represented. When a tomb owner is named, it is immediately accepted that it is a true historic record of a real person who lived in ancient times. When inscriptions name additional members of the deceased's family or provide information on his career, they are also taken to be historical fact. That the tomb owner may have been untruthful and projected a fraudulent view of this part of his life is never deliberated. But accuracy and reliability in other images and inscriptions depicting daily life and the like, are questioned. Thus another query is raised: is it reasonable to selectively rely upon certain aspects of tomb evidence but dismiss others? Perhaps this selective acceptance of evidence has occurred because what is represented is not an identical match with our own experiences in the present day. That is, the notion that humans have names, family members and assume employment matches our current experience of life, but our lifestyle, living conditions and surrounding environment, has changed from those experienced millennia past. Perhaps our understanding of these aspects of visual imagery is not so explicit because we cannot directly identify with them.

If all aforementioned artistic representations can be accepted as reliable sources of evidence reflecting the tomb owner's reality, so much more can be understood about the ancient Egyptians and the individual life of each tomb owner. Unusual, rare, and unique images, including those that contain specificity, exist because they are reflective of the personal experience the tomb owner had in life. Equally, similarities in themes and background images demonstrate aspects of life that were shared by each tomb owner due to them living in the same environment, at the same time. When wall scenes are viewed in detail collectively, each tomb proves to be different from the others and tells its own story, thus allowing a rare glimpse into the unique life of a specific individual in ancient times.

### 1.3 Literature Review

There is a significant lack of literature that precisely addresses the significance, purpose and meaning of unusual, rare and unique attestations, including those that contain specificity. A select number of scholars have recently dedicated attention to this topic, raising the profile of such scenes. However, as their observations have been published as short articles, their scope has been limited. As such, this thesis extends upon the work of these scholars in order to fill the gap by undertaking a large scale comprehensive study, enabling further exploration of their significance.

In *Specificity in Old Kingdom Tomb Scenes*,<sup>7</sup> Kanawati incorporates a definition designated by Gaballa on what elements constitute a story, that is, ‘a specific event carried out by particular characters in a particular place at a particular time’, to prove that a diverse range of daily life scenes are representations of specific biographical events. His article is full of examples of scenes that contain such ‘particulars’.

The article opens with an example of what Kanawati believes are two separate representations of the same event experienced by two individual tomb owners. He explains how the similarities in the scenes, such as the depictions of Egyptian troops attacking an Asiatic fort and forcing their entry with ladders, which unusually occurs in the presence of women and children, are likely to exist because they illustrate the same war. Whilst the scenes’ differing details are due to the individual perspectives of each tomb owner and possibly the illustration of a different episode of the same war, Kanawati justly suggests these scenes contain all the elements of a specific event. His hypothesis is further supported when he notes that the tomb of Inti also names the particular Asiatic town that was attacked - ‘Nedia’.

Kanawati continues to provide examples of specificity to demonstrate how the particulars illustrated in a diverse range of scenes including the fishing and fowling, bullfighting, and pet animals, tell a story. An amusing example of an unconventional boat fight is provided from the tomb of Inumin. In addition to the description of the physical appearances of the boatmen and their weapons and position in combat, Kanawati details one unique image where two boatmen are grasping each other by the genitals. The scene under scrutiny certainly does seem to depict particular individuals through the illustration of certain physical features, and a specific event

---

<sup>7</sup> Kanawati, *ASAE* 83 (2009), 261-278.

through its unusual nature. However, the lack of accompanying text naming the individuals could cause those opposed to the theory to remain somewhat unconvinced. The possibility of this is refuted through other examples where the accompanying text explicitly names figures. Texts, such as those found in the rendering of accounts scene in the tomb of Ibi, identify ‘Rensi, son of Ibi’ who is the subject of punishment, presumably for lack of delivery in expected produce.

The article also raises the possibility that wall scenes depicting the tomb owner at his offering table could actually be representative of the tomb owner enjoying banquets during his life, rather than receiving offerings as sustenance in death. This somewhat controversial proposal is probably difficult for some to accept. However, a strong case is steadily built on the theory that all types of scenes tell an individual story, leaving the reader with an appetite for more. It is unfortunate that the work ends without further exploration of this topic with a discussion of specific examples.

Kanawati briefly addresses many of the arguments used by those who believe tomb scenes contain no originality and therefore do not depict actual events. He attributes the similar nature of scenes to the shared environment in which tomb owners lived, and stylistic and representational similarities to artists being trained in the same schools. Scenes which are said to be copied by artists because they contain mythological significance are also not ignored. Kanawati also briefly touches on why the true nature of such scenes should be questioned, the level of freedom possessed by each tomb owner to select his own scenes and the issue of our lack in comprehension of the true intention the ancient Egyptians had for selecting and creating each scene. Yet, discussions of each aforementioned point are extremely brief, with some ideas reduced to only one sentence. Moreover, although a diverse range of examples were selected for the study, incorporating a larger quantity would have been ideal. Admittedly, these limitations are probably because they were beyond the scope of a short article. The absence of exploration into how specificity may have translated into Middle Kingdom scenes means the work does not contribute to all facets of the present research. However, the title of the work makes it obvious that it was never the intention to look outside the Old Kingdom.

Lashien continues with the approach used by Kanawati, utilising Gaballa's definition of a story to discuss additional Old Kingdom scenes that contain elements of a narrative.<sup>8</sup> She suggests scenes should be studied to identify the very reason for the tomb owner's desire to commemorate an event and justly states that instances where specificity seems to be lacking, may be due to our modern inability to detect any specific elements which may be present. This work also takes a similar approach to the one used in this thesis by proposing that rare scenes may exist because the events they depict were experienced by the tomb owner.

An example is provided in the tomb of Mereruka, where a seemingly typical scene illustrates the tomb owner catching birds on his boat. However, a crocodile devouring a newborn hippopotamus, and a male hippopotamus biting a crocodile, appear below the boat which are not common images present in many tombs. Like Kanawati, Lashien also uses occasions where similar scenes are depicted in tombs dating to the same period, to propose that the representations may be of the same events, from varying perspectives. She argues that differing details personalise each scene and incorporating elements of various separate episodes does not make them 'unreal'. This hypothesis is relevant to this thesis and is utilised in selected examples.

The tomb of Mereruka is again utilised to discuss the notion that scenes contain narrative that progress through space and time. It is proposed that a scene of five ships on a pilgrimage, each illustrating the tomb owner aboard and identifying him by name and titles, could represent one ship progressing through both time and space. Yet, the possibility that more than one ship took part in the voyage is also acknowledged.

Lashien produces a very interesting assessment of scenes from the perspective of whether they contain elements which demonstrate a progression through time and space, and how this relates to the concept of narrative. Basing her study on a restricted number of scenes with emphasis on those illustrating a voyage is both effective at strengthening her hypothesis, and limiting in its scope. However, the article concludes by stating that a major study is underway to assess the extent to which the proposed method was used in a variety of themes. Finally, it is noticeable that the majority of tombs assessed for the article are located around the capital.

---

<sup>8</sup> Lashien, *BACE* 22, 101-114.

Hopefully the wider study will include a wider corpus of tombs, allowing for further comparisons to be made between scenes.

Kahlbacher uses an alternate approach to study specificity focussing instead on the single theme of offering scenes.<sup>9</sup> Her research was to determine whether the degree of personal preference illustrated in the Old Kingdom was still of importance in the Middle Kingdom, or whether a standardised repertoire of offerings became more common. It is expected that Kahlbacher's restricted approach to study a single theme allowed her to cover a vast sample of offering scenes. However, her careful selection of examples to 'illustrate the development within this period' causes one to wonder what may have been neglected, or if any anomalies may have been of significance. Yet, Kahlbacher does deliver evidence of some rare items in offering lists, such as that in the relief slab of Heken where she notes a shirt made of a specific type of linen, which is only attested in two other sources.

Despite these examples of specificity, a lack of interpretation in the article is somewhat disappointing. In the tomb of Baqet I, she advises that the 'inventory list' and 'the composition of the repast scene is quite exceptional since the pile of offerings is completely missing' but no viewpoint is offered on the meaning or significance. It is rather unfortunate that this lack of interpretation continues in other examples, such as in the tomb of Amenemhat where it is observed that the offering list of his wife is a much shorter type known as the C list, but no further explanation regarding its significance is provided.

It is obvious that Kahlbacher analysed at least some of the specific items in each offering list. Instances where offerings, food and household goods have been grouped and counted is demonstrative of a large-scale analysis of data having taken place. Whilst occasionally a specific item is singled out, perhaps a thorough examination of the exact items making up each list would have showed great diversity and personalisation, however, this is not done. If this data was analysed and listed in the appendices, it would have been most useful for future research.

To Kahlbacher's credit, there is one instance where insightful interpretation of a reason why a specific and very rare item, the fruit of a moringa tree, may be present in the tomb of Ukhhotep II. The suggestion that the fruit may have been included for the creation of behen oil which

---

<sup>9</sup> Kahlbacher, *MKS* 4 (2016), 102-111.

was used in cooking and medicine, for the manufacture of perfume and had some religious significance. This conclusion is thought-provoking and it would have been most interesting if more interpretations were proposed.

The conclusion of Kahlbacher's article is one that supports the nature of this research. It demonstrates that despite some elements of the offering scene appearing to be standardised, scenes continued to contain enough variance to express personalisation, causing the artist and tomb owner to be creative in expressing their individual choices. However, due to the limited scope of Kahlbacher's research being restricted to a single theme and being bound by the parameters of a short article its contribution to this research project is partial.

El-Tayeb's article, *Some Rare Scenes in the Tomb of Rashepses at Saqqara*<sup>10</sup> is a concise and excellent summary of the tomb, the tomb owner and a selection of interesting features. Its narrow scope is established up front, providing the reader with clear expectations from the beginning and a curiosity to learn more upon conclusion. Five rare themes, some being the earliest known examples of their kind, are outlined, explained and described, with parallels noted. These aspects of the study are clear and interesting.

However, where the article falls short is in its lack of interpretation. It is disappointing that no opinion has been provided on why the rare themes may exist, nor their possible meaning. For example, one extremely rare theme is the depiction of a man feeding a puppy by his mouth. This theme is said to appear in only one other Old Kingdom tomb causing it to be of utmost significance. Whether the scene could be representative of an image Rashepses witnessed in life or otherwise is completely unknown and no tentative conclusion has been shared by El-Tayeb. This type of analysis would have been of great interest and relevance to the current research.

Where El-Tayeb's work excels is in the simple inclusion of images that accompany scene descriptions, providing absolute clarity to what is discussed. His data tables are also an excellent addition to allow for analysis and scene comparisons by tomb. The work also highlights how an Old Kingdom tomb located in the capital could exercise a level of freedom in tomb decoration and demonstrate originality. This method and approach could easily be

---

<sup>10</sup> El-Tayeb, *PES* 19 (2017), 124-134.



complimented by a whole series of similar studies on a large number of Old Kingdom tombs, with the addition of interpretation.

*The Arrangement of Murals as a Principle of Old Kingdom Tomb Decoration* by Bolshakov<sup>11</sup> takes a combined approach to study architecture and tomb decoration in correlation with each other. Bolshakov sees the two as interrelated and of significant importance, stating that so far the area of research has been neglected.

His work contains many statements that are in agreement with the present research. He argues that every tomb is architecturally and decoratively unique and supports the theory that the tomb owner had influence over his own tomb. The article also occasionally mentions ‘unique’ representations. For example, Bolshakov notes that the east wall of tomb G 4970 is unique because it illustrates the children of the tomb owner as the central element of the scene. However, a contradiction is made soon after in a discussion on the composition of the same scene which is ‘typical and even banal’.

It is difficult to understand the methodology Bolshakov has employed and the reasons he found it useful. There is no explanation for why his analysis compares two tombs against each other, let alone the significance of the particular tombs chosen. Moreover, whilst a neat background is provided on the history of studying Old Kingdom tomb decoration and architecture, it was highly selective in nature, excluding some of the most significant current contributors in the field. It was also unclear why architecture and decoration should be studied in conjunction with each other. For the purpose of the present research, this approach was distracting and was further complicated by the in text, arrow method incorporated aimed at showing the orientation of register.

Bolshakov’s analysis is lengthy and detailed, yet hard to follow and understand. His lack of interpretation caused it to be of limited value to the present study. Its use is in the small number of select examples provided of tombs containing unusual and interesting features which need to be further researched.

General texts on Egyptian art occasionally discuss the meaning and purpose of tomb decoration. However, these works are typically focussed on the principles of art from the

---

<sup>11</sup> Bolshakov, *Arrangement of Murals*, 37-60.

artist's perspective or the development of art, conventions of decorum and its changes over chronological periods.<sup>12</sup> Unusual and unique features are rarely mentioned and they deal only briefly with the meaning of art beyond a sentence or two outlining the function of a tomb, hardly enough to evaluate.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, their use is in gaining familiarisation of the typical characteristics and style of tomb art.

Many tomb publications have been consulted for this research. First-hand reports remain a record of factual information on the condition and contents of each tomb. Therefore, tomb art is treated somewhat conservatively in these publications and the authors must resist injecting too many personal opinions. Any observations and interpretations are reserved for publication in articles or other reference works, such as those earlier mentioned in this literature review. In all instances, the most recent tomb publications have been consulted for accurate records of tomb decoration. This was most pertinent as some cases of older publications containing inaccurate recordings exist. An example can be found in the publication of the tomb of Khnumhotep II by Kanawati, where it has been revealed that a representation of a man is missing part of his leg.<sup>14</sup> A detail which was inaccurately illustrated in the earlier recordings.<sup>15</sup>

Evaluating relevant literature makes it apparent that further investigation on individualism expressed within tomb scenes is required. The limited number of studies on the topic contradict the traditional notion that artists were strictly bound by decorum and raises the opportunity to undertake a new research to further develop the topic. This thesis will attempt a large scale comparative study exploring the wider implication of their existence. It will hopefully highlight the need to re-evaluate the presence and significance of unusual details recorded in tombs, the reasons for their inclusion, and encourage further research on the subject.

---

<sup>12</sup> For example, Smith, *HESPOK*, passim; Bourriau, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, passim; Harpur, *Decoration*, passim; Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, passim; Smith and Simpson, *Art and Architecture*, passim; Robins, *Art*, passim; Robins, *Painting and Relief*, passim; James, *Egyptian Painting*, passim; Schäfer, *Principles*, passim; Robins, *Proportion and Style*, passim; Kanawati and Woods, *Artists*, passim.

<sup>13</sup> Aldred, *LÄ* 2 (1977), 856; Davis, *Canonical Tradition*, 199-201; Hartwig, *Tomb Painting*, 49-50.

<sup>14</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 62, pls. 79 (a)-(c).

<sup>15</sup> Lepsius, *Denkmäler* II, 130; Newberry, *Beni Hasan* 1, pl. 34.

## **1.4 Methodology and Scope**

The objective of this thesis was to examine the purpose and significance of unusual and unique artistic representations in tomb paintings from the Old and Middle Kingdoms. To achieve this, a substantial quantity of tomb scenes exhibiting these qualities had to be analysed and compared. Identifying such scenes was the first task to be undertaken and began with research on pertinent literature. This essential activity had a dual purpose. First, it provided specific examples of the scenes in question from which further research could occur. Second, it revealed the extent to which the topic was understudied and required attention. During this stage of research, it also became clear what features caused a scene to be unusual or unique. It was discovered that distinctive characteristics could be illustrated in individual figures or through the differing surrounding environment and setting in which they were represented.

That there are a significantly larger amount and more diverse range of attestations containing the features relevant quickly became apparent in these early stages of research. This required for the scope of the thesis to be narrowed and limited to gathering a manageable dataset achievable for the time and length parameters set for this thesis. It was decided that scenes selected should be catalogued into themes, in order to collate data in a logical manner in which they could relate to one another. Selected themes were organised into the following categories:

- Depictions of physical punishment in scenes involving the rendering of accounts
- Images related to women and children
- Distinguishing physical features identifying a specific individual

Once an adequate amount of scenes were collated within each theme, the individual scenes were examined and compared against one another to analyse whether any preliminary conclusions could be drawn regarding the reasons for their existence. Any chronological developments or site specific trends were further investigated to ascertain their significance. Additionally, care was taken to select scenes from varying sites in order to avoid any assumptions based upon local artistic trends and the more conservative nature of art in tombs located in the capital.

The majority of tombs consulted for this thesis are primarily located in Giza, Saqqara, Meir, Beni Hassan, Deir-el Gebrawi and El-Hawawish. Many of these sites have been extensively published, most having been produced by Blackman, Newberry, Davies, Junker, Simpson and

Kanawati. When the description of a scene, the photograph or line drawings was unclear or highly unusual, an attempt was made to clarify information. If more than one tomb report was available, it was sought and on occasion, members of the archaeological mission were contacted for further clarification. When these efforts did not entirely clarify and resolve the issue at hand, suggestions were made with an annotation of caution.

A qualitative ethnographical perspective was taken to evaluate the significance of the findings in this research. The adoption of this approach aimed to reveal whether each scene could be a commemoration of specific events that occurred during the life of the tomb owner, proposing an alternate understanding of the reason for illustrating such unusual features beyond mythological significance. It is understood that this type of interpretation may be influenced by the desire to understand something about each ancient individual on a personal level. The belief that the minds and lives of the ancient Egyptians were not so drastically different from our own in the present day is demonstrated throughout the thesis in the way it attempts to familiarise the reader with images by relating them to their own thoughts and experiences. Each case analysed is connected to an activity that still occurs in the present day and is indicative of the illustration representing actual happenings. Factually, the extent to which the tomb owner and artist were free to deviate from the standard conventions of decorum is evidenced by the collation and discussion of the many existing examples of specificity and demonstration of the lack in their attestation elsewhere.

The proposed interpretations do not disregard scenes that are described as typical. Instead, it addresses why scenes may be described this way and attempts to classify what aspects cause tomb scenes to appear as typical. However, the hypothesis is also questioned. It appears that activities which occur frequently, lacking distinctive attributes are most often defined as common. Yet, it could be possible that mundane events may have been meaningful to the tomb owner. Finally, an exploration of why typical scenes may appear alongside scenes illustrating specificity, is addressed in the concluding chapter using the tomb of Khnumhotep II as a case study. It also does not ignore that certain scenes contain mythological significance. For the ancient Egyptians who connected religion as an inseparable concept from everyday life, it certainly had its place within the tomb. Yet, defining which scenes may contain this additional magical function, to assist the deceased to successfully survive in the afterlife, is a complex task and is well beyond the scope of this thesis.

## Chapter 2: The Rendering of Accounts and Depictions of Punishment

### 2.1 The Rendering of Accounts

Tomb scenes which depict the ‘rendering of accounts’ motif first appear in the Old Kingdom. They are positioned before the tomb owner’s gaze – effectively under his supervision – in a representation of the various activities he had to oversee in life. Whilst most of these scenes do not contain any distinctive or unusual characteristics, a small selection depict unusual imagery and unique features. Scenes of this type illustrate punishment. In some cases, it is even administered to precise individuals who can be identified by distinctive physical characteristics, or within the accompanying hieroglyphic text.

The rendering of accounts<sup>16</sup> first makes its appearance in the Fourth Dynasty<sup>17</sup> and from this time onward, was featured in the tombs of various individuals including a king’s son, a queen, priests, viziers and other high ranking officials. A typical scene would depict the specific procedure of presenting accounts in various forms of agricultural produce, such as livestock and grain. The scene usually begins with royal scribes, with recording materials in hand, seated before estate managers who are brought by officials to render their accounts. The estate managers present themselves in the same passive postures, ranging from a slight to full bend from the hips, or to a full kneeling position on the ground. They are also frequently depicted with an arm bent across their chest with their hand cupping the opposite shoulder,<sup>18</sup> a possible gesture of respect.

In these examples, officials lead the estate managers assertively, either by the hand, or by the back of the neck and hold a stick with their free hand passively, perhaps in the unspoken threat of a beating for any resistance or misconduct.<sup>19</sup> It is apparent that in these early scenes, the

---

<sup>16</sup> Harpur, *Decoration*, 169-170.

<sup>17</sup> Only two examples are attested in the Fourth Dynasty: In the tomb of Khufukhaef I and in Tomb G 7560. Simpson et al., *Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, 11 pls. 15 (c), 16 (a), fig. 26; Smith, *HESPOK*, 172.

<sup>18</sup> This placement of the hand cupped over the shoulder and the arm bent across the chest is more common in earlier scenes where physical treatment is milder, although does appear in later examples less frequently.

<sup>19</sup> Typical examples of scenes from dynasty four, five and six are as follows: Davies, *Deir el-Gebrawi* 2, pl. 17; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III* 2, pl. 10, fig. 9; Junker, *Giza* 5, pl. 6 (b), fig. 18; Morgan, *Catalogue des Monuments* 1, pl. 160 (left); Harpur and Scremin, *Kagemni*, pl. 4; Simpson, *Kayemnofret*, pl. 21(a); Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Unis Cemetery* 2, pl. 53(e); Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 4, p. 21, fig. 13.

estate managers are depicted submissively acknowledging their subordinate position. However, they are never the recipient of physical violence or punishment.

Punishment first appears in tombs located in the capital, dating to the Fifth Dynasty, before gradually spreading geographically to the south, progressing over the course of the Middle Kingdom. Investigating this curious phenomena has revealed a number of scenes feature aspects of personalisation thereby indicating they could depict specific, rather than general events. These scenes illustrate particular types of equipment or restraining techniques which have no parallel, or contain hieroglyphs naming individuals, alongside their titles. It is when these scenes are examined chronologically, that a gradual increase in the severity of punishment, is noticed.

As such, this chapter will focus on identifying scenes involving punishment that are highly individualistic with aspects of personalisation, explore the significance of their existence and propose a purpose for their inclusion. The final analysis will consider contemporary environmental and political factors to explore the extent to which the surrounding conditions impacted the lives of the tomb owners, their affiliates, and consequently the tomb art. The proposition that climate change affected normal levels of agricultural production and effective payment of tax, thereby resulting estate managers being punished for delivering a shortfall in accounts, is proposed and discussed in detail. The specific cases of punishment discussed shall dispute claims about the similarities in art being due to artists' copying and support the hypothesis of these events being a commemoration of the tomb owner's life and experience, demonstrating a level of freedom of art design.

## **2.2 Punishment and Specificity**

From the Fifth Dynasty, the content within a number of rendering of accounts scenes change and occasionally include hints that illustrated events could have been true to life. In certain cases, an individual is named and described with such detail that it seems to be for the reason that the tomb owner did not wish for them to be confused with any other person with the same first name. Other cases illustrate very unusual or unique punishment techniques that cause a problem for the interpretation that they have been copied or inspired from similar scenes within other tombs. The following scenes are discussed in chronological order to clearly demonstrate the gradual increase in the harshness of punishment that appears over time. The reason for this

is explored upon in detail upon conclusion, with an attempt to gain an understanding of why the phenomena may occur.

### *Old Kingdom Tombs*

The first example of specificity appears in Fifth Dynasty and comes from the tomb of priest, Tepemankh II. This rendering of accounts scene<sup>20</sup> contains the first hint of punishment artistically, with an official standing with his baton stick held high, ready to beat down on the back of an estate manager. At this point in time, there is no indication of the reason for reprimand. However, it is the earliest example that contains a harsh representation and specifically names particular individuals present in text, alongside their titles.

The naming of figures also appears in the tomb of Kahai.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, one scribe present has a more descriptive name – Kahai ‘the young’, suggesting the depiction of a particular individual who should not be confused with another. It is hardly possible that the names have been fabricated for the sake of narrative or that they are too common to represent any particular individual. Additionally, it is not always the case that participants in such activities are named, leading one to wonder the reason for them to be named in cases such as this.



Fig. 1. Punishment in the tomb of Kahai.  
According to Lashien, *Kahai*, pl. 12.

In the Sixth Dynasty, the tomb of the powerful vizier, Mereruka<sup>22</sup> features a number of estate managers who are individually named,<sup>23</sup> but more importantly, it is also the earliest tomb to

---

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *AJA* 46 (1942), fig. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Three estate managers, Hetep, Hetepni and Nefer and two officials, Djebaensetpet and Iydjefa, are named. Lashien, *Kahai*, 29, pls. 12 (a), 82.

<sup>22</sup> Kanawati et al., *Mereruka* 3:1, pl. 77 (a); Duell, *Mereruka*, pl. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Kanawati et al., *Mereruka* 3:1, 27-30.

exhibit actual punishment artistically. Examining this scene within context of Mereruka's extremely high-ranking status and influential background<sup>24</sup> reveals additional thought-provoking insights. Mereruka is a prime candidate for a man who most likely possessed enough power to act as he wished with little consequence and this behaviour is reflected in his tomb art.<sup>25</sup>

Mereruka's scene begins with all the archetypal elements of the rendering of accounts, but signs of the deteriorating conditions estate managers were subjected to appear through an increased number of officials holding baton sticks. For the first time, a naked estate manager is seated on the ground, and is physically restrained with his arms and legs wrapped around a whipping post while two officials prepare to beat him with baton sticks. The scene continues with further depictions of punishment of another naked estate manager who is forced to sit on his legs with his arms raised above his head, with a restraining device placed through his arms and his head shoved forward. It is also the first instance where the genitals of an estate manager are entirely illustrated and the nudity is noteworthy as it seems to be a humiliation technique as part of the punishment. Acts of such violence in the scenes of the rendering of accounts are unprecedented and these examples of Mereruka's tough and aggressive nature are proudly and perhaps, boastfully, represented in his tomb. They offer rare insight into the personality of the man himself<sup>26</sup>. Perhaps they are a visual display of the effective performance of his role, without compromise or sympathy. An attitude which may have been adopted by his successors.

Similar expressions of brutality appear in the tomb of the vizier who succeeded Mereruka, Khentika.<sup>27</sup> Although this scene is brief, an escalation in violence appears with the number of naked estate managers increasing to two, both of whom are forced to wrap their arms around a whipping post waiting for a beating. It could be argued this scene is an example of artists copying the scene of Mereruka, however, the increased number of estate managers could also justifiably indicate punishment was inflicted more frequently due to an increasing number of

---

<sup>24</sup> Kanawati, Mereruka and King Teti, passim.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion on the personality of Mereruka, see: Kanawati, *Mereruka and King Teti*, 56-58.

<sup>26</sup> Kanawati, Mereruka and King Teti, 56.

<sup>27</sup> James, *Khentika*, pl. 9.



cases where expected accounts fell short. Moreover, a number of individuals within the scene are individually named,<sup>28</sup> one of whom is the estate manager, Ipi.<sup>29</sup>

The first example of an image containing punishment spreading outside Saqqara features in the tomb of Henqu II, in Deir el Gebrawi<sup>30</sup> and presents the implication that provincial officials began to be influenced by enforcement practices transpiring in the capital. There is no parallel of a miscreant escorted by officials with his head secured in a head-locking device, *and* with his hands restrained by a rope attached to a block.

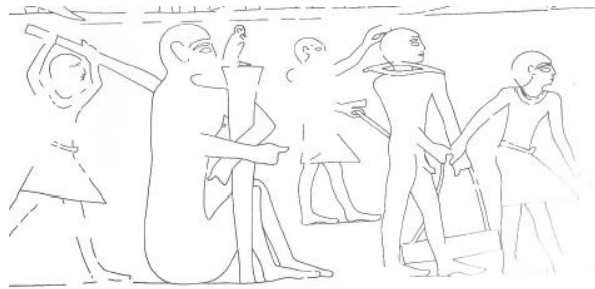


Fig. 2. Punishment in the tomb of Henqu II.  
According to Kanawati, *Deir el-Gebrawi* 1, pl. 55

The severity of punishment appears to resemble one of a prisoner being brought before a court to learn of his fate, with the severity of the situation increasing and demonstrated by the total number of officials exceeding that of the accused men. The scene of Henqu II is also the only one to show a baton stick actually coming into contact with a person's back. No text explicitly states the offender is an estate manager, the painted hieroglyphs, if existed, have disappeared. Yet, the significance of this scene is paramount in that no comparison is extant elsewhere.

At the same province, the tomb of Ibi contains a unique scene of paramount importance.<sup>31</sup> The name and description of the offender in this scene is highly unusual when considered within the wider tomb context. He is named 'Rensi son of Nedjemib', 'the hated one of his lord, the disliked one of his mistress and the detested one of the guardians'. This appears in direct contrast to another present in the tomb - 'Rensi, son of Ibi'<sup>32</sup> – who has a number of favourable

---

<sup>28</sup> James, *Khentika*, 45.

<sup>29</sup> It is possible that the same Ipi also appears in two tombs and is discussed on the following page.

<sup>30</sup> Kanawati, *Deir El-Gebrawi* 1, pl. 55.

<sup>31</sup> Kanawati, *Deir El-Gebrawi* 2, 11-22, pl. 50; Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi* 1, pl. 8.

<sup>32</sup> There is no suggestion that this Rensi is the son of the tomb owner Ibi. This is another Ibi.

titles and epithets such as ‘inspector of scribes’ and ‘one who does what his lord favours’.<sup>33</sup> The entire punishment scene occupies two registers and expresses violence to either a significantly increased number of individuals, or is an episodic depiction of a series of events inflicted on ‘Rensi, son of Nedjemib’.<sup>34</sup> Notable artistic representations feature a succession of images depicting the most severe punishment seen yet. A figure has been grabbed by the head, forced down into a kneeling position with his arms wrapped around an official who holds him in place to prevent any resistance at the forthcoming beating. Directly behind this, another figure is prostrated, face down, with his arms secured above his head by one official and his legs by another. A third official stands over him ready to administer blows with a beating stick in hand.<sup>35</sup>

Such attempts to distinguish each Rensi is of utmost importance and possible comparisons may exist elsewhere. For example, the father of Rensi, ‘Nedjemib’, may feature in the tomb of Mereruka as an accused man, which Kanawati explains, could provide an explanation for the uncommon animosity shown against Rensi in the tomb of Ibi.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, it is possible that the provincial estate manager, Ipi, makes an appearance in two tombs. His own at Beni Hassan and in the aforementioned tomb of the vizier, Khentika, where he would be the said victim of punishment. It is possible that these men are two different men with the same name, however, it is also possible that it is the same man. If he is indeed the same Ipi, a possible explanation for his punishment in the tomb of Khentika could be due to his dishonesty in correctly passing on payments to the vizier.

### *Middle Kingdom Tombs*

---

<sup>33</sup> Kanawati, *Deir El-Gebrawi* 2, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Kanawati, *Deir El-Gebrawi* 2, 36 – 37. For information on the episodic depiction of scenes see Soudive, *La main*, 10ff.

<sup>35</sup> For a parallel, see: Kanawati, *El-Hawawish* 1, fig.9. Scene can be viewed in fig.9. Ka-hep, chapel, south wall, west of entrance. ) in El-Hawawish. The image is in a highly deteriorated state, however, when studied closely, extremely harsh punishment is apparent.

<sup>36</sup> Kanawati, *Deir el-Gebrawi* 2, p. 36 n. 208

With less available tombs dating to the Middle Kingdom, the number of rendering of accounts scenes decreases with only four examples identifiable.<sup>37</sup> Of these, only one contains serious punishment and appears in the tomb of Baqet III<sup>38</sup> from the Eleventh Dynasty.<sup>39</sup>

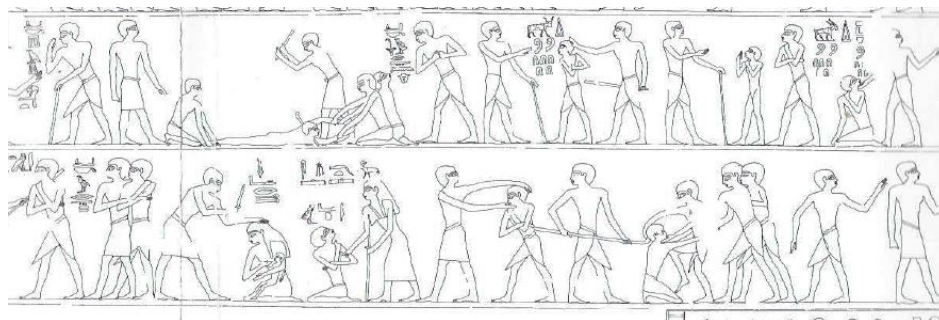


Fig 3. Punishment in the tomb of Baqet III  
According to Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, pl. 62.

<sup>38</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, pl. 62.

The accompanying text provides context for the extreme handling of individuals within this scene. The officials make statements such as ‘behold, I have done what I have said to you’, ‘give 250 oxen’, and the victims reply with ‘you made a reduction previously’ and ‘woe’.<sup>40</sup>

This late scene provides insight into the life of society at the time of the Middle Kingdom. It is an indication of the way in which transgressions were handled, which could reflect a tradition that began in the capital, subsequently passed on by officials through the generations and consequently adopted by those with authority at the time. It seems the harsh conditions that began in the Old Kingdom continued into the early part of the Middle Kingdom.

While no other Middle Kingdom tomb containing the rendering of accounts depicts any artistically distinctive representations, nor any significant act of punishment, two texts in related scenes deserve mention. Khnumhotep II names a particular individual specifically as ‘Nakht’s son, Nakhti, overseer of the house of the estates’.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, in the tomb of Amenemhat, scribes are named, along with their titles, in addition to herdsmen.<sup>42</sup> As with the examples from the Old Kingdom, it is difficult to justify why an artist would fabricate names and titles for the sake of tomb artistry. It seems more likely, these were real individuals who performed these roles in their lifetimes.

### **2.3 Impacts of a Changing Climate and Rising Provincial Power**

In the process of investigating punishment scenes, it has become apparent that a number appear to contain unusual elements. Evidence suggests punishment gradually spread from the capital, southward and increased in severity over time. Considering environmental and political factors of the time may rationalise the phenomena.

While the implication of the specificity that exists in scenes representing the rendering of accounts is somewhat open to interpretation, observations made in previous investigations on this topic revealed some interesting conclusions. Punishment spreads geographically and spans over the course of the collapse of the Old Kingdom. In examples from the Fifth Dynasty, scenes

---

<sup>40</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, 40-42.

<sup>41</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 52, pl. 126.

<sup>42</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 3, 39, pl. 96.

are attested in the capital but by the Sixth Dynasty, along with those in the Middle Kingdom, all examples are located in Middle Egypt, the most fertile and accordingly the most important for food production.

The shift in their location can be explained by the establishment of provincial administration in the Sixth Dynasty, and the influence on governing practices coming from the capital. Yet, justification for the provincial officials' newfound authority must be sought to understand the reason for their existence.<sup>43</sup>

Leading up to the collapse of the Old Kingdom, royal power experienced a significant period of instability. Mounting evidence suggests the situation was likely caused by a change in climate consequently impacting the level of the annual inundation of the Nile.<sup>44</sup> A cascading domino effect from the environment, to the people, finally disturbing the centralised government meant it was unable to continue to enjoy the prosperous wealth and produce it was accustomed to. Such a monumental change in the Nile flood would have significant effect on access to water, resulting in a disruption to normal levels of agricultural produce and the ability to fully pay expected taxes.

The extent to which the changing climate impacted society is currently a topic of much debate,<sup>45</sup> however, irrespective of the exact nature in which it occurred it seems likely that provincial officials used their unprecedented increase in power to their advantage.<sup>46</sup> Evidence exists for the local control of irrigation<sup>47</sup> which, if accurate, would have greatly affected those responsible for working the land, contributing to their ability to produce and potentially justifying the reason for the lack of production. At present, this hypothesis is difficult to prove and is outside the scope of this thesis.

---

<sup>43</sup> For an explanation on the topic, see: Grajetzki, *Egyptian Administration*: 215-258.

<sup>44</sup> Burn, *EER* 6:5 (2018), 446 n. 37.

<sup>45</sup> A wide range of literature is available on this topic. For an overview of the varying opinions, see: Kemp, *Social History*, 71-182; O'Connor, *World Archaeology* 6 (1974), 15-38.; Moeller, *Ägypten und Levante* 15 (2005), 153-167; Hamdan et al., *Archaeology and Environment*, 37 – 48; Burn, *A River in 'Drought'*, 28-32.

<sup>46</sup> For an understanding of the elevated level of power held by nomarchs and the violence that ensued into the Middle Kingdom, see: Grimal, *History*, 139; Hassan, *Riparia*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Hassan, *World Archaeology* 29 (1997), 52.

## 2.4 Conclusion

As previously stated, the ‘rendering of accounts’ motif was included in the tombs of viziers and other high ranking officials who had various levels of involvement in the process during their life. Therefore, it seems likely they chose to illustrate these events because they experienced them. Further details in the scenes name the individuals involved, and when two individuals shared the same name, they were differentiated by naming them as the ‘son of’ so and so. As in the example of the two Rensi’s who appear in the tomb of Ibi, there is ‘Rensi, son of Nedjemib’ and ‘Rensi, son of Ibi’. It is difficult to explain the unique visual representations unattested elsewhere, such as the head-locking device featured in the tomb of Henqu II or the mother nursing her baby in the tomb of Baqet III, without considering them as possible portrayals of reality. They cannot be classified as examples of artists copying images from other tombs or as a natural progression in the development of art without existing parallels.

The purpose of including these particular punishment scenes within a tomb which was designed to assist the deceased to exist in the afterlife, could be to validate that the tomb owner was effective in performing the duties bestowed upon him by the king. If this is considered to be true, the images transform from being viewed as violent transgressions to proud and boastful displays of successful management. Accepting this would also place these scenes firmly within the category of images that depict actual events in the life of the tomb owner.

This chapter has explored the acts of punishment in scenes pertaining to the rendering of accounts and to investigate the reason for their existence. Within these scenes, numerous examples of specificity have been identified, in both text and visual imagery. The illustrations commence in the Old Kingdom and feature an escalation of severity by the time of the Middle Kingdom. Evidently, during these periods, there were serious repercussions for the failure to produce the correct accounts. The exact nature of the impact and extent to which the changing level of the Nile effected agricultural produce is still being debated amongst scholars but the fact that a relationship exists between the environment, production levels and punishment seems likely. Harsh conditions seem to have lasted beyond the collapse of the Old Kingdom and extreme strict disciplinary measures continued with punishment as a repercussion of a shortfall in expected accounts.

## Chapter 3: Rare Depictions of Women and Children

### 3.1 Females in Prominent Positions

The most common representation depicted alongside the tomb owner is the most important woman in his life, his wife. However, occasionally she is his mother or daughter who accompanies him in various scenes of daily life, including important duties and leisure activities.<sup>48</sup> Although much has been published on the subject of women,<sup>49</sup> plenty of which is in a tomb context, there is a paucity of information regarding rare attestations, a number of which can be found.

In a funerary culture where the predominate number of figures are males, the highly unusual Middle Kingdom tomb of Wekhotep III (C1) at Meir<sup>50</sup> represents an exceptional number of women. A total of ninety-nine women<sup>51</sup> appear throughout the tomb. Many of whom are portrayed not only undertaking roles usually performed by men but are also dressed in male attire.<sup>52</sup> No other tomb sees the number of women exceed men on such a great scale. Kanawati suggests that Wekhotep III could have been an advocate of gender equality by explicitly demonstrating women were more than capable of performing duties that were traditionally undertaken by men. By doing this, he exposed his desire to ensure his only child, a daughter, became his successor. Although a theory, Kanawati rightly suggests that further study is required.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, approximately sixteen of the women are named as Wekhotep III's wives and concubines,<sup>54</sup> making this the largest polygamous family unit attested in a private tomb by

---

<sup>48</sup> A summary on the representation of women in Old and Middle Kingdom tombs can be found in: Routledge, *Did women 'do things'*, 176-177.

<sup>49</sup> Some examples include: Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, passim; Robins, *Women*, passim and Graves-Brown, *Dancing for Hathor*, passim. In strictly an artistic sense, see: Robins, *Proportion and Style*, passim.

<sup>50</sup> Blackman, *Meir* 6, 8-38.

<sup>51</sup> Johnston, *Behind Every Great Man*, 65, table 5.1.

<sup>52</sup> Blackman, *Meir* 6, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Kanawati, *BACE* 26, 44.

<sup>54</sup> The accurate number of women and their position is uncertain due to the current state of the tomb. Kanawati, *BACE* 26, 38.

far.<sup>55</sup> While polygamous relationships and their representation in a general sense is not unusual, it is unusual to have the women depicted together, alongside each other.<sup>56</sup> No further information regarding the length or overlap of relationships is provided. The overriding conclusion that Wekhotep III preferred polygamous relationships is hypothesised by several scholars. Some claiming the intention was to link himself with royalty via the emulation of the king surrounding himself by his harem of women in a funerary context.<sup>57</sup> Other proposals have suggested he was simply a lovingly devoted husband.<sup>58</sup> Although having such an exceptionally high number of wives could also have come from a desire to produce a male heir,<sup>59</sup> and not understanding that it may have been he himself who was the victim of infertility.

Another unusual rendering of women can be found in the tomb of Mereruka, via the representation of his wife, Waatetkhethor. After an initial inspection of the tomb scenes, the importance of Waatetkhethor becomes quite evident. While it is customary to the tomb owner's wife to accompany in a range of scenes, the frequency in which Waatetkhethor appears at her husband's side has no other parallel.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the highly unusual motif of her feet obscuring those of her husband,<sup>61</sup> including one exceptional instance where the occurrence is proudly displayed on the outside entrance to the tomb,<sup>62</sup> suggests her societal importance is greater than that of her husband.

---

<sup>55</sup> The next highest number of six wives are represented within the tomb of Mery-aa of Hagarsa. Kanawati, *El-Hagarsa* 3, pl. 42.

<sup>56</sup> Simpson, *JEA* 60 (1974), 100-105; Wilfong, *Egyptian Archaeology*, 164-180.

<sup>57</sup> See Simpson, *JEA* 60 (1974), 102. Other signs of royalty in the tomb also exist. For information on this see: Kanawati, *BACE* 26, 37-38; Grajetzki, *Court Officials*, 114-115.

<sup>58</sup> Blackman, *Meir* 6, 15.

<sup>59</sup> Kanawati, *BACE* 26, 41-44.

<sup>60</sup> Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family* 2, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Kanawati et al, *Mereruka* 3:1, pls. 8 (b), 64 (a).

<sup>62</sup> Kanawati et al, *Mereruka* 3:1, pl. 7 (c).





Fig. 4. Waatetkhethor's feet obscuring those of her husband.  
According to Kanawati et al., *Mereruka and His Family* 3:1, pl. 64.

Moreover, the intimate scene where Waatetkhethor plays the harp for her husband's enjoyment is attested in only one other tomb.<sup>63</sup> The prominent and frequent depiction of a wife is unusual, leaving no doubt to the visitor of the tomb that Waatetkhethor was of great importance to her husband. The likely explanation for this can be found through her status and direct royal lineage as the eldest daughter of King Teti, probably by his official queen Iput.<sup>64</sup> The special privileges granted to Waatetkhethor continue through to the allocation of her own chapel within the tomb of her husband. It is interesting to note that he does not feature in a single scene in her chapel. Moreover, a dominate scene in her chapel shows Waatetkhethor seated upon her palanquin in a royal throne chair decorated with a lion.<sup>65</sup> Her eldest son, Meryteti, the possible successor to King Teti before the birth of Pepy I, accompanies her.<sup>66</sup>

Every representation of Waatetkhethor seems to have been, at least in part, to intentionally display her status and royal lineage. In emphasising her position, Mereruka consequently raised his own level of importance. Whether this was the true purpose of her prominence or demonstrative of a man possessing a great love for his wife, cannot be proved. However, the former does seem more likely.

<sup>63</sup> Kanawati et al, *Mereruka* 3:1, pls. 52, 99. Only one other known example exists in the tomb of Pepi at Meir. Blackman, *Meir* 5, pl. 45.

<sup>64</sup> Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family* 2, 14.

<sup>65</sup> Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family* 2, pl.69. The only other known example containing this motif is extant in the tomb of Queen Mersyankh III. Baud, *Famille royale*, 435; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, fig.6.

<sup>66</sup> Kanawati, *Mereruka and King Teti*, 50ff.

### 3.2 Breastfeeding

Although not unusual in a royal context, evidence of breastfeeding, or depictions of an infant ‘suckling’, is rarely attested in private tomb paintings. Only a handful of examples dated to the Old and Middle Kingdom are identifiable.<sup>67</sup> When illustrated, a woman is usually seated with the child on her lap, his legs dangling down the opposite side of her body. One hand supports the child while the other offers her breast. The image appears without much context, nor do any hieroglyphs further explain its significance. Evidence of breastfeeding is also extant without the actual depiction of suckling. In instances such as this, the name, title and epithets of a specific wet-nurse is commemorated, in conjunction with her image standing alongside important family members.<sup>68</sup>

Studies on breastfeeding have not been widely undertaken to date. What research has been published suggests that the images most commonly portray peasant women feeding their babies while undertaking their daily duties,<sup>69</sup> and assesses the physical position the breastfeeding woman and child exhibit.<sup>70</sup> Where wet-nurses are used, it is suggested that wealthy elite families probably employed them either as a prestigious status symbol, or when the mother was unable to feed her baby due to premature death or failure of milk production.<sup>71</sup> Nursing another woman’s child was regarded as a position of privilege and the social rank of a wet-nurse was determined and elevated by the status of whom she was breastfeeding.<sup>72</sup>

The rarity of such images provides the opportunity to examine the depictions and through this study, it quickly becomes apparent that no two depictions are alike. The following attestations clearly portray specific individuals.

From the Old Kingdom, all depictions of breastfeeding place the image in a different context. The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep contains a mother feeding a young baby within

---

<sup>67</sup> Evidence of breastfeeding can be found in a select few other instances such as in text and upon stele, however, this is outside the scope of this thesis.

<sup>68</sup> For example, in the tomb of Khnumhotep II. Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 1*, 65, pls. 80, 88(a).

<sup>69</sup> Robins, *Women*, 90

<sup>70</sup> Maruejol, *ASAE* 69, 311-319.

<sup>71</sup> Robins, *Women*, 89.

<sup>72</sup> Elhabashy and Abdelgawad, *IJANS* 11 (2019), 4.

bread baking scene.<sup>73</sup> In this case, it seems likely that the woman's child accompanies her whilst she is working.<sup>74</sup> In the tomb of Kagemni, a woman can be spotted breastfeeding an older child on a moored boat. The scene also contains a man accompanying her on the same boat, feeding a cow. Whether the man and woman are husband and wife on a work or leisurely trip together,<sup>75</sup> or whether the woman is using the boat as a means of transport is purely speculative. Irrespective, a scene illustrating a woman breastfeeding on a boat is unattested elsewhere. In both examples, the women are presumably feeding their own children despite all individuals being unidentified. In the absence of any further information in the form of hieroglyphic text or parallels,<sup>76</sup> a reasonable assumption for their attestation could be that breastfeeding whilst at work, or even in public, was uncommon and therefore notable when it occurred.

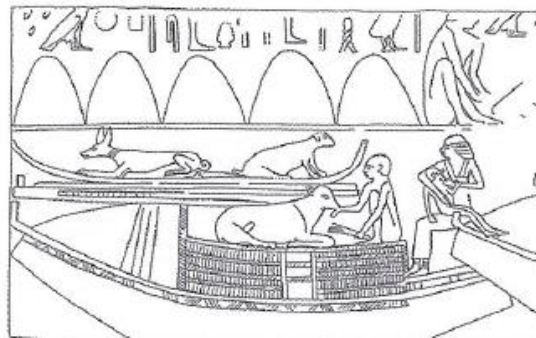


Fig. 5. Woman breastfeeding her child on a boat.  
According to Harpur and Scremin, *Kagemni*, drawing. 4.

Breastfeeding scenes in the Middle Kingdom are rare. The Eleventh Dynasty tomb of Khety, at Beni Hassan features a large scale depiction of Khety and his wife dominating this section of the wall, directly above whom are two female musicians, along with another female breastfeeding a baby.<sup>77</sup> The placement of this image as part of the main scene is of paramount importance and likely infers that the depiction represents the child of Khety and his wife, breastfed by a wet-nurse. Khety's elite status as 'Great Chief of the Oryx Nome', and

<sup>73</sup> Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, 68, table. 26.

<sup>74</sup> Robins, *Women*, 90.

<sup>75</sup> Harpur and Scremin, *Kagemni*, 367.

<sup>76</sup> Evidence of breastfeeding also exists in ostraca, textual and statuette form, some cases contain the names of the individuals involved. This further supports the importance and heightened status of a wet-nurse but assessing this type of evidence is outside the scope of this thesis.

<sup>77</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, pl. 110.

indications of his wife also having her own high rank,<sup>78</sup> certainly place the family in a position of wealth with the means to employ a wet-nurse, who presumably, occupied a vital position in their family.

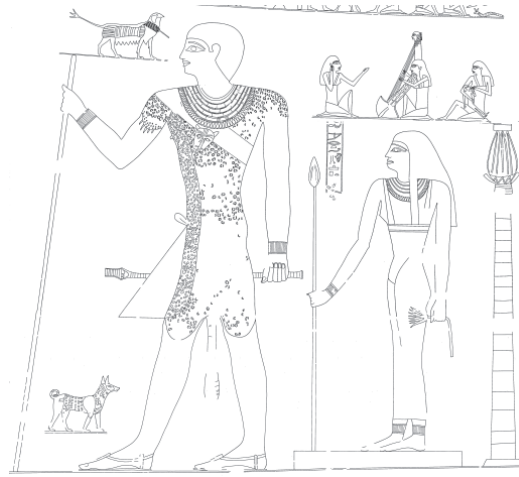


Fig. 6. Wetnurse breastfeeding.  
According to Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 6*, pl. 110.

At the same site, the tomb of Khnumhotep II also commemorates an important member of his family and emphasises the privileged social status a wet-nurse enjoyed in an offering table scene, placing her in an exceptional position of prominence.<sup>79</sup> Behind Khnumhotep II's seated wife, five important female members of the family are depicted. Three are daughters, followed by a second wife or mistress and finally, 'the [wet] nurse, Khetry, the justified, the possessor of veneration'. Standing very close to Khetry is a young girl, likely the daughter of the second wife/mistress, for whom she is responsible for nursing. Khetry's significance is accentuated twofold: firstly, through the position she occupies, accompanying the immediate family; and secondly, in the text, where she shares the same epithets as the other women in the scene. Khetry is explicitly described as a person who commands respect and identified as a valuable and essential figure extremely close to the family.

<sup>78</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 6*, pl. 51. The type of staff Khetry's wife holds is the indicator. A parallel can be seen in Kanawati, *Meir 4*, pl. 89. A collection of Old Kingdom depictions illustrating women holding this type of staff have been gathered by Harpur, *Decoration*, 332.

<sup>79</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 1*, pls. 80, 88(a).



Fig. 7. Wetnurse standing behind family members  
According to Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, pl. 88 (a).

It is highly likely that these two scenes reflect images of real wet-nurses who served the families of Khety and Khnumhotep II. The women have been commemorated on tomb walls because they played important roles in the lives of each tomb owner. The infrequency of such scenes also infer that the hiring of wet-nurses was uncommon.

A probable final reference to breastfeeding can be found in the Middle Kingdom tomb of Baqet III, again, located at Beni Hassan.<sup>80</sup> Although the image is not abundantly clear due to deterioration, the almost identical posture of the woman holding her baby in the punishment scene strongly suggests she could also be breastfeeding.<sup>81</sup> No further information is provided. As discussed in the chapter two, representations of punishment are highly unusual. Combining an illustration of a mother breastfeeding, as she is being beaten, is of paramount importance as if the event actually occurred and was witnessed during Baqet III's lifetime, it is not an image one would easily forget. Accepting this as the representation of a real event would also explain why no similar attestation exists elsewhere.

As is evident, scenes involving breastfeeding in private tombs from the Old and Middle Kingdom are rare. Furthermore, their manner of representation and the context in which they appear varies greatly. That is, no woman breastfeeds in the same surrounding environment. This complicates any argument for the theme being attributed to artist copying as it does not seem to be a theme with much popularity. It seems more likely that breastfeeding was not

<sup>80</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, pls. 52 (b), 62.

<sup>81</sup> A fact that drastically worsens the way the woman is treated.

performed in public very often causing any act that was witnessed to become a memorable occasion and subsequently recorded in the tomb. Perhaps Kagemni was touched by the private moment of the breastfeeding woman on the moored boat, or perhaps he knew the working ‘couple’ and observed the family carrying out their daily life together. In cases where specificity is explicitly present, such as in the tomb of Khnumhotep II, it is highly likely that the commemoration of a real wet-nurse occurs, standing alongside his wife and children. When closely examined, it appears that each child is of a different age and at times, their sex is also determinable. Even without naming the breastfeeding women, the action performed by them, along with the context within which each woman is represented, contains enough variation to support the idea that the images are likely to reflect life experiences which have been recorded as moments of significance by the tomb owner.

### **3.3 Children’s Games**

Family gatherings with young children in attendance frequently see the little ones running around and playing games together. As a child grows, they let their imagination guide them through an endless tunnel of amusement as they explore their surroundings through play. When children meet, their enjoyment and learning is enhanced through shared experiences. Just as this happens in the present day, so too did it occur in ancient times.

Representations of the types of games children played are attested in a small number of tombs from the Old and Middle Kingdom, and it is through these images that the viewer can get a sense of how ancient Egyptian children delighted in the playful nature of games and amused themselves. When scenes are watched over by the tomb owner, one can imagine it was not only the children who were being entertained by the games but also the spectating adults who were generally fond of physical activity themselves.<sup>82</sup>

In most cases, the name of each game and its precise rules are not given, however, the scenes provide amazing details on the ways in which children played and the games they engaged in. Although not all scholars agree with such realistic explanations for the depiction of children playing games,<sup>83</sup> the illustrations do serve as representations of life. Significantly, they also

---

<sup>82</sup> A literature review of this topic is well summarised in: Abdou, *Sports and Games*, 116-117.

<sup>83</sup> For a theory relating to the depiction of children’s games connected to with religion and the afterlife, see: Janssen and Janssen, *Growing up*, 55.



In contrast to the tomb of Ptahhetep, which features all games played by boys, the tomb of Mereruka contains a variety of games played by both male and female participants, hence indicating both genders were permitted to enjoy play time and games.<sup>88</sup> The tomb of Mereruka also depicts a rare tug-of-war game featuring a group of boys separated into two teams.

The location of where the games are represented in the tomb of Mereruka is significant. They occupy the north wall of room A13, where an entranceway to the tomb of Mereruka's son, Meryteti, was later cut. While it is possible that this was the only or most appropriate place the chapel could be extended, a strong case also exists for the argument that the specific location was strategically and purposefully selected. As previously discussed, Meryteti was the eldest son of Mereruka and princess Waatetkhethor, daughter of King Teti, which also made him a likely successor to the royal throne for a point in time until King Pepy I was born.<sup>89</sup> That Meryteti's tomb was a later addition to his father's tomb is evident in the way the doorway interrupts the scene, indicating its location was a matter to be considered. It therefore seems no coincidence that Meryteti chose to place the entrance to his tomb chapel on this wall; a wall that most probably depicted himself playing games amongst the other children whilst his parents watched over him. Furthermore, the scene appears within close proximity to those that depict Mereruka interacting with his children; for example, playing senet 'presumably' with one of his sons, and the illustration of him holding the hand of his son, representing an ideal father-son relationship.<sup>90</sup>

Only two tombs dating to the Middle Kingdom contain scenes of children playing games. The tomb of Baqet III is the only one to contain a fantastic series of ball games.<sup>91</sup> The first game played by six girls 'piggy in the middle'; the next involves two girls being 'piggy backed' by another two, each with a ball in her hand. Perhaps the objective of the game is to throw and catch the ball at the same time which would complement the following game perfectly – juggling. The next group of unusual images depict girls playing a 'leaping dance', followed by

---

<sup>88</sup> Additional male youths appear in a short fourth register interrupted by the cutting of a niche. However, whether or not they are playing games with less movement or are simply spectating bystanders is not certain.

<sup>89</sup> Kanawati, Mereruka and King Teti, 50ff.

<sup>90</sup> Kanawati, Mereruka and King Teti, 69.

<sup>91</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, 26-27, pl. 60.



‘being quiet’.<sup>92</sup> Unique images of lively acrobatic movements, back bridges and somersaults performed by girls follow, with one girl performing a back bend without her hands supporting her!

Another group of rare images are attested in the neighbouring tomb of Khety.<sup>93</sup> Each game is illustrated on a series of successive, short registers and involve between two and four male participants. Some of the most unusual games include: two individual depictions of young men carrying another on their shoulders, horizontally. The first case shows the boy’s body in a lax state and the second very rigid. In another register a boy either balances or spins upside down upon his head. A separate illustration shows two boys beating their fists on the back of another boy who is on the ground in a crouched position. Although each image contains accompanying text as a caption, the translations are too uncertain to provide any further insight on the nature of the games themselves.<sup>94</sup>



Fig. 9. Children playing games  
According to Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, pl. 60.

It is interesting that the tombs of Khety and Baqet III are the only two to contain games involving the use of objects. Khety’s tomb portrays two boys using long hooked sticks to play with a ring on the ground, similar perhaps to hockey. While Baqet III’s tomb portrays girls playing with balls, it also depicts a group of boys shuffling what appears to be upside down cups, maybe hiding objects inside, in addition to a game that involves throwing spikes at a target and throwing heavy bags high in the air.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, 28.

<sup>93</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, pl 51 – 53, 60, 110.

<sup>94</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, 44-45.

<sup>95</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, 44, pl. 62.

The vast variety of games illustrated in each tomb is a testament to the brilliant imaginative mind of ancient Egyptian children. The diverse range of individual games paired together may show those which were preferred by each specific group of youngsters, while those that were repeated throughout a number of tombs could indicate the games' popularity. In addition, the differing depiction of genders and number of participants per game, as well as the occasional use of gaming objects, probably reflects actual occasions of play by young ones in the family and community. The rare instance of named players in the tomb of Idu demonstrates an explicit example.

As is usual, a search for deeper meaning to justify the existence of games in tomb scenes is sought by scholars with some striving to prove a relationship between games, religion and festivals.<sup>96</sup> However, while it does seem to be the case with dancing, a topic often discussed in association with the appearance of games, it does not apply to attestations of children playing.

It becomes apparent that the desire to attribute unusual images as mistakes by an artist who conforms to the rules of decorum outweighs the understanding of the games illustrated on the tomb walls. For example, Smith argues the drawing of the near arm of a boy, placed behind his body in the tomb of Ptahhetep, as a 'queer mistake' made by exceptionally gifted artists.<sup>97</sup> It is far more likely this arm placement was the actual movement the boy exercised in an attempt to grab onto the leg of his adversary as part of the game.

Captions with obscure meanings create further difficulties in garnering a full understanding of games. An example of this can be understood by considering the game Harpur refers to as 'fighting with sticks' found in the tomb of Idu. In Simpson's tentative translation of the accompanying text, the game certainly does seem to contain an element of violence, however, without a definitive translation it remains open for interpretation. Simpson himself admits this and advises the translation to be considered with caution. A caveat which is concurred by Kanawati where he ratifies that any translation would be 'too hypothetical' in the tomb of Khety.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> Davies, *Ptahhetep*, 11 and Janssen and Janssen, *Growing up*, 55-56.

<sup>97</sup> Smith, *HESPOK*, 331-332.

<sup>98</sup> Simpson, *Qar and Idu*, 25 and Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, 44.

Despite the unknown specifics relating to games depicted within the tomb walls, the illustrations of unique games and their participants, the instruments used and actions displayed between playmates, they all combine together to reveal a separate world from everyday life where children were able to enjoy themselves free of care. The light-hearted nature of little ones shines through and exposes the softer side of the tomb owner, who likely valued family and happiness amongst the things that were most important to him in life. These were some of the pleasant and personal memories he wished to preserve for eternity.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted a series of unusual representations involving women and children. The significance of illustrations that represent women in prominent positions is paramount because they appear in a context where the female is usually depicted as a secondary figure to her husband. Evidently, an artist was able to illustrate subtle hints of a particular female's importance, whilst still respecting the principles of decorum. Perhaps the best example of this can be seen at the entrance to the tomb of Mereruka, where the feet of his beloved Waatetkhethor obscure his own. Yet, it appears that other individuals, besides a royal princess, were also deserved of this privilege, such as in the example where the wet-nurse, Khetry, stands alongside important members of the family in the tomb of Khnumhotep. Overall, there is no doubt that ancient Egyptian tombs convey a message of women being less important than men. However, on occasions where the tomb owner wished for their position to be emphasised, it could be done.

The softer side of a tomb owner is also represented through unusual illustrations involving children. Scenes of breastfeeding and playing games convey a light-hearted feeling to the viewer and do not obviously stand out as necessary images which would assist the deceased in the afterlife. Whether the children involved in both scene types were known to the tomb owner, cannot be proven but the example of the child playing in the tomb of Mereruka, the evidence does seem to suggest a close relationship between the man and the boy. In other scenes, the images probably exist because they were witnessed by and appealed to the tomb owner as a man who valued family and wished to preserve meaningful memories of life.

## Chapter 4: Identifying Features of Specific Individuals

The conventions of decorum in Egyptian tomb decoration dictates the way images are illustrated and restricts the amount of freedom an artist may have. This has resulted in scholarship describing artistic depictions as highly standardised. Subtle changes in the style and proportion of the images occur over time and extensive studies based on this have resulted in the establishment of a dating system for tomb art.<sup>99</sup> However, it becomes apparent when studying the detail of artistic scenes, that other examples of deviations, beyond these gradual and systematic changes, exist. Deviations of this type are not classified as systematic. This is due to the simple reason that they do not act as a marker of change where the trend was established and continued in other tombs. Nor should they be attributed to a mistake made by the artist, as is the excuse so used often to explain the seemingly unexplainable.

This chapter focusses on a series of unusual examples which contain identifying features that allow for some individuals to be distinguishable from others. Examples of distinguishable features include portrayals of physical abnormalities and disabilities, dwarfism, leg and back deformities,<sup>100</sup> potbellies, hernias,<sup>101</sup> specific injuries and the representation of foreigners. Such identifying characteristics are present in multiple tombs and occasionally also include the name of the individual represented. Furthermore, when such depictions occur, it suggests that they are sometimes used by the artist to tell a story, which may have been inspired by an event the tomb owner or artist witnessed during his lifetime. Deviations of this kind exist because the artist possessed a level of freedom, which allowed him to portray scenes as he wished to and reflect reality whilst still working within the strictures of decorum.

### 4.1 Physical Deformities

A unique depiction of a man with a deformed chest is present in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Nikauisesi.<sup>102</sup> The scene is partly damaged but clearly portrays a man with a protruding chest under the seated tomb owner, supporting a box on his shoulder with his hand and holding the

---

<sup>99</sup> See Robins, *Proportion and Style*, 64-86, 229-254.

<sup>100</sup> A thorough collection of examples from the Old Kingdom are discussed in: Mahran, *AJH* 2 (2016), 169-192.

<sup>101</sup> For example, Kanawati and Hassan, *Teti Cemetery* 2, pl. 42.

<sup>102</sup> Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* 6, 36, pls. 12, 48.

leash of a seated dog in the other.<sup>103</sup> The man is named as a specific individual, ‘the seal bearer, Itji’, and could have the condition *pectus carinatum*, also known as Pigeon Chest, ‘a deformity of the chest wall characterised by anterior protrusion of the sternum and ribs’, of which males are more commonly affected.<sup>104</sup> Despite his deformity, Itji seems to have been quite an important member of staff to Nikauisesi given his position directly under his seat. One could speculate whether it was possible that he was responsible for attending to animals, in addition to holding his position as sealer.<sup>105</sup> Another man standing behind him, albeit without deformity, is depicted with a leashed monkey eating fruit while seated upon his head. Perhaps Nikauisesi kept the two animals as pets and these men were their attendants. If this suggestion is correct, it appears the deformity did not hinder Itji’s ability to do his job just as well as the man behind him.

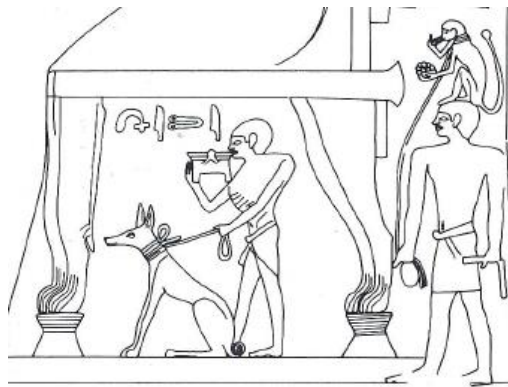


Fig. 10. Man with chest deformity under the seat of Nikauisesi  
According to Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* 6, pl. 48.

Specific animals can also be recognised by deformities. An exceptional example of this appears in the tomb of Inumin, where an ox with deformed horns can be identified in two different scenes, allowing for its fate to be tracked.<sup>106</sup> In the first scene, the ox is presented by an attendant to the tomb owner amongst other oxen which have normally shaped horns.<sup>107</sup> The

<sup>103</sup> It is also believed Itji may have a hunchback deformity. Mahran, *AJH* 2 (2016), 182.

<sup>104</sup> Bhargava and Bhargava, *JPCS* 3:2 (2017), 118-119.

<sup>105</sup> Kozma, *AJMG* Part A, 140:4 (2006), 306.

<sup>106</sup> Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery* 8, 34, 45, pls. 9, 11 (c), 29 (b), 49 (a), 52.

<sup>107</sup> Other examples of deformed horns can be seen in Épron and Wild, *Ti*, pls. 167-68; Junker, *Giza* 4, pl. 12; Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchnum*, fig. 17; Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Unis Cemetery* 2, pl. 71.

same ox again appears amongst the others, in a second scene depicting the slaughtering of the animals. Although no precise reason is provided for this particular animal having been of special significance, it is interesting to note that it is the only one not shown in the process of being cut by the butchers. As rightly pointed out by Kanawati, if specificity is represented in humans, it is not unreasonable to think it may also be attested in animals.<sup>108</sup>

## 4.2 Dwarfism

Illustrations of dwarfism recur frequently in tomb scenes and most commonly depict the dwarf in scenes of daily life and at work.<sup>109</sup> Research on the topic indicates that dwarfs were not only accepted amongst others but were also respected members in society who, on occasion, attained positions of particularly high status.<sup>110</sup> Two such dwarfs from the Old Kingdom, Seneb<sup>111</sup> and Perniankhu,<sup>112</sup> who was also known as ‘the Dancing Dwarf’,<sup>113</sup> were even awarded their own tombs. Further evidence suggests there may have been more who attained the privilege.<sup>114</sup> In both cases, the men are named in artistic depictions and textual form leaving little doubt of them being specific individuals who lived and served the kings of the Fifth, and possibly Sixth Dynasty. It is interesting to note that in the ‘Group Statue of Seneb and His Family’, he chose to depict himself true to form, with his wife by his side and his children at his feet, highlighting the difference in size between them.<sup>115</sup> For Seneb, it seems there was no reason to hide his condition and he was comfortable to represent himself as he was, as proudly and publicly as any other tomb owner. Perhaps all dwarfs in ancient Egyptian society felt the same way but without similar evidence it is not possible to make an assessment.

---

<sup>108</sup> Kanawati *Teti Cemetery* 8, 45-46.

<sup>109</sup> For example, Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family* 1, pl. 7 (b); Steindroff, *Ti*, pl.15; Kanawati and McFarlane, *Deshasha*, pls. 28, 33; Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 6, pl. 110.

<sup>110</sup> Kozma, *AJMG* Part A, 140:4 (2006), 303-311; Dawson, *JEA* 24:1 (1938), 185-189; Mahran, *AJH* 2 (2016), 169-192.

<sup>111</sup> Tomb publication: Junker, *Giza* 5, passim. For information on his career see: Cherpion, *BIFAO* 84 (1984), 35-54.

<sup>112</sup> Hawass, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), 157-165. The tomb of Periankhu was discovered in close proximity to that of Seneb and the pyramids, causing speculation that he may have been Seneb’s father. See Hawass, *ASAE Supplement* 34 (2005), 26.

<sup>113</sup> Kozma, *AJMG* Part A, 140:4 (2006), 307.

<sup>114</sup> Dawson, *JEA* 24:1 (1938), 185-189.

<sup>115</sup> Junker, *Giza* 5, pl. 9 (b).

Two men with specific features are present in multiple Middle Kingdom tombs at Beni Hassan.<sup>116</sup> One is a dwarf and the other has a condition known as *talipes equinovarus* or clubfoot.<sup>117</sup> In all instances, they form part of a larger scene in which the tomb owner dominates with the two men accompanying him in close proximity. The tombs of Khety and Baqet I illustrate almost identical representations with the standing tomb owner holding a staff, accompanied by sandal bearers and other attendants, with the two men depicted directly below his figure. However, a difference in the image is present in the tomb of Baqet I, which also contains another man with a hunchback. Considering the hunchbacked man is not again attested elsewhere, this disproves the theory that the scenes were copied. Perhaps his sudden disappearance is because he died or was dismissed before having the chance to serve another tomb owner. Despite the two men being unnamed in each tomb they appear, it seems highly likely they are the same men employed by all three tomb owners. In fact, it is also likely they appear in a fourth. The Australian expedition working at the Beni Hassan have observed they probably were present on the south wall of the tomb of Ramushenti (tomb 27). However, it cannot be confirmed due to the very bad condition of the scene.



Fig. 11. Three men with various forms of deformities standing behind Baqet I  
According to Newberry, *Beni Hasan 2*, pl. 32.

The very presence of the dwarf and clubfooted man in multiple tombs suggests they were probably close acquaintances working together. One can imagine whether they were brought together through a mutual understanding of their shared physical abnormalities. Such a pair would have been highly recognisable and if their representation is due to them having been in

<sup>116</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 6*, 41, pl. 77(a); Newberry, *Beni Hasan 2*, pl. 32; Lashien and Mourad, *Beni Hassan 5*, pl. 77.

<sup>117</sup> For information on the disability see: Chassinat, *BIFAO 10* (1912), 169-173.

the service of multiple members of the same family, it seems appropriate for them to have been commemorated on the walls of each tomb.

Two unusual scenes depicting female dwarfs are extant from the Old Kingdom. The tomb of the official Nuntjer at Giza depicts a very small-sized female dwarf dancing amongst a group of regular-sized women.<sup>118</sup> This image forms part of a larger scene which is for the entertainment of the tomb owner and his wife. Although the dwarf is unnamed, her representation is unparalleled and can only be compared with the evidence of the dancing male dwarf, Periankhu. Dwarfs employed as entertainers is well attested and so it seems probable that this image represents a specific female who worked as part of the troupe.

The second scene is attested in the tomb of Princess Waatetkhethor, the wife of the vizier Mereruka, at Saqqara. Located upon entry as the most prominent scene in her tomb, Waatetkhethor is carried on her palanquin and surrounded by a group of mostly female attendants, several of whom are dwarfs. Between eight and twelve female dwarfs are illustrated on the bottom register, some of whom contain more pronounced characteristic bodily features. The women are responsible for transporting a range of the princess' goods, such as sandals, linen, myrrh and other ointments. While it is not uncommon for a woman to have female attendants replace those who would typically be male, it is unusual for a group of dwarfs to be depicted working together in this way. Furthermore, their appearance suggests there was a high number of dwarfs living in the capital at the time as evidenced by the amount of skeletal remains found from the period.<sup>119</sup>

### **4.3 Fighting Boatmen and their Injuries**

Scenes of boat fights are first attested in the Old Kingdom<sup>120</sup> and while the general style developed over time, specific features in some examples give the impression that they record

---

<sup>118</sup> Giza Project at Harvard University, (2017) viewed on 14 July 2020. Vienna ÄS8028. Kunsthistorisches Museum. Blocks of relief from mastaba of Nuntjer, chapel.  
<<http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/objects/45384/allphotos/>>

<sup>119</sup> Human remains of both male and female dwarfs dating to the Old Kingdom have been found in the capital. Kozma et al., *AJMG* Part A 155:8 (2011): 1817-1824.

<sup>120</sup> The earliest known example comes from the tomb of Queen Mersyankh III. See Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, fig. 4.



real life incidents.<sup>121</sup> Typical scenes depict boatmen standing on their respective boats, engaged in a fight using their oars as weapons to poke each other, perhaps with the goal of pushing them into the water.<sup>122</sup> It is thought the examples represent a somewhat spontaneous and entertaining event that occurred after finishing work for fun.

One such unique example is attested in the tomb of Inumin at Saqqara where a large number of men over a wide range of ages engage in a very chaotic boat fight.<sup>123</sup> The most unusual feature of this scene is the very forceful nature of physical contact between the opponents where a pair are illustrated grasping each other's genitals! The other boatmen participate with more usual tactics, using poles and oars as weapons to poke and shove at each other, although the weaponry use of shorter clubs and throw-sticks is unattested elsewhere. One man illustrated at the centre of the scene has fallen overboard. The whole spectacle is watched over by the tomb owner and his wife, and it certainly would have been an entertaining sight.

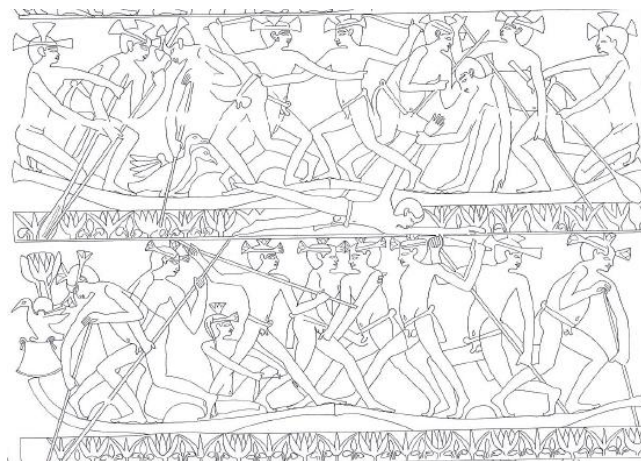


Fig. 12. Fighting boatmen in the tomb of Inumin  
According to Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery* 8, pl. 48.

Obvious threats to the safety of boatmen appear in rare scenes involving crocodiles. The tomb of Senbi I at Meir contains a crocodile lurking directly beneath the boats on which a boat fight is taking place.<sup>124</sup> The boatmen appear to be either unconcerned or unaware of the crocodile hiding in the water, but they were likely to have been familiar with the creatures living in the

<sup>121</sup> Kanawati, *ASAE* 83 (2009), 265-266.

<sup>122</sup> For example see Lashien, *Kahai*, pls.23-25, 81-82 and Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery* 8, pls. 17, 48; Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 4, pl. 60.

<sup>123</sup> Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery* 8, pls. 16-17.

<sup>124</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, 32, pl. 79.

Nile. Perhaps the heightened risk was part of the fun. A more serious situation is portrayed in the tomb of Ni-ankh-Pepy at Zawiyet el-Maiyitin it depicts a group of men engaged in the more typical style boat fight using their oars as weapons,<sup>125</sup> but also illustrates a crocodile lurking beneath the water actually biting the leg of a man who has fallen overboard.<sup>126</sup> None of the boatmen seem distressed by the incident with only one bending down to assist the man in the water, whilst the rest carry on in their game.

The tomb of Khnumhotep II contains a scene so unusual it was inaccurately recorded in an early tomb report, either because the unfamiliar feature was unnoticed, or to correct the artist's presumed 'mistake'.<sup>127</sup> On the east wall, below the fishing scene of Khnumhotep II, a dramatic illustration of boatmen trying to rescue their fellowman from the water, who surprisingly has only one leg.<sup>128</sup> It is uncertain whether this scene illustrates a boat fight or simply boat travel. Regardless, the significant unique detail of the man's amputated leg is unparalleled. In addition, it is indeterminable whether the depiction is of an accident in which a man lost his leg, or of an amputee who fell overboard and needed rescuing. No text provides an explanation for the incident. Irrespective of the exact circumstances, the scene certainly tells an unusual story involving a one legged man on a boat. A sight which was surely not witnessed more than once in a lifetime.

#### **4.4 Foreigners – The 'Beja' Herdsmen and the Asiatics**

The representation of foreigners demonstrates how the artist possessed the freedom to illustrate particular characteristics in order to identify specific peoples and nationalities. Deviations in colour, from the usual tone of brown and yellow for skin, the dark colour of the hair and eyes, and the inclusion of the most striking colourful patterns and intricate designs on clothing, cause foreigners to become immediately recognisable.

##### *The 'Beja' Herdsmen*

---

<sup>125</sup> For an explanation of this type of scene, see Vandier, *Manuel* 5, 510ff; Harpur, *Decoration*, 153-55.

<sup>126</sup> Varille, *Ni-ank-Pepi*, pls. 5-6. A similar scene can be seen in the tomb of Wekhhotep I at Meir. Although, it depicts a far more aggressive boat fight scene in which the man overboard has been deliberately shoved into the water by an opponent, with the crocodile prowling directly under his head. Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, pls. 64 (b), 65 (a), 92.

<sup>127</sup> See Newberry, *Beni Hasan* 1, pl. 34.

<sup>128</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 60-61, pls. 79 (a) - (c), 135.

Interesting depictions of this kind are attested in a pair of Middle Kingdom tombs at Meir. In each case, the scenes depict an emaciated herdsman, his ribs and collarbone visible with bushy hair and a beard.<sup>129</sup> These unique physical features are vastly unlike those of the typical Egyptian causing the herdsman to become instantly recognisable. It is believed these representations depict a ‘Beja’ herdsman, who, to this day hold the legacy for their expertise in herding cattle.

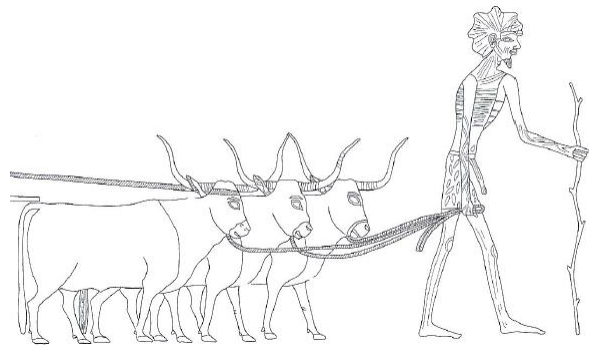


Fig. 13. The ‘Beja’ leading cattle in the tomb of Wekhhotep I  
According to Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, pl. 86.

Two images of the Beja are depicted in the tomb of Senbi I and the tomb of Wekhhotep I contains three. In all but one instance, the Beja is illustrated with his distinctive features and carries a walking stick. A unique scene presents an anomaly with the herdsman found on a boat.<sup>130</sup> The notion of a foreign herdsman brought in to assist with herding cattle is accentuated through this unparalleled example.

It is not clear whether the Beja depictions represent the same man, or if they are indicative of a group of herdsmen working at Meir. Regardless, it appears they were engaged for their expert shepherding skills after a troublesome period of decreased agricultural production, no doubt as the result of climate change.<sup>131</sup> Circumstances around their employment are unclear. There is no evidence to provide information on their treatment, nor outline whether they were paid and treated fairly.<sup>132</sup> One of the most easily recognisable attributes of the Beja herdsman is his

<sup>129</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, pls. 12, 13 (a-b), 38 (a), 39, 51 (a-b), 58 (a), 77, 79, 86, 87, 90.

<sup>130</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, pls. 31 (b), 79.

<sup>131</sup> See n.44

<sup>132</sup> Hebron, *Health*, 101-102.

undernourished state which causes one to wonder how well cared for he may have been.<sup>133</sup> Considering the herdsmen are attested in tombs belonging to father and son,<sup>134</sup> it may be the case that Senbi I was the first to employ the foreigners and subsequently advised his son, Wekhhotep I, to continue. Why further Egyptians chose not to carry on with this tradition remains unknown.

### *Asiatics*

Old Kingdom art traditionally depicts the Asiatic people as the enemy; they were most commonly represented as bound captives in images of siege and war. As such, it can be inferred that the relationship between the Egyptians and this group of foreigners was unfriendly. However, a shift in their representation is evident from tomb scenes dated to the Twelfth Dynasty, where there seems to have been a change in attitude between the two countries. In this period, there is a clear demonstration of a case with a much closer, even friendly, relationship.<sup>135</sup>

The differing physical characteristics between the Egyptians and the Asiatics are obvious. The male foreigners possess lighter skin tone, longer hair and vastly different shaped facial features with a pointed beard. Few rare cases show remaining traces of red paint on hair and skin.<sup>136</sup> Both genders are also illustrated with elongated shaped eyes and nose, and wearing intricately patterned design of clothing. These distinctive features cause the foreigners to become easily identifiable.

The tomb of Intef, located at Thebes, contains a scene depicting the siege of an Asiatic fort.<sup>137</sup> It is because comparative scenes most often exist in royal temples, the representation of Asiatics in battle in a tomb context is somewhat uncommon, particularly when considering the treatment of women and children in the scene. Apart from more frequently attested images of bound captives, the scene also portrays Asiatic females being pulled by the hair, their children

---

<sup>133</sup> For further information on the physical aspects of the Beja herdsmen see Darlow, *Chronological Investigation*, 170-171.

<sup>134</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Meir* 4, 14.

<sup>135</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Saretta, *Asiatics*, 93.

<sup>136</sup> For example in the tomb of Intef at Thebes and Amenemhat at Beni Hassan.

<sup>137</sup> Jaros-Deckert, *Ini-jti.f*, pl. 17.

by their side, as well as a man in a back bend who is about to be beaten on the chest. One very sad image shows a young child seized from its mother and taken away by an Egyptian and another who may be seeking a breastfeed from his mother, but this part of the scene has deteriorated and is not unclear. Only one such other graphic parallel exists from the late Old Kingdom tomb of Inti.<sup>138</sup> However, this scene differs with the inclusion of an elderly figure, in addition to women using weapons and involved in fighting. Two children are also shown being taken away from their mothers, one of whom is carried on the shoulders of a soldier.

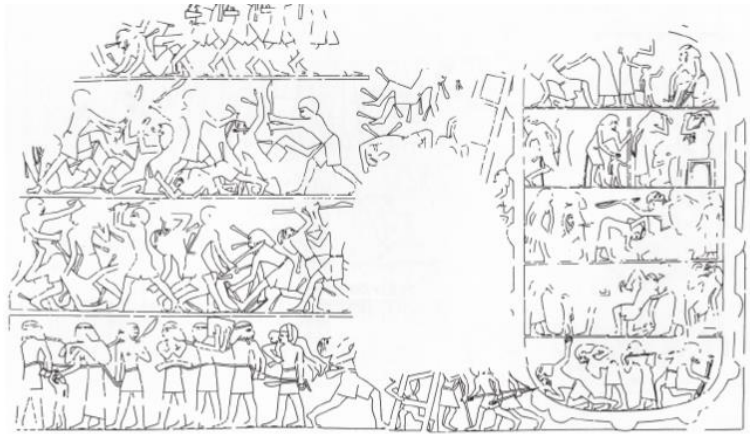


Fig. 14. The siege of an Asiatic fort in the tomb of Inti  
According to Kanawati and McFarlane, *Deshasha* 4, pl. 26.

The Twelfth Dynasty tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan depicts Asiatics appears in stark contrast to the earlier aforementioned scenes.<sup>139</sup> ‘The Procession of the Asiatics’ is a well-known, unique scene, illustrating the arrival of the foreign people to Egypt. As expected, the distinctive visual representation of their appearance stands out but so does the peaceful nature of their visit. A group of men, women and children, arrive in an organised and calm fashion bearing gifts of black eye paint, or ‘galena’ for Khnumhotep II. Their leader specifically named and described as ‘the ruler of a foreign land, Ibsha’, heads the group. Several scholars have discussed the purpose and significance of this scene, debating whether it was for trade, work or immigration.<sup>140</sup> These deliberations in part show support for the theory that tomb scenes

<sup>138</sup> Kanawati and McFarlane, *Deshasha*, 25, pls. 2, 26-27.

<sup>139</sup> Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 72-78. pls. 29, 42 – 48, 115(b), 123-124, 128-129, 130(c).

<sup>140</sup> Goedicke, *JARCE* 21 (1984), 203-210; Kessler, *SAK* 12 (1987), 147-165 and Kamrin, *Khnumhotep II*, 94-96; A.L Mourad in Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 77-78.

depict events which truly occurred in life. The opinion that the scene was strategically positioned within the tomb and its symbolic link to the afterlife<sup>141</sup> could contain some truth, however, the unique attributes and specific details of the scene including the name of the group's leader and the date of their arrival makes it unconvincing. The illustrated document pictured at the forefront of the scene indicates the event took place in the 'regnal year six under the Majesty of Horus, Leader of the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khakheperre (Senwosret II)',<sup>142</sup> thus making it very difficult to interpret the scene in any other way other than the commemoration of an actual historical event.

Perhaps a gradual shift in the relationship between the Egyptians and the Asiatics is further evident from their possible representation in other tombs at Beni Hassan. These representations again illustrate the foreign people in scenes of warfare, however, they are on the side of the Egyptians.<sup>143</sup> They are not the enemy, nor do they receive any harsh treatment. The combined evidence from all periods could be interpreted to demonstrate a changing relationship between the two cultures. One which began as enemies, transitioned into a period of (probably forced and subsequently voluntary) migration and tolerance, followed by peaceful affiliations and completed with taking over under the Hyksos.

Irrespective of the particulars surrounding the relationship between the two cultures, the rare appearance of Asiatics in Old and Middle Kingdom tomb art is indicative of a level of freedom the tomb owner and artist possessed to include images according to their wishes. As stated by Saretta, 'the paintings in these private tombs reflect the immediate impressions of the artists of the Middle Kingdom who saw the foreigners and provide unique data regarding their appearance'.<sup>144</sup> It seems the Egyptians truly had associations with Asiatics in ancient times and chose to commemorate these relationships on their tomb walls as memorials.

---

<sup>141</sup> Kamrin, *JAEl* 1 (2009), 29-31.

<sup>142</sup> A.L Mourad in Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan* 1, 48 and 72-73.

<sup>143</sup> Saretta believes a number of soldiers present in the tombs of Baqet III, Khety, Khnumhotep I and Amenemhat, appear to be non-Egyptian and could be Asiatics. Saretta, *Asiatics*, 80-86.

<sup>144</sup> Saretta, *Asiatics*, 44.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

There is no doubt that artists responsible for tomb paintings were trained in and bound by conventions of decorum. However, just as it was required to illustrate certain images in a perfect way, it is evident that there was also a level of freedom in the illustration of others. The many examples of personalised features portrayed in tomb paintings contradict any notion that decorum was unequivocally inflexible. Moreover, the depiction of deformities refutes that the human figure should always be shown in its perfect form; representations of potentially dangerous situations further challenge the assertion that scenes should always depict an idealised image of daily life.

Paintings of unique and specific identifiable characteristics in humans, animals and events exist which suggests that the tomb owner and artist witnessed and experienced these manifestations. Resemblances between scenes only exist in the environmental background, not in their detail. That is, at first glance, boat fight scenes appear to be similar because they depict boatmen on boats, holding oars whilst on the Nile, but the finer details within the scene that differ from the standard iconography reveal their personal experience on a particular day. When these differences are present, it proves they were not copied from an earlier scene and so we can conclude that inspiration for images illustrated on tomb walls came from real life experiences.

## Chapter 5: The Tomb of Khnumhotep II

As established throughout the body of this thesis, numerous decorated tombs dating to the Old and Middle Kingdoms contain attestations of specificity. Yet, amongst those images, in the same tombs, scenes which are seemingly unspecific also appear. These scenes do not contain any palpable qualities enabling the subject to be dated to an exact moment in history. Nor do they illustrate an unusual occurrence which identifies the representation as a specific experience of the tomb owner. Therefore, interpreting tomb art is difficult particularly because both such representations are illustrated side by side. Whether it is possible that some scenes depict actual events in the midst of others which do not is debatable. The aim of this thesis was not to attempt to answer this question, however, it has become evident that it is a topic that requires further research.

There is no doubt that the quality of art in the tomb of Khnumhotep II is exceptional. Obviously, Khnumhotep II was able to dedicate great resources to its fine execution, utilising the talents of highly skilled artists whose illustrations are remarkable in their detail. It is clear that a tomb of this calibre underwent an extensive planning phase prior to its creation, with the division of registers, their size and the layout of each scene carefully considered. A tomb demonstrating this level of detail suggests that every aspect of the tomb's contents, including the decorative program, likely received similar attention. Yet, it is curious that in some instances, specifics are provided but not in others.

The unique depiction of the procession of the Asiatics records the name of the group's leader, 'the ruler of a foreign land, Ibsha' and lists the number of his companions as thirty-seven. It also states the purpose of their visit; to bring the gift of galena or black eye paint. What is more, the visit is dated to regnal year six of Senwosret II's reign. With such absolute specifics, it is surely regarded as a record of a historical event Khnumhotep II wished to celebrate through his tomb.

In comparison, the scenes nearby the procession of the Asiatics do not contain such features. The desert hunt names several of the individuals participating in the hunt, yet there is no date provided to specify when the hunt took place. Nor is there any text outlining whether this particular scene commemorates a specific hunt, or simply refers to the regular hunting trips that were taken during the life of the tomb owner. Another possible interpretation is that it



could be a fictional representation of what would hopefully occur in the afterlife. Similarly, the register devoted to the presentation of animals is another example without such particulars.

The tomb of Khnumhotep II continues to juxtapose a number of other scenes clearly representing true aspects of his life against those which appear as general. The wall that contains the illustration of the man overboard with a missing leg is dominated by the large depiction of Khumhotep II spear fishing, a common scene present in many tombs. Likewise, the named family wet-nurse, Khetry, who stands alongside important female members of the family is pictured behind Khnumhotep II's wife seated at her offering table.

This raises the matter of what constitutes a scene to be described as specific. It is important to note that even common or 'typical' scenes can differentiate themselves from another in their detail. In Khnumhotep II's scene of the desert hunt, several of his sons are identified by name. Yet, it is not possible for us to ascertain whether these individual men were present during a particular hunting trip, on every hunting trip, or perhaps on numerous separate trips that are represented together. Nor is it evident in which place they hunted. By Gaballa's definition, this disqualifies the scene from being specific because it lacks all the elements that tell a story. Similarly, in the scene depicting the presentation of animals, it is not clear whether the species illustrated were presented on a particular occasion, or recurringly. Moreover, in another scene related to the presentation of animals, many species of birds have been caught in clap-nets. It seems extraordinary that all these birds would have been caught on the same occasion. It is more likely that this scene combines multiple catches, perhaps for the purpose of commemorating the diverse range of species caught over his life. Therefore, it may be prudent to consider whether scenes that possibly represent multiple events together should be classified as unspecific.

Khnumhotep II's tomb does not only feature specificity in tomb scenes, but also in text. The tomb contains a lengthy autobiography incised on the dado of all four walls of the tomb chapel.<sup>145</sup> While some aspects of the text contain standard formulae and information, it also provides personalised material on his own professional position and achievements, his familial connections and celebrates a number of other accomplishments. In addition, it reveals a considerable amount of data on the motive for building his tomb and his desire for recognition.

---

<sup>145</sup> For a translation, see: Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan 1*, 31-36.

Evidently, Khnumhotep II's tomb contains scenes which are specific, and others which can be argued as either specific or unspecific. This raises two questions: first, how may we distinguish which scenes which are clear representations of actual events and those which are common, recurring, or 'typical'. Second, whether it is possible for specific and typical events to be represented alongside each other.

Two such events illustrated within close proximity is the 'typical' desert hunt scene and the unique procession of the Asiatics. The juxtaposition of such a major scene, depicting an experience of such significance, beside one which illustrates a common activity appears odd and complicates the theory that tombs received careful consideration and advanced planning. Classifying this desert hunt scene as typical may be problematic. Perhaps it has been included because Khnumhotep II treasured the moments he hunted with his sons. The fact that he may have hunted with them on more than one occasion, does not necessarily cause it to be unspecific. Additionally, when the fine details of the scene are examined, the presence of a bald shepherd with injured legs also becomes noticeable, resulting in the scene containing some distinct characteristics. This causes uncertainty on how the scene in its entirety should be classified. Clearly, designation of which scenes are specific and those that are typical needs further investigation.

The mythological significance of specific scenes is also one to contemplate. Certainly, the ancient Egyptians believed in magic and these beliefs were incorporated into the tomb's structure. This is particularly evident in the discovery of 121 private tombs, dating from the Old to Middle Kingdom, which contain decoration in the burial chamber.<sup>146</sup> However, overall there is a considerable difference in the type of decoration illustrated in these chambers, when compared with those in the tomb chapel. That is, the large majority display inanimate objects of food, drink, offering lists and burial equipment, with only a small minority depicting living beings. As such, these images were almost certainly intended to provide sustenance in the afterlife. There is debate regarding whether the small number of tombs featuring depictions of life was a gradual development or a short-lived tradition that appeared sporadically, yet this does not deny that it did not remain a popular practice adopted in future tomb design. Manifestly, the images illustrated in the burial chamber had to be selected with caution, likely

---

<sup>146</sup> Dawood, *MOM* 40:1 (2005), 110.

because of their magical effect on the deceased which may seriously threaten their chance to successfully live in the afterlife.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The underlying enquiry of this thesis was to investigate the significance, purpose and meaning of unusual, rare and unique attestations, including those that contain specificity. This task was undertaken within the parameters outlined from the outset, with the goal of proving the topic deserves further research and attention. It was not and perhaps never will be possible to provide absolute answers and conclusions on the topic, but throughout the research several matters became evident that should not be ignored.

Decorum was both a constraint and a tool providing artists with freedom of expression. It dictated *aspects* of art. Decorum outlined rules related to style and visual representation, acting as a guidebook from where artists could learn to understand the parameters, principles and guidelines they could illustrate within. Beyond this rulebook, it seems the artist possessed a significant level of freedom which allowed for each scene to communicate its own story. This can be identified in the scenes such as those that depict punishment in the rendering of accounts. It was not usual practice to illustrate violence in scenes of this type, yet these depictions were adapted and modified to convey repercussions due to a shortfall in accounts. Furthermore, these illustrations and the other examples examined in this thesis vary in the number of people present, how they partook in activities and the differing environment that surrounded them. Evidently, these details are the features that the artist could represent according to his desire.

When a tomb was to be built, it was commissioned by the tomb owner. Builders, labourers and artists were employed by the owner. Evidence of instances where artists receive payment for completed, although is rare, does exist,<sup>147</sup> suggesting that just like in the present day, artists were commissioned to create works and would work within the specifications provided by the client. That there would have been consultation between the tomb owner and those responsible for its creation, pertaining to the structure, design and decoration of the tomb, is perfectly reasonable. Surely the content of the decorative program formed part of these considerations. The level of involvement each tomb owner exercised will never be known but each differing characteristic is indicative of a decision made by someone with essential input in the tomb's design, whether it was the tomb owner himself or the artist. Differing details cannot be defined

---

<sup>147</sup> For an overview on evidence relating to the level of freedom an artist might have had when commissioned to create tomb paintings, see: Kanawati and Woods, *Artists*, 6.

as part of decorum, therefore the inspiration for their creation must have been sought elsewhere. Life's meaningful and memorable experiences are a feasible and sensible explanation.

The purpose of reflecting life's experiences within the tomb was to commemorate what the tomb owner found meaningful. In some instances, life's very simple pleasures were deserved of this privilege and in others, they were grand displays celebrating success and achievements. Tombs could also contain both traits, revealing the stronger and softer side of the tomb owner's personality. The tomb of Mereruka combines both elements seamlessly. The man is portrayed in many instances as a powerful vizier, for example in the accumulation of eighty three titles, but also as a simple man painting the seasons alongside his son. He also appears somewhat vulnerable in the depiction of him leaning on his son and an official for support, perhaps in a moment of weakness. That the scenes were created with an audience in mind, strengthens the reason to share the life of the tomb owner with visitors, rather than a standard collection of images of no personal significance. A similar concept can be seen in simple modern day burials, where tomb stones contain personalised information regarding the deceased person. The name of the deceased, a photograph, important familial connections and perhaps a short quote on their contribution in life, is recorded. Were our burials as elaborate as the ancient's elite, one may ponder how many more resemblances there would be of the moments selected to commemorate and compare.

Although this study was focussed on the meaning, purpose and significance of certain scenes, there is still so much to be understood about tomb decoration in general. Its entire absence from so many tombs in all periods of Egyptian history is of utmost importance and is of relevance. If it was possible for tomb owners who were buried without tomb decoration to successfully reach the afterlife and live for eternity, this has enormous implications for the meaning, purpose and significance of tomb art and could change our understanding of its function entirely. Moreover, tombs that contain only minimal decoration should be further studied and considered in detail to ascertain whether particular scenes may truly have been of greater significance than others. For example, the tomb owner seated at the offering table.

From the themes analysed, it has been shown that anomalies in tomb art exist. Yet, the true extent to which these attestations occur is far greater than was anticipated. Initial expectations and preliminary exploration prior to undertaking the research required for this study, predicted a considerable amount of examples would be identified, thus warranting a study of this kind. However, it has been found that individuality appears with such vast frequency in tomb scenes

that it warrants use of the term, mammoth. It could be possible that every scene differentiates itself from another, with no two ever appearing as an identical match. This field requires further research.

What can be ascertained with certainty from this research is that the scenes studied undeniably demonstrate originality. There are many illustrations of specific people and items, unique to a single tomb, in addition to those which clearly have a story to tell. When a tomb contains personalised features, they were likely of importance to the tomb owner. Where evidence allowed for interpretations to be substantiated, possible explanations for the attestations have been proposed, though many can never be proven with absolute certainty. However, the beliefs maintained regarding life after death are inextricably linked with the learnings and experiences gained during life. Thus, the tombs of the ancient Egyptians contain illustrations that are reflections of life because they desired them to be preserved for eternity.

## Bibliography

**Abdou, *Sports and Games*:** Abdou, K. S., *Sports and Games in Ancient Egypt* (PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 1961).

**Aldred, *Egyptian Art*:** Aldred, C., *The Development of Ancient Egyptian Art, From 3200 to 1315 B.C.* (London, 1973).

**Aldred, *LÄ 2* (1977):** Aldred, C., ‘Grabdekoration’, *LÄ 2* (1977), 853 – 857.

**Bhargava and Bhargava, *JPCS 3:2* (2017):** Bhargava, M. and Bhargava, R., ‘Pectus Carinatum (Pigeon Chest)’, (*JPCS 3:2*) (2017), 118-119.

**Blackman, *Meir*:** Blackman, A. M., *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, 6 vols. (London, 1914-1953).

**Bolshakov, *Arrangement of Murals*** Bolshakov, A. O., ‘Arrangement of Murals as a Principle of Old Kingdom Tomb Decoration’, in Fitzenreiter, M. (ed.), *Dekorierte Grabanlagen im Alten Reich Methodik und Interpretation* (London, 2006), 37-60.

**Bourriau, *Pharaohs and Mortals*:** Bourriau, J., *Pharaohs and Mortals, Egyptian Art in the Middle Kingdom* (New York, 1988).

**Burn, *A River in ‘Drought’*:** Burn, J.W., *A River in ‘Drought’, Environmental and Cultural Ramifications of Old Kingdom Climate Change* (PhD Dissertation, Macquarie University, 2019).

**Burn, *EER 6:5* (2018):** Burn, J.W., ‘A River in Drought: Consequences of a Low Nile at the end of the Old Kingdom’, (*EER 6:5*) (2018), 446-460.

**Chassinat, *BIFAO 10* (1912):** Chassinat, E., ‘A propos d’un bas-relief du tombeau de Senbi ’ *BIFAO 10* (1912), 169-173.

**Cherpion, *BIFAO 84* (1984):** N. Cherpion, ‘De Quand Date La Tombe Du Nani Seneb?’, *BIFAO 84* (1984), 34-54.

**Darlow, *Chronological Investigation*:** Darlow, S., *Chronological Investigation of the Middle Kingdom Tombs at Meir* (PhD Dissertation, Macquarie University, 2017).

**Davies, *Deir el-Gebrâwi*:** Davies, N. De G., *The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrâwi*, 2 vols. (London, 1902).

**Davies, *Ptahhetep*:** Davies, N. De G., *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethetep at Saqqareh*, 2 vols. (London, 1900-1901).

**Davis, *Canonical Tradition*:** Davis, W., *The Canonical Tradition in Egyptian Art* (New York, 1989).

**Dawood, *MOM 40:1* (2005):** Dawood, K. (2005). 'Animate Decoration and Burial Chambers of Private Tombs during the Old Kingdom. New Evidence from the Tomb of Kairer at Saqqara', (*MOM 40:1*) (2005), 107-127.

**Dawson, *JEA 24:1* (1938):** Dawson, W., 'Pygmies and Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt', (*JEA 24:1*) (1938), 185-189.

**de Morgan, *Catalogue des Monuments 1*:** de Morgan, J., *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de l'Égypte Antique*, vol. 1, *Haute Égypte, de la frontière de Nubie à Kom Ombos* (Vienna, 1894).

**Dodson and Ikram, *The Tomb*:** Dodson, A. and Ikram, S., *The tomb in Ancient Egypt: Royal and Private Sepulchres from the Early Dynastic Period to the Romans* (London, 2008).

**Duell, *Mereruka*:** Duell, P., *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1938).

**Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*:** Dunham, D. and Simpson, W. K., *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III G 7530-7540, Giza Mastabas*, vol. 1 (Boston, 1974).

**Elhabashy and Abdelgawad, *IJANS 11* (2019):** Elhabashy, S. and Abdelgawad, E.M., 'The History of the Nursing Profession in Ancient Egyptian Society', *IJANS 11* (2019), 1-7.

**El-Tayeb, *PES 19* (2017):** El-Tayeb. H., 'Some newly uncovered blocks from the tomb of Rashepses at Saqqara', *PES 19* (2017), 124-134.

**Épron and Wild, *Ti*:** Épron, L. and Wild, H., *Le tombeau de Ti*, 3 fascs. (Cairo, 1939-66).

**Giza Project at Harvard University:** <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/>

**Goedicke, *JARCE 21* (1984):** Goedicke, H., 'Abi-Sha(i)'s Representation in Beni Hasan', *JARCE 21* (2018), 203-210.

**Grajetzki, *Court Officials*:** Grajetzki, W., *Court Officials of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom* (London, 2009).



**Grajetzki, *Egyptian Administration*:** Grajetzki, W., ‘Setting a State Anew: The Central Administration from the End of the Old Kingdom to the End of the Middle Kingdom’, in Moreno Garcia, J.C., (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration* (Leiden, 2013), 215-258.

**Graves-Brown, *Dancing for Hathor*:** Graves-Brown, C., *Dancing for Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2010).

**Grimal, *History*:** Grimal, N., *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 1992).

**Hamdan et al., *Archaeology and Environment*:** Hamdan, M., Hassan, F., Flower, P. and Ebrahim, E., ‘Climate and Collapse of Egyptian Old Kingdom: A Geoarchaeological Approach’, in G. C. Vittozzi, F. Porcelli (eds.), *Archaeology and Environment. Understanding the Past to Design the Future: A Multidisciplinary Approach. Proceedings of the International Workshop ‘Italian Days in Aswan’*, Aswan 16-18 November, 2013 (Rome, 2016), 37 - 48.

**Harpur and Scremin, *Kagemni*:** Harpur, Y. and Scremin, P., *The Chapel of Kagemni, Scene Details* (Oxford, 2006).

**Harpur, *Decoration*:** Harpur, Y., *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom, Studies in Orientation and Scene Content* (London, 1987).

**Hartwig, *Tomb Painting*:** Hartwig, M., *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (Turnhout, 2004).

**Hassan, *Riparia*:** Hassan, F.A., ‘Climate Change, Nile Floods and Riparia’, in *Riparia dans L’Empire Romain* (London, 2010).

**Hassan, *World Archaeology* 29:1 (1997):** Hassan, F.A., ‘The Dynamics of a Riverine Civilization: A Geoarchaeological Perspective on the Nile Valley, Egypt’, in *World Archaeology*, vol. 29: 1 *Riverine Archaeology* (London, 1997), 51-74.

**Hawass, *ASAE Supplement* 34 (2005):** Z., ‘Unique statues from Giza V: the exceptional statue of the Priest Kai and his family’. *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan. ASAE Supplement* 34 (2005), 25-38.

**Hawass, *MDAIK* 47 (1991):** Hawass, Z., ‘The Statue of the Dwarf "Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)" Recently Discovered at Giza’, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), 157 – 165.

**Hebron, *Health*:** Hebron, C.S., *Aspects of Health, Injury and Disease amongst the Non-elite Workforces of Dynastic Egypt* (PhD Dissertation, University of London, 2005).

**James, *Egyptian Painting*:** James, T. G. H., *Egyptian Painting and Relief* (London, 1985).

**James, *Khentika*:** James, T. G. H., *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953).

**Janssen and Janssen, *Growing up*:** Janssen and Janssen, *Growing up in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1990).

**Jaros-Deckert, *Ini-jti.f*:** Jaros-Deckert, B., *Das Grab des ini-jti.f, Die Wandmalereien Der XI Dynasty* (Mainz, 1984).

**Johnston, *Behind Every Great Man*:** Johnston, H., *Behind Every Great Man, the Position of Women as Expressed Through Tomb Design in Middle Kingdom, Middle Egypt* (MRes Dissertation, Macquarie University, 2019).

**Junker, *Giza*:** Junker, H., *Giza*, 12 vols. (Vienna, 1929-1955).

**Kahlbacher, *MKS 4* (2016):** Kahlbacher, A., ‘The menu Please! Individual vs. standardization in funerary repast scenes from the early dynastic period to the Middle Kingdom’, *MKS 4* (2016), 102-111.

**Kamrin, *JA EI 1:3* (2009):** Kamrin J. ‘The Aamu of Shu in the Tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan’, (*JA EI 1:3*) (2009), 22-36.

**Kamrin, *Khnumhotep II*:** Kamrin, J., *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan* (New York, 1998).

**Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family*:** Kanawati, N. and Abder-Raziq, M., *Mereruka and His Family*, part 1, *The Tomb of Meryteti*; part 2, *The Tomb of Waatetkhethor* (Oxford, 2004, 2008).

**Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *Unis Cemetery 2*:** Kanawati, N. and Abder-Raziq, M., *The Unis Cemetery at Saqqara, Vol II: The Tombs of Iynefert and Ihy (reused by Idut)*(Oxford, 2003).

**Kanawati and Evans, *Beni Hassan*:** Kanawati, N. and Evans, L., *Beni Hassan*, vols. 1, 3, 4, 6. (Oxford, Wallesey, 2014-2020).

**Kanawati and Evans: *Meir 4*:** Kanawati N. and Evans, L., *The Cemetery of Meir*, vol. 4, *The Tombs of Senbi and Wekhhotep* (Oxford, 2017).

**Kanawati and McFarlane, *Deshasha*:** N. Kanawati and A. McFarlane, *Deshasha: The Tomb of Inti, Shedu and Others* (Sydney, 1993).

**Kanawati and Woods, *Artists*:** Kanawati, N. and Woods, A., *Artists in the Old Kingdom: Techniques and Achievements* (Cairo, 2009).

**Kanawati et al., *Mereruka and His Family 3*:** Kanawati, N., Woods, A., Shafik, S. and Alexakis, E., *Mereruka and His Family*, 2 parts, *The Tomb of Mereruka* (Oxford, 2010-2011).

**Kanawati et al., *Teti Cemetery*:** Kanawati, N. and Hassan, A., *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, vols. 1-2; Kanawati, N. and Abder-Raziq, M., vols. 3, 5-7; Kanawati, N. vols. 8-9 (Sydney, 1996; Warminster, 1997-2001; Oxford, 2006-2009).

**Kanawati, *ASAE 83 (2009)*:** Kanawati, N., ‘Specificity in Old Kingdom Tomb Scenes’, *ASAE 83* (2009), 261-278.

**Kanawati, *BACE 26 (2016-2018)*:** Kanawati, N., ‘Wekhhotep III of Meir: the first advocate of gender equality?’, *BACE 26* (2016-2018), 37-46.

**Kanawati, *Deir El-Gebrawi*:** Kanawati, N., *Deir El-Gebrawi*, vol. 1, *The Northern Cliff*; vol. 2, *The Southern Cliff, The Tomb of Ibi and Others*; vol. 3, *The Southern Cliff, The Tomb of Djau/Shemai and Djau* (Oxford, 2005, 2007, 2013).

**Kanawati, *El-Hagarsa*:** Kanawati, N., *The Tombs of El-Hagarsa*, 3 vols. (Warminster, 1993-1995).

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

**Kanawati, *Mereruka and King Teti*:** Kanawati, N., *Mereruka and King Teti, The Power behind the Throne* (Cairo, 2007).

**Kanawati, *Mountain Speaks*:** Kanawati, N., *A Mountain Speaks* (Sydney, 1988).

**Kanawati, *Tomb and Beyond*:** Kanawati, N., *The Tomb and Beyond: Burial Customs of Egyptian Officials* (Warminster, 2001).

**Kemp, *Social History*:** B. Kemp, ‘Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period c. 2686-1552 BC’, in B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O’Connor and A.B Lloyd (eds.), *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge, 1983), 71-182.

**Kessler, *SAK 12 (1987)*:** Kessler, D., ‘Die Asiatenkarawane von Beni Hassan’, *SAK 12* (1987), 147-165.

**Kozma et al., *AJMG Part A, (155:8) (2011)*:** Kozma, C., Sarry El Din, A. M., El Shafy El Banna, R. A., El Samie Kandeel, W. A., Lachman, R., ‘The ancient Egyptian dwarfs of the pyramids: The high official and the female worker’, *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A, (155:8) (2011)*, 1817-1824.

**Kozma, *AJMG Part A, 140:4 (2006)*:** Kozma, C., ‘Dwarfs in ancient Egypt’, in *AJMG Part A, (140:4) (2006)*, 303-311.

**Lashien and Mourad, *Beni Hassan*:** Lashien M. and Mourad A.L., *Beni Hassan*, vols 2, 5 (Oxford, 2016-2019).

**Lashien, *BACE 22*:** Lashien, M., ‘Narrative in Old Kingdom Wall Scenes: The Progress Through Time And Space’, *BACE 22* (2011), 101-114.

**Lashien, *Kahai*:** Lashien, M., *The Chapel of Kahai and His Family* (Oxford, 2013).

**Lepsius, *Denkmäler II*:** Lepsius, C. R., *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien II* (Genève, 1972).

**Mahran, *AJH 2:3 (2016)*:** Mahran, H., ‘Physical Disability in Old Kingdom Tomb Scenes’, in *AJH (2:3) (2016)*, 169-192.

**Maruejol, *ASAE 69 (1983)*:** Maruejol, F., ‘La Nourrice: Un Thème Iconographique’, *ASAE 69* (1983), 311-319.

**Moeller, *Ägypten und Levante 15 (2005)*:** N. Moeller, ‘The First Intermediate Period: A Time of Famine and Climate Change?’, in *Ägypten und Levante*, vol. 15 (2005), 153-167.

**Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*:** Moussa, A.M. and Altenmüller, H., *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz, 1977).

**Newberry, *Beni Hasan*:** Newberry, P.E., *Beni Hasan*, 4 vols. (London, 1893-1900).

**Newberry, *El Bersheh*:** Newberry, P. E., *El Bersheh*, 3 vols. (London, 1894-1896).

**O’Conner, *World Archaeology* 6:1 (1974):** D. O’Connor, D, ‘Political Systems and Archaeological Data in Egypt: 2600-1780 B.C. ’, in *World Archaeology* (6:1) *Political Systems* (London, 1974), 15-38.

**Robins, *Art*:** Robins, G., *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1997).

**Robins, *Painting and Relief*:** Robins, G., *Egyptian Painting and Relief* (Buckinghamshire, 1986).

**Robins, *Proportion and Style*:** Robins, G., *Proportions and Style in Ancient Egyptian Art* (Austin, 1994).

**Robins, *Women*:** Robins, G., *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1993).

**Routledge, *Did Women ‘Do Things’*:** Routledge, C., “Did Women ‘Do Things’ in Ancient Egypt? (c.2600-1050 BCE)” in C. Graves-Brown (ed.) *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don your wig for a joyful hour'* (Swansea, 2008), 157-177.

**Saretta, *Asiatics*:** Saretta, P., *Asiatics in the Middle Kingdom: Perceptions and Reality* (London, 2017).

**Schäfer, *Principles*:** Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art* (Oxford 1986).

**Schwabe, *AH*:** Schwabe, C. W., 'A Unique Surgical Operation of the Horns of African Bulls in Ancient and Modern Times', in *AH* (58:2) (1984), 138-156.

**Simpson et al., *Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*:** Simpson, W., Champman, S. E. and Reisner, G. A., *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II: G7110-20, 7130-40, and 7150, and Subsidiary Mastabas of Street G7100* (Boston, 1978).

**Simpson, *JEA* 60 (1974):** Simpson, W. K., ‘Polygamy in Egypt in the Middle Kingdom?’, *JEA* 60, (1974), 100-105.

**Simpson, *Kayemnofret*:** Simpson, W.K., *The Offering Chapel of Kayemnofret in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1992).

**Simpson, *Qar and Idu*:** Simpson, W. K., *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu, G7101 and 7102, Giza Mastabas* vol. 2 (Boston, 1976).

**Smith and Simpson, *Art and Architecture*:** Smith, W. S. and Simpson, W.K., *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New York, 1981).

**Smith, *AJA* 46 (1942):** Smith, W.S., 'The Origin of Some Unidentified Old Kingdom Reliefs', *AJA* 46 (1942), 509-531.

**Smith, *HESPOK*:** Smith, W. S., *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (New York, 1978).

**Sourdive, *La main*:** Sourdive, C., *La main dans l'Égypte pharaonique* (Berne, 1984).

**Steindroff, *Ti*:** G. Steindroff, *Das Grab des Ti*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913).

**Vandier, *Manuel*:** Vandier, J., *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1952-1978).

**Varille, *Ni-ankh-Pepi*:** Varille, A., *La tombe de Ni-ankh-Pepi à Zâouyet El-Mayetîn* (Cairo, 1938).

**Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt*:** Watterson, B., *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Sutton, 1991).

**Wilfong, in *Egyptian Archaeology*:** Wilfong, T. G., 'Gender in Ancient Egypt', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (West Sussex, 2010), 164-180.