

# Behind Every Great Man

THE POSITION OF WOMEN AS EXPRESSED THROUGH  
TOMB DESIGN IN MIDDLE KINGDOM, MIDDLE EGYPT

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to analyse how women are incorporated into the decoration of Middle Kingdom tombs, and how this reflects their broader role in society. This has been done by focusing on the main elements of design within the tombs, at the neighbouring necropolises of Meir, Deir el-Bersha and Beni Hassan. Through analysis of the text, art and architectural features it is demonstrated that the representation of women in tombs was tied to that of the tomb owner, who were typically their husbands, fathers or sons. With few exceptions noble women have little independent representation within the broader decorative program; and women across the board only accounted for approximately 10% of human figures. Likewise women have a limited presence within the cultic focus of the tomb during the Middle Kingdom, namely on the false door or within the shrine. This is paralleled with developments in female titles during this period. Ultimately however, the design of the tomb reinforced the patriarchal social hierarchy. Although upper Egypt has some of the most extensive and well-preserved necropolises from the Middle Kingdom period, there has been limited research into the elite women of these sites; with only cursory investigations into their lives. More research is needed to fully understand how women were incorporated into tomb design.

### 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.*

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

18/10/2018.

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And to my friends, who have never wavered in their patience when listening to my ideas. I could not have done this without you.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**AJA** - *American Journal of Archaeology*

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

**BMFA** - *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*

**BIFAO** - *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*

**GM** - *Göttinger Miszellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion*

**JEA** - *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

**JNES** - *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

**JAS** - *Journal of Archaeological Science*

**JAIE** - *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*

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

**UCL** - *University College London*

**PM** - *Porter and Moss A Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egypt*

**ZÄS** - *Zeitschrift Für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Project and Aims

The phrase “behind every great man is a great woman” appeared in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Although the exact origin is unknown, it developed into a shorthand during the women’s rights movement referring to the invisible work women have done behind the scenes throughout history. This adage is no less true for the women of ancient Egypt.

Compared to many ancient societies, the women of ancient Egypt certainly had more liberties.<sup>2</sup> During the Middle Kingdom they had the legal right to inherit property, could divorce their husbands, were not restricted to the home, and were afforded many other societal freedoms.<sup>3</sup> There are also several examples of women in key positions within the government during this period. Indeed the final ruler of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty was the female pharaoh *Sbk-nfr.w*.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, they still existed in a male-dominated society, with their status and power tied to their husbands and fathers.

The records of women from this period come primarily through the men in their lives. The mortuary landscape is one of the key ways the culture of ancient Egypt has been preserved and is now studied. Tombs were commissioned by male tomb owners and then produced by male artists.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, reading and writing and artistic endeavours were generally restricted to elite men.<sup>6</sup> Although the Middle Kingdom is renowned for its copious literature, it was primarily produced and recorded by men.

It is however possible to glimpse at the lives of women on their own terms. For example, within the Lahun letters, there are several records of women corresponding with each other. UC 32203 is a rare example of a woman reporting to her supervisor about the production of linen by some weavers.<sup>7</sup>

To understand the broader role of gender in culture during the Middle Kingdom, the tomb provides a more effective microcosm for study. Although there is debate, it is generally agreed upon that the purpose of the tomb during this period was to preserve and help perpetuate an idealised image of daily life through eternity.<sup>8</sup> As Egyptian art is highly

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<sup>1</sup> Rees (2002: 23)

<sup>2</sup> Wilfong (2010: 165)

<sup>3</sup> Wilfong (2010: 165)

<sup>4</sup> Grajetzki (2010: 61)

<sup>5</sup> Dodson & Ikram (2008: 53)

<sup>6</sup> Routledge, (2008: 164)

<sup>7</sup> Parkinson (1991: 6)

<sup>8</sup> Dodson & Ikram (2008: 13)

standardised, the construction and decoration of the tomb followed rigid principals of decorum. The scenes and images recorded on the walls both have a symbolic value, but also subtly record the priorities and values of the tomb owner. The decoration was not intended to be strictly true to life, but instead to create an idealised world based on the principles of its creator.

This is the issue this thesis aims to problematise, namely how women are represented in the context of the tomb. More specifically, which women are depicted; and how and where in the tomb are they portrayed? What does this portrayal say about the position in society? To express this more succinctly: *To what extent is the position of women in society expressed through tomb decoration?*

To investigate this question, three Middle Kingdom sites from middle Egypt have been selected, namely Meir, Deir el-Bersha and Beni Hassan. Together they represent some of the best examples of Middle Kingdom provincial tombs still extant. Unlike the more turbulent history of the capital in the Middle Kingdom, these areas are comparatively politically stable.<sup>9</sup> As neighbouring provinces they share a similar political history, with commonalities in their art styles as well as marriages between the elite families.

These provinces also represent some of the most affluent areas during this period. The provinces of 14-16 contain the most fertile soil in all of Egypt. Even today, the department of agriculture rates this land as the most productive in the country.<sup>10</sup> As a primarily agrarian society, this afforded the nobles of middle Egypt to produce some of the most elaborate and well decorated non-royal tombs in all of the dynastic period.

The women of these powerful families have left little trace outside of the limited representations within the tombs of their husbands and fathers; despite holding some of the highest titles and being afforded the most luxuries possible in their time. Even as some of the most well documented women of this period, they are still figuratively and literally, behind the great men in their lives.

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<sup>9</sup> For a concise history of the Middle Kingdom, see Grajetzki (2017)

<sup>10</sup> Kanawati & Woods, (2010: 2)

## 1.2 Women and Gender in Ancient Egypt

Defining womanhood and gender is complex, but important when applying the lens of gender to any study. On a conceptual level, gender is a personal aspect of identity that changes between person, but may be defined as *“the set of social constructions relating to, arising from, and imposed upon biological sex.”*<sup>11</sup> It is created through performance and the interactions between individuals within different contexts.<sup>12</sup> Ancient Egyptian society was one of ridged dualities, and this is no less true in respect to gender roles.<sup>13</sup> While modern understanding separates the concept of gender and biological sex, they were understood by the Egyptians as the same concept,<sup>14</sup> perceiving sex and gender as a duality, part of the larger collection of dualities within their worldview.<sup>15</sup>

## 1.3 Previous Literature

There is limited previous literature that solely investigates the women of Middle Kingdom tombs from these provinces; and studies focusing on the women of ancient Egypt are ever emerging. As such, this literature review addresses studies that are tangential, as opposed to evaluating a body of related discourse. The primary areas that have direct relevance to this study are notably: the art history of the Middle Kingdom, studies of women and gender, the Nome and provinces, architectural studies and investigations into relevant genealogies. Hopefully in future there will be more scholarly discourse surrounding the role of women in the Middle Kingdom.

The selected corpus of tombs has been excavated, recorded and rerecorded several times. Older archaeological methods were not as precise or detailed as today's standards. However older publications frequently have access to parts of a site that are now damaged or destroyed. For example, the tomb of Dhutychotep at Deir el-Bersha has deteriorated, and several carvings have been destroyed, likewise portions of the biography of Khnumhotep II have been vandalised at Beni Hassan. The first published tomb reports are also frequently the first commentary on the women of these sites.

The tombs of Meir have been excavated several times. Firstly, by numerous European scholars with limited record of the work done.<sup>16</sup> Blackman from 1914 to 1953 published 6

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<sup>11</sup> Wilfong (2010: 164)

<sup>12</sup> Robins (2014:120)

<sup>13</sup> Wilfong (2010: 164)

<sup>14</sup> Meskell (1998: 218)

<sup>15</sup> Sweeney (2011: 3)

<sup>16</sup> Blackman (1914: 3)

volumes documenting the site in full. More recent work has been conducted under the Australian Centre for Egyptology lead by Kanawati.

The tombs of Deir el-Bersha were recorded from 1881 by Griffith and Newberry, with a single volume dedicated to the tomb of Dhutychotep, the largest and best preserved of the site. The cemetery has been subject to extensive quarrying, and many tombs are completely lost. In 2007 a new tomb was located by the University of Leuven, and research at the site is ongoing.

The large rock tombs of Beni Hassan were first recorded by Newberry from 1893, and the lower Middle Kingdom tombs by Garstung. Garstung also carried out extensive excavation at the site, which was published in 1908. Several tombs have also been published by the Australian Centre for Egyptology. Within this thesis, the numbering system of Newberry is followed, numbering the tombs consecutively from the north to the south of the site.<sup>17</sup>

Much of the literature on the Middle Kingdom attempts to place the significance as the language, and the role the writing and texts produced had in later periods. Studies such as *Never had the like occurred': Egypt's view of its past* edited by Tait (2003) focus on the Middle Kingdom from this perspective. The people of the Middle Kingdom did not have this foresight, and thus these inquiries are not relevant to understanding the people within their own context, particularly one that was looking back to the Old Kingdom in order to construct the past.

Synonymous with the study of the Middle Kingdom, and Middle Kingdom women is Wolfram Grajetzki. A key text is *The Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt* by Grajetzki (2006) which provides an overview of the entire period, sequentially summarising the material from each province geographically. Likewise Grajetzki (2009) *Court officials of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom* closely documents the inner workings of the state during the Middle Kingdom and the known officials. While this does not include many women, it is useful for the significant people of this period, especially those of the relevant provinces. *A Social History of Ancient Egypt* (2006) by Trigger is an overview of the entire dynastic period from a social historical perspective, placing less emphasis on the administrative and political forces. While this approach does include more women, it is still a very broad look at Egyptian society overall.

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<sup>17</sup> As opposed to the P&M system

Studies relating to Middle Kingdom art have been focused heavily on the statuary, such as *Pharaohs and mortals, Egyptian art in the Middle Kingdom* by Bourriau (1988) which is primarily concerned with the development of sculpture within this period. More general studies into relief and painting include that of Smith and Simpson (1998), *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* which overviews the development of art over the entire pharaonic period, placing the Middle Kingdom in the context of artistic development.

*Egyptian paintings of the Middle Kingdom* by Terrance (1968) considers both the art of tomb walls and on coffins, making particular note of how the art developed from the old kingdom and through the first intermediate period. However, the rendering of human forms, particularly those of women is not given much discussion.

Smith (1951), “*Paintings of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom at Bersheh*” examines the fragments of art preserved from Dhutychotep, reconstructing the images and providing some analysis of the activities depicted, including the women involved in activities. More recent studies include *Proportion and Style in Ancient Egypt* by Robins (1994) which provides data on the changing nature of women in art during the Middle Kingdom provincial setting. Many of the examples are taken from Beni Hassan and Meir and the analysis of art style and women is thus particularly useful.

“The Menu Please! Individual vs. standardization in funerary repast scenes from the early dynastic period to the Middle Kingdom” by Kahlbacher (2016) investigates the degree of personal choice involved in tomb decoration, particularly related to Middle Kingdom examples. A factor important to consider when applying trends within tomb decoration to broader society and culture. “Playing with traditions” the decoration of Djehutyhotep II’s tomb at Deir el-Bersha reconsidered” by Pieke (2016) interprets a range of scene types carried over from the Old Kingdom. She presents the idea that women within this tomb are given a more dynamic role compared to similar scene types from the Old Kingdom. The extent to which this can be applied to other tombs will require further research. “Some aspects of the decorative and the cult program of the twelfth dynasty tombs at Qaw el-Kabir” by Marochetti (2016) is focused primarily the statuary and architectural features of these tombs. However, it is source of information on the elite of this region and the associated families.

*Non Royal Epithets of the Middle Kingdom* by Doxey (1998) provides a social and historical analysis of its titles and epithets of the period. Epithets are placed in the context of both previous usage, but also use over time and in relation to reigns. Providing interesting opportunities for dating potential. It draws upon the previous work of Ward (1986), (1982) with *Essays on the Feminine Titles of the Middle Kingdom and related subjects*, as

well as *Index of Egyptian administrative and religious titles of the Middle* and which take a prosopographical approach to the feminine titles. Although it is focused on the feminine titles, and relates their titles of women to their husbands, these studies both highly relevant to the study of women in the Middle Kingdom and invaluable resources. The recent work of Ilin-Tomich (2018) ‘Female Titles Specific to the Southern Upper Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period’ examines the hierarchies of feminine titles and how they relate to position in society.

The study of women is frequently related to their role within the household. More general texts include *Women in Ancient Egypt* by Watterson (1991), and Robbins (1993) work of the same name. Both provide an overview of the lives of women, however both are at a general level. *Dancing for Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt* by Graves-Brown (2011) is an updated overview, incorporating a greater degree of sources, and critique of the ideas related to women’s studies. *Mistress of House, Mistress of Heaven* by Capel and Markoe (1996) is both a catalogue of material relating to women, and a critique on this idea of them as the ‘mistress of house’. *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom: the archaeology of female burials* Grajetzki (2014) analyses both the style and material of dynasty 12 burials, including many undisturbed tombs. Most of these are taken from the necropolis of the capital and relate to royal women. However the typology used and the examination of non-royal women is useful for comparison. Within “New approaches to the study of households in the Middle Kingdom and the second intermediate period Egypt” by Muller (2015), frames the study of the household in relation to dependants, and where the bounds of the household are Likewise, “The (social) house of Khnumhotep” by Melina Nelson-Hurst (2015) looks at the family and dependants of Khnumhotep of Beni Hassan, addressing what composed the household of this nomarch. “Did women ‘Do things’ in ancient Egypt? (c.2600-1050 BCE)” (2008) by Carolyn Routledge considers the intersection of language and representation in art. Many of her examples are drawn from Beni Hassan and her suggestion is that the phraseology of “*iri ht*” absence in relation to women is reflected literally in art.

“In the realm of reputation: Private life in Middle Kingdom Auto/Biographies” (2015) by Landgrafova investigates the key aspects are emphasized within biographies. One element in particular is that of the wife and the husbandly duties, and how this related to the social values of the Middle Kingdom.

There are several studies which address how succession between offices was practised in ancient Egypt. ‘The Nomarchs of the Hare Nome and Early Middle Kingdom History’ (1983) by Willems analyses the genealogy of this province to show how this position was

transmitted. A similar topic is addressed by Nerlson-Hurst (2011) in his dissertation “Ideology and practicality in transmission of office during the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt: An examination of families and the concept of *ỉꜣꜣ*” which addresses how power was passed within families, and by extension the role of women within this. Similarly, Favry (2016) shows in “The Transmission of Offices in the Middle Kingdom” that direct succession from father to son accounts for only a very limited percentage of cases, and instead the mechanism by which titles are appointed is more complex. “Ritual Marriage Alliances and Consolidation of Power in Middle Egypt during the Middle Kingdom” by Kanawati (2017) investigates the intermarriage amongst the various provinces; suggesting that these marriages were the product of a central policy in order to strengthen alliances.

The study of gender as it pertains to architectural design has been studied in the royal context by Melandri (2015), in “Female Burials in the Funerary Complexes of the Twelfth Dynasty: An Architectonic Approach.” Although specific to the royal context, the allocation of space in a funerary context applies within this context. More broad studies include that of Clark & Engelbach (1990) *Ancient Egyptian Construction and Architecture*, Arnold’s, *Building in Egypt* as well as Lloyd and Müller’s (1986) *Ancient Architecture* which all focus more heavily on methods of construction and design.

## **1.4 Methodology**

This thesis analyses how the position of women is expressed within the design of the tomb, by closely examining the three main considerations of tomb design, namely the artistic elements, the body of text included, and the architectural features.

The anticipated outcome will be a greater understanding of the elite women in provinces 14-16 during the Middle Kingdom. This will in turn represent a case study which could be applied later to a broader study of women in ancient Egypt both in the capital and the provinces throughout Egyptian history.

The majority of evidence related to these women comes from the tombs of officials, from the necropolises of the selected provinces. Primarily Meir, Beni Hassan, and Deir el-Bersha. Understanding the method of depicting the tomb owners’ wives, mothers, daughters, will allow us to gain insight into their lives. These records will be accessed from the various tomb reports, particularly those of Blackman, Newberry, Willems, and Kanawati.

Some archaeological material will be included, primarily funerary goods and the sparse bioarchaeological remains from the sites. The excavation report of Garstung (1908) from Beni Hassan on the material will be used to supplement these reports. Elements like false doors are grouped under architectural features, even though they were not carved into the tomb itself. As this thesis does not involve any field work, or on-site analysis, the descriptions within tomb reports and museum reports will provide the access to this material. This material is both difficult to access and scant and will not be the main focus of analysis, as well as will be used alongside the tomb depictions.

Textual analysis will involve the biographical and tomb inscriptions, which refer to the lives of women, particularly the titles which is a key factor in determining position in society. Tomb biographies feature women as they relate to their husbands and fathers, with captions over scenes recording women names and titles. While not exhaustive in the information they provide, they are invaluable in studying the role of women. There are several volumes such as Wente (1990) and Parkinson (1991), that provide translations and text editions of letters of female contemporaries, including some examples of women from these areas.

This project will use a novel approach to the study of women by focussing the investigation on a limited period and a restricted number of neighbouring provinces. Examining the roles of women in such a limited context is also innovative, since hitherto studies looked at women of ancient Egypt globally, with the preconceived idea that no changes occurred due to the conservative nature of ancient Egyptians. Similarly, this thesis will attempt to deconstruct the idea that the role and position of women was homogenous in both the capital and the provinces. Each tomb presents women in complex and nuanced ways, and the position of the various women varied between tombs. By understanding more specifically the role of provincial women, it allows for these comparisons to be drawn and will hopefully open up the potential for further research.

The project will attempt to analyse a diverse range of sources in order to look at the broader position of women in society. Once collected and examined, material from the Middle Kingdom will be compared with the aim of better understanding the development and changes in the social status and role of women throughout these periods. The project will use existing methods of analysis but apply them to new sources.

There are a range reasons to approach the topic in this way. This thesis aims to investigate understudied aspects of Egyptian History through non-traditional approaches, it will investigate the evidence through the lens of social and cultural framework. This is in contrast to economic, administrative and military approaches, which are still some of the predominant approaches to the study of ancient Egypt. Although the experiences and position of elite women are not representative of the average woman during this period, they are the most well represented in the extant evidence.

The focus is on the archaeological and artistic elements of the Middle Kingdom, a period which has traditionally been studied for its contribution to language and literature. There are also practical reasons to limit the study to one period. It ensures there is a sufficient quantity of evidence without becoming overbearing. This provides a sizeable relative chronological period, which avoids many of the problems of absolute dating. Very few objects, events or reigns are able to given an absolute date within this period and thus would not be useful to this study. Many of the tombs are not able to be identified to a specific reign, and are instead placed in a relative chronology with surrounding tombs through the art style, titles, and family members. Likewise, utilising tombs from a single dynasty would be complicated by tombs which are on the periphery of dynasty 11 or 12.

Focusing on a single period also means the evidence can be considered collectively. As it is not able to be known which tombs were constructed concurrently, isolating evidence for subtle changes is difficult. Although the considerable Old Kingdom evidence could be used to study change over time, this would increase amount of material to be studied within this thesis to unwieldy levels.

There are several key advantages to this approach. By focusing on tomb representations instead of other bodies of evidence, all the material is already recorded and available in tomb reports. This approach does not require fieldwork, and is reliant on already known material. It is therefore easier to know where the boundaries of the evidence are. Using well studied Middle Kingdom sites ensures there is copious previous material to adapt and utilise ideas from. The methodology is also suited to the available evidence. It is also the most straightforward way to study a socio-cultural phenomenon like gender roles and position in society.

There are some disadvantages and limitations to this approach as well. There are large gaps within the evidence, which could be addressed by including a larger selection of provincial cemeteries within the dataset. As not all of the tombs are well preserved, gaps are an inevitable part of historical investigations. Each site has different challenges; Meir is now

heavily weathered and the eastern walls of every tomb has been reconstructed; Deir el-Bersha was both used a quarry from the New Kingdom onwards, and has suffered greatly from erosion; and the original art of Beni Hassan was vandalised during the Coptic period.

Attempting to study lives through the funerary context exclusively is not necessarily representative of broader society. Likewise, focusing on a small selection of sites means conclusions can not necessarily be draw wider conclusions about the whole of Middle Kingdom Egypt. This approach focuses heavily on a small subset of the population, the elites; which is already overrepresented in research. Ultimately this is a reality of studying most of ancient Egyptian history.

By focusing narrowly on the Middle Kingdom, the broader changes over time is not factored into this study. Expanding to focus on more material would increase the amount of data, thus limiting the amount of analysis able to be conducted. Finally, our modern biases and perceptions can limit our understanding of the past. Assumptions and implicit ideas about what antiquity was like should be challenged, and investigated as neutrally as possible.

### **1.5 Corpus of Tombs**

This thesis investigates the women recorded in the tombs of provinces 14-16. There are 13 decorated tombs from Beni Hassan, 5 from Meir and 7 from Deir el Bersha, with a total of 25 tombs all up. These cemeteries represent both the largest and most elaborate non-royal and provincial examples from the Middle Kingdom. Thus, they offer insight into the artistic and mortuary presence of women which other necropolises are not able to. Through studying these sites as a collection, it is easier to see potential connections and relationships between the provinces, and examples of intermarriage and family and of artistic diffusion and emulation are easily observed.

The women of these sites have not had extensive studies focused towards them, being traditionally neglected in scholarship. This is part of an ongoing process of recognising the important role women have had within history, and addressing it with research.

Unfortunately, attempting to focus on extensively on non-elite women is beyond the scope of possibility for thus study, and would potentially require fieldwork. Another important factor is the availability of the tombs, as they are well recorded and the publications accessible.

Although non-elite women constituted the majority of women within these provinces and are also underrepresented in the historical discourse, they are also underrepresented within the evidence. The early excavation methods, looting and natural destruction has made the non-elite parts of the necropolis resulting in limited records of the sites.

## CHAPTER 2: ARTISTIC DEPICTIONS

### 2.1 Introduction

The art of ancient Egypt depicted an idealised image of the world.<sup>18</sup> During the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the decoration of tombs was centred around images of daily life, drawing from a repertoire of activities and scene types. The most prominent human figures within the tomb, apart from the tomb owner himself, was his wife. Women are also shown in a small selection of other activities, but were overall a minority in the decorative program. As the art of the tomb is most accessible to all visitors, it would have been able to have the broadest impact; as inscriptions were limited to the literate.

The representation of activities within the tomb are not true to life, but are instead reflective of the values/ preferences of the tomb owner. The common scene types and motifs across many tombs reinforcing shared cultural values, such as military pursuits and agrarian success. This chapter will focus on the portrayal of the elite women in the tomb, the industries and activities of non elite women, as well as discussing the proportion of women within the tomb decoration overall as a percentage of human figures within the tomb.

The art styles of Middle Kingdom, and by extension the portrayal of women was heavily influenced by the Old Kingdom styles.<sup>19</sup> Contemporary tombs from neighbouring provinces may have utilised the same artists or schools of art.<sup>20</sup> The art styles of the Old Kingdom rock cut tombs of Meir influenced the artists constructing the Middle Kingdom tombs. Smith suggests that the same artists were behind the tombs of Ukhhotep IV (C1) at Meir and the tomb of Dhutychotep (B2) at Deir el Bersha, given the similar quality and style of the painting.<sup>21</sup>

There were however developments during this period in the realm of art. Particularly within the standardised grid system, with a set ratio of height to width for human figures.<sup>22</sup> In the tombs of Ukhhotep (B1) and Senbi (B2) at Meir grid lines are found, and in the tomb of Amenemhat (B2) at Beni Hassan.<sup>23</sup> The depiction of human bodies continuing to adhere to strict rules of decorum, and repertoires of activities which were appropriate to depict. As well

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<sup>18</sup> Robbins (1990: 45)

<sup>19</sup> Smith (1981:192)

<sup>20</sup> Smith (1953: 192)

<sup>21</sup> Smith (1953: 199)

<sup>22</sup> Robbins (1994: 259)

<sup>23</sup> Robbins (1994: 70)

as an increasing influence of the capital style in the late 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, with the more weary and aged portrayal of the king influencing private statuary and art alike.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2 Elite Women

Aside from the Tomb owner himself, wives are the most prominent human figures in the tomb. They share in the activities of their husbands, generally at a reduced scale, such as within the fishing and fowling scenes, or accompanying him in receiving offerings. The wives, mothers and daughters of the tomb owner accompany him a range of scenes.<sup>25</sup>

The presentation of elite women was highly standardised, following strict rules of proportion. In the B group tombs at Meir, wives are consistently depicted with their husbands. However they are not depicted on the same scale. The only tomb in which the husband and wife are depicted consistently on the same scale is that of Senbi and his wife Dhutychotep (B2) at Meir. She is depicted 6 times within the tomb and on each occasion with her husband. At Meir and Deir el-Bersha, there are no other women depicted on the same scale as their husband, making these examples of particular note. At Beni Hasan, there are examples of similarly sized couples, such as Amenemhat (B2) and his wife, who are both the same size in the their offering tables. While they are the same size, her offering table scene is a third of the size of his.<sup>26</sup> In tomb (B23) at Beni Hasan Women are shown in large scale. They appear at the same size as their husbands, and are also very prominently featured on the east wall.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately this tomb is highly damaged, the full context for these images are unknown. While size does not directly collate directly with importance, it does reflect how power is shared in the scene itself.

Instead, symbols are a clearer way to indicate position. On the north wall, Dhutychotep (B2) at Meir, is shown holding a papyri-form staff, a symbol of divinity. This staff was known for its association with goddesses but it is not depicted with royal women until the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty.<sup>28</sup> There are two other cases of staffs from this corpus. (B15) both from Beni Hassan include the wives Hotepnerferu (B15) and Khnumhotep (B17), at Beni Hassan who both hold a lotus staff.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the papyri-form staff, this appears to have developed from the image of

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<sup>24</sup> Robbins (2008: 118)

<sup>25</sup> Routledge (2008: 176-177)

<sup>26</sup> Newberry (1892: pl.18)

<sup>27</sup> Newberry (1893: pl.24)

<sup>28</sup> The first depiction of a female member of the royal family holding a staff is that of Queen Iah, mother of Montuhotep II at Shatt er-Rigal. Hassan characterises the staff's royal women hold as more typically feminine, the papyrus or the *w3s* sceptre having associations with beauty as opposed to more war-like staffs of men. Hassan (1976: 198)

<sup>29</sup> Newberry (1893: pl. 4,14,16,)

women holding flowers from the Old Kingdom. An image which co-exists with the staff, such as Khnumhotep (B17) and Dhutya (B29).<sup>30</sup> In the tomb of Dhutyhotep (B2) at Deir el-Bersha, and tomb (B14) there are two examples of flower headdresses.<sup>31</sup> These reflecting the ability of the position of women to partake in leisure activities, and general symbols of beauty and adornment.

These examples concern wives depicted adjacent to their husbands. The depiction of multiple wives together explicitly is rare, and there is ongoing discussion about the prevalence of polygamy.<sup>32</sup> In C1 at Meir, there are multiple wives depicted throughout the tomb, which is an outlier within the corpus. Simpson suggests this may have been an attempt at the emulation of royal style polygamy.<sup>33</sup> The funerary monuments of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty kings were typically surrounded by the burial of royal women.<sup>34</sup> Just as the King was surrounded by his harem, the tomb owner within the chapel is surrounded by women. Other symbols include the *ꜥnh* held in his hands, the formula “*sꜥ ꜥnh dd wꜣs nb snb nb ꜥw tꜣb nb*”<sup>35</sup> Royal symbols are utilised within other tombs at Meir, with the throne chair used as a determinate in the inscription in Senbi II (B3). Indeed, the consanguineous marriages themselves may have been an emulation of royal protocol.<sup>36</sup> Kanawati proposes an alternate theory for the amount of wives in this tomb; arguing that the wives were instead an attempt at producing a male heir.<sup>37</sup> There appears to have been several generations of consanguineous marriages at Meir. In B3, Mersi and Senbi are noted as having identical parents and grandparents.<sup>38</sup> These theories are all compelling, but as Newberry stated, “...is the explanation simply that he was an uxorious person?”<sup>39</sup>

While symbolism is an emphatic part of artistic depiction, there are also more personal moments shown between spouses. There are two cases of subtle examples of affection. In B2, at Meir Dhutyhotep is shown holding her husband’s hand as they walk together.<sup>40</sup> In B1 Meres sits before her husbands, looking up at him tenderly.<sup>41</sup> While the relationship is highly

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<sup>30</sup> Newberry (1893: pl.14,16)

<sup>31</sup> Newberry (1893: pl.46) and Newberry & Griffith (1893: pl. 24)

<sup>32</sup> See Simpson (1974) and Wilfong (2010)

<sup>33</sup> Simpson (1974: 102)

<sup>34</sup> Melandri (2016: 176)

<sup>35</sup> Blackman (1953:13)

<sup>36</sup> Willard (1976: 23)

<sup>37</sup> Kanawati (2018: 38)

<sup>38</sup> Blackman (1953: pl.5-6)

<sup>39</sup> Blackman (1953: 15)

<sup>40</sup> Blackman (1912: pl.5)

<sup>41</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: pl.90)

stylised. Despite the symbolic meaning imbued within the design, these moments would appear to reflect the underlying human relationships.

## 2.3 Industry and Activity

Images of daily life and industry are an important part of the repertoire of Middle Kingdom tomb decoration. Although the majority of these activities were carried out by men, there are a few industries which are shown to have had a female presence. These images of non elite women are generally unnamed and do not represent a specific individual but the concept of the activity.<sup>42</sup>

Spinning and weaving were carried out by both men and women in ancient Egypt, and that is reflected in the art within this corpus. Herodotus famously remarked at the role reversal the Egyptians of the late period.<sup>43</sup> Depictions of weaving from the Middle Kingdom are not as common as other types of industry, such as bread and beermaking.<sup>44</sup> At Deir el-Bersha, the weaving appears to have been of particular importance as local industry. Tayt the goddess of weaving is mentioned in a fragment in the tomb of *ḥt-nḥt* (B5), and there is a large depiction of weaving in the tomb of Dhutyhotep (B2).<sup>45</sup> The level of detail is quite striking, the tools used rendered in large scale. It is exclusively carried out by women, as well as showing the process of separating roving, and then using a top whirl spindle to produce the thread. A similar scene is shown in the tomb of Khnumhotep II (B3) at Beni Hassan, here women and men are shown working together to produce the cloth from flax. The caption describes the process as *msn*, plying the strands to produce fibres thick enough to be woven. This process is overseen by a man titled *imī-rꜥ pr-šnꜥ*, overseer of weavers.<sup>46</sup> This does not appear to be universal however, in the tomb of Khety (B17), the weaving is carried out entirely by men.<sup>47</sup> The production of cloth was an important part of everyday life, but it also has a symbolic element. Cloth was a necessary part of the funerary equipment and used in daily ritual dressing of statues.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 14)

<sup>43</sup> Herodotus, *Historia* 2.35-99

<sup>44</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 4)

<sup>45</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1895: pl.26)

<sup>46</sup> Kanawati & Evens (2014: 43)

<sup>47</sup> Kanawati & Evens (2014: pl. 34)

<sup>48</sup> Karmin (1999: 87)

In the tomb of Dhutyhotep (B2) at Deir el Bersha, there is an uncommon scene of female bakers. This activity was primarily carried out by men, and is unique in this corpus. Other examples of bakers seem to show it was primarily carried out by men, such as in Khnumhotep II (B3).<sup>49</sup>

One prevalent across the corpus is dance, which women are consistently shown engaging in. There are several types of dance shown, and although it is not uniquely performed by women and girls, it is one of the few activities they feature in which take up considerable space within the register. The depiction of women in dance at Beni Hassan in particular has parallels to the military training also featured at the site. Just as the dancers are drawn in rhythmic motion, the wrestlers are likewise highly stylised. Dancing could likewise serve a dual purpose, both as recreational entertainment but also in within the context of religious rites. In his study of performance throughout ancient Egyptian history, Gillam argues that military training had a non-utilitarian purpose, with combat sports a feature of many festivals, alongside activities such as dance.<sup>50</sup>

One distinct aspect of Beni Hassan is the focus on military scenes. The eastern walls of B2, B15, B17 are reserved entirely for wrestling and military practice, and are the first thing someone views when entering the tomb.<sup>51</sup> Although these activities are not given the same level of focus, they would appear to reflect similar types of athletic training; with the military training of a higher priority within the decoration of the tomb. In B1 at Meir this view of wrestling is shown on the north wall, amongst an array of entertainers, including harpists, clappers and women playing the sistrum.<sup>52</sup>

Compare this to tombs 2 and 3 where the most traditional fishing, fowling and marsh scenes face the entrance. As family activities, the wives and children are prominently featured within these tombs and thus emphasise a very different aspect to the tomb owner. This shift appears to have taken place after the during the 12 dynasty, as this is when the emphasis is changed.

There are assorted other activities they are shown participating in. In the tomb of Khety (B15) two male and two female musicians are shown playing for the tomb owner and his wife. In Uhkhotep IV (C1) at Meir, there is an image of some female flutists, however the image is badly damaged.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Newberry (1893: p.12)

<sup>50</sup> Gillam (2005: 89)

<sup>51</sup> Newberry (1892: pl. 29) and (1893: pl.5, 25)

<sup>52</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: pl.78)

<sup>53</sup> Blackman (1953: pl.7)

All of these examples depict tombs where women are featured in the minority. In the tomb of C1 at Meir, women are women depicted throughout the tomb; with the exception of the shrine, they feature on every wall. Women are shown in procession, as offering bearers, presenting cattle, dancing and singing.<sup>54</sup> Just as with other tombs of Meir, this may be depiction of various rites for Hathor, and a reflection of her worship at the site. The tomb owner is shown flanked by columns with Hathor head capitals.<sup>55</sup> Several women are also shown with tattoos, which are attested on the bodies of priestesses from the New Kingdom.<sup>56</sup> Given the poor state of presentation of the tomb, this may be a result of selective preservation.

## 2.4 Percentages

The ratio of male to female figures within the decoration of tombs is likely provides a quantitative way to understand the significance of women within the broader artistic program. Unfortunately, the analysis of tombs by this metric is difficult, as only a minority of tombs are decorated, and then only a small selection of those have completely preserved decoration in a near-complete state. Although the broader trends within other tombs can be considered, this analysis is applicable to a very limited proportion of tombs.

Moreover, importance is not simply indicated representational amounts. Many of the tombs at Meir and Deir el-Bersha feature more cattle than humans, but that does not mean that cattle were more important than men in Egyptian society. Indeed, most of the figures are not of the tomb owner, but that does not imply he is less important than the commoners, placing it within the broader context of decoration is important.

However, given there is no reason to assume women did not represent 50% of the population, why then do their activities do not account for 50% of the scene types? Certainly, some of the more important roles of women have cultural taboos against their representation. The following tables provide an overview of female figures compared to male figures in the well preserved tombs of the three sites.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Blackman (1953: pl.5-19)

<sup>55</sup> Blackman (1953: pl. 9)

<sup>56</sup> Tassie (2003: 90-91)

<sup>57</sup>All figure counts refer to female figures. A\* refers to partial figures that are ambiguous. The numbers given are thus imperfect, and only reflect what is preserved. The final percentage is calculated as the total women divided by the total male and female figures combined. Statues and depictions of coffins are not included, only living persons.

**Table Va: Meir**

<b>Tomb No.</b>	<b>Nth Wall</b>	<b>Sth Wall</b>	<b>Est Wall</b>	<b>Wst Wall</b>	<b>Shrine</b>	<b>Side Room</b>	<b>Total Women</b>	<b>Total Male</b>	<b>Final Percentage</b>
<b>B1</b>	5	2	1*	0	0	-	8	161	5%
<b>B2</b>	2	4	2	6	2	-	16	82	20%
<b>B4</b>	7	3	0	34 -	()	1	45	193	19%
<b>C1</b>	28	19	32	11	9	-	99	42	70%

The eastern rock walls of the tombs of Meir have unfortunately collapsed, and the decorations on these walls is only partially restored. The decoration of B3 is not included in the table, as the decoration is restricted to the two false doors and inscription on the doorway. The first false door is well preserved and belonged to a woman called Mersi, the wife and sister of the tomb owner Senbi. She is shown seated, with an offering bearer presenting her with a goose.<sup>58</sup> The other false door is fragmentary, but the text indicates it was for her husband and probably contained a similar image.<sup>59</sup> C1 is the greatest outlier, and the only tomb apart from Netjernaht (B23) at Beni Hassan where women outnumber men. Although the eastern wall is only partially preserved, it is possible that more women were included.

**Table V b Beni Hassan**

<b>Tomb No.</b>	<b>North Wall</b>	<b>Sth Wall</b>	<b>East Wall</b>	<b>Wst Wall</b>	<b>Shrine</b>	<b>Total Women</b>	<b>Total Male</b>	<b>Final Percentage (out of total figures)</b>
Amenemhet (2)	7	4	6	13	4	34	628	5%
Khnumhotep II (3)	4	13	2	19	6	44	395	10%
Baket III (15)	49	13	0		nil	62	837 (West Wall missing)	7%
Khety (17)	54	4	nil	Nil (erasure of offering table)	nil	58	1057	5%
Nakht (21)	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	0	23	0%

<sup>58</sup> Blackman (1953: pl. 5)

<sup>59</sup> Blackman (1953: pl. 6, 6)

Netjernahkt (23)	nil	nil	4	nil	nil	4	2	67%
Baket I (29)	1	nil	1			2	186	1%

Beni Hassan encompasses tombs spanning the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Tomb 2, 3, 15, and 17 are the best preserved and most complete tombs of the site, with only minor gaps within the decorative program. Unlike Meir, there is considerably less variation in the proportion of female figures. Instead these tombs fall within the same range of 5-10%.

Tomb 14 is unfortunately only described in full by Newberry, and the included plates neglect key scenes.<sup>60</sup> He notes that the west wall included multiple women wearing necklaces. There was also a fishing and fowling scene, which may have depicted a wife or female attendants.<sup>61</sup>

Tomb 21 is also poorly preserved, although the south wall depicts tomb owner Nahkt overseeing animals being presented to him; including the tomb owner, there are 23 figures, all male. Tomb 33 is likewise in a poor state of preservation, with only the north wall even partially preserved. There are no female figures, both in the walls scenes on the false door. Tomb 23 which only preserves the large figures of the deceased and his wife. The East wall preserves only 7 human figures but given other similar walls we can understand the original number was likely much higher.

**Table V c: Deir el-Bersha**

<b>Tomb No.</b>	<b>Outer Chamber</b>	<b>North Wall</b>	<b>Sth Wall</b>	<b>East Wall</b>	<b>Wst Wall</b>	<b>Shrine</b>	<b>Total Women</b>	<b>Total Male</b>	<b>Final Percentage</b>
<b>B2</b>	4	4	35	0	2	0	45	532	8%

Deir el-Bersha is the most fragmentary of the three sites, thus the only tomb this analysis could realistically be applied to is tomb 2. The 9 other relevant tombs being quarried away and only preserving minimal decoration. Although even at the time of recording many of the walls of tomb 2 could be only be partially reconstructed.<sup>62</sup> The southern wall reconstructed from the large fragments found within the tomb.<sup>63</sup> Today the site is further destroyed through

<sup>60</sup> Newberry (1892: 84-85)

<sup>61</sup> Newberry (1893: 84)

<sup>62</sup> Newberry (1894: vii)

<sup>63</sup> Griffith and Newberry (1893: pl.24)

vandalism. Because of this uncertainty, it is of course possible that the decoration featured a higher proportion of women overall. Especially given that it is the scenes of women baking, weaving and in elaborate garb that are most destroyed on the south wall. The right wall is the best preserved from this site and it contains 337 men compared to 4 women, which is only 1%. Much of the art is described as similar in style to that of Beni Hassan, but many of the themes are different.<sup>64</sup> Particularly and increased focus on industry, including women in industry. Despite this, the final percentage is only 8%, within the same range of Beni Hassan.

## 2.5 Miscellaneous Examples

There are other women not included in these general categories. Most notably the famous arrival of the Asiatics depicted in B2 at Beni Hasan, which includes multiple depictions of foreign women. As the writing of *ʿzm(.w)* usually includes a male determinate, this could indicate that 37 men had arrived.<sup>65</sup> However Karmin suggests that this may refer to 37 men and their family groups, closer to what is depicted on the wall.<sup>66</sup> If these women are understood as the wives, grouping them together is an interesting choice. They are depicted next to a child and in the middle of the troupe. Unlike the men, they hold their arms against their chests. This gesture could be a greeting, or an act of subservience.<sup>67</sup> The level of detail given to the design of these women, particularly in their garb, would suggest this is an accurate portrayal.

There is also the role of visual puns within tombs to be considered. An example is the common depiction of men spearing fish in their tombs. The verb *stj* could mean “to spear” and is a homophone for the verb *stj* ‘to impregnate’. Therefore, a scene that at first glance suggests fishing had overt sexual undertones for the man and his sexual endeavours in the afterlife.<sup>68</sup> The presence of wives in these scenes takes on new meaning in this context.

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<sup>64</sup> Newberry & Griffin (1892: 4-6)

<sup>65</sup> Karmin (2009: 24)

<sup>66</sup> Karmin (2009: 24)

<sup>67</sup> Karmin, (1998: 27) and Brunner-Traut (1986: 574–585)

<sup>68</sup> Goudsouzian (2012: 4)

One key gap within the record in relation to women, is the lack of birthing scenes. This appears to be emblematic of a wider cultural trend; as even within the world of medico-magical papyri, there is a limited focus on labour and parturition.<sup>69</sup> As Töpfer argues, the act of labour was assisted by midwives and was not classed alongside medical issues.<sup>70</sup> Instead, it was a private affair and not to be depicted publicly. Childbirth is virtually absent across all of ancient Egyptian art along with other aspects of childrearing such as breastfeeding. There are rare cases such as the examples from 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty tombs of Kagemni and Khety from the Teti Cemetery.<sup>71</sup> Most of the known cases being determinatives,<sup>72</sup> and these activities are not found within this corpus.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Women fulfil a variety of roles within the decorative program. In the tombs of Beni Hasan, female figures account for approximately 10% of the total figures within a tomb, this is number is slightly higher at Meir. Elite women are primarily depicted in relation to their husbands, accompanying the tomb owner as he oversees aspects of the tomb. Robbins suggests that the inclusion of women within the tomb itself may have had an overarching symbolic purpose, in order to facilitate the rebirth of the deceased in the afterlife.<sup>73</sup> Although the exact purpose of the artistic decoration of a tomb is controversial, there are glimpses at affection between husband and wives, suggesting that the art was more than

The strict rules of decorum that Egyptian art followed was part of a wider nature to idealise daily life. Some of the most important roles women held in society were not depicted within tombs, most notably childbirth and reproduction. As some of the key roles of women, these taboos may have had impacted the depiction of women when prioritising scenes to depict.

Women unrelated to the tomb owner feature in activities from daily life. A common theme is the dancing, which features prominently in many of Beni Hasan. This may have been a female parallel to the military scenes, both strenuous activities. There are some examples of women in industry scenes, primarily weaving and baking. Other activities include weaving and spinning, which although not engaged in exclusively by women; it is found in great detail in B2 at Deir el-Bersha and in B3 at Beni Hassan. Women in industry are well attested with models, but it is not as common on tomb wall scenes.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Töpfer (2014: 317)

<sup>70</sup> Töpfer (2014: 335)

<sup>71</sup> Kanawati & Woods (2010: 34)

<sup>72</sup> Gardiner Sign List: B3, B5 and B6

<sup>73</sup> Robbins (1990: 54)

<sup>74</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 15)

Thus, the limited presence of women within the tomb scene and restricted to only a few scene types, shows what the culture valued. At a broad sense this is reflected in them accounting for approximately 10% of figures overall. It should also be noted that it is unlikely that the artists were conscious of this decision, but instead reflects broader social mores.

## CHAPTER 2: TEXTUAL REFERENCES

### 2.1 Introduction

Just as with artistic representation of women, the choice of language within the tomb reflected aspects of the society that created it. Unlike visual representations of women, written language was only accessible to a minority of the population.<sup>75</sup> Elite women do not typically have a biography, but are only referred to briefly through their titles.

The text inscribed on tomb walls was not simply for the fulfilment of the cult, but served both a symbolic and commemorative function. The biography presents an idealised set of principals which were important within Middle Kingdom society. Women do not feature heavily in biography, but are instead represented through titles and captions.

One of the most important ways the position of women was expressed is through the use of titles. During the Middle Kingdom, there were considerable developments in feminine titles.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, there were considerable changes in how names were written, with increasing emphasis on the maternal lineage. At a broader level, the language and verbal constructions used to describe women are quite different to men, with more passive action.<sup>77</sup> This chapter will consider the different text bodies within the corpus of tombs, and how women are represented within them.

In addition, it is through the text of the tomb that explicit links between sites, and the role of women in succession can be determined. There are a few key examples of definitive cross provincial marriages from these sites. This chapter will consider the feminine titles utilised by the women of this site and the changes that they underwent during this period as well as the role of women in succession and naming conventions.

Correct action towards women is described in biography, for example in the negative confessions on the door jambs of B2 at Beni Hasan.. These contained highly standardised phraseology, demonstrate what was considered virtuous conduct. In the Entrance thickness from Amenemhat states that, ‘*nn s3t nds shbt.n=i nn h3rt d3it.n=i and rdi.n=i n h3rt mi nbt hii*’ ‘There was no daughter of a commoner whom I humiliated, no widow who I oppressed’,<sup>78</sup> Landgrafova characterises the biographies of the middle kingdom as “*dedicated to the realm of reputation*”, which also includes the realm of conduct towards women.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Parkinson (1991: 13-21) discusses the rise in writing during this period and the general state of literacy.

<sup>76</sup> Ward (1982: 21)

<sup>77</sup> Routledge (2010: 176)

<sup>78</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2016: 27)

<sup>79</sup> Landgrafova (2015 :184)

## 2.2 Feminine Titles

Titles are one the most straightforward way of reflecting an individual's position in society. They could either be honorific, relate to a specific role or be a combination of both. For example, '*s3.t h3.ty-ꜥ*' 'daughter of a count' can be understood literally.<sup>80</sup> The titles of the women are listed in Table III. Women typically hold less titles than men, and the titles of women underwent shifts during this period, most notably the rise of the title *nb.t pr* for women.

One of the most important titles during this period is *nb.t pr* or 'mistress of the house'. It appeared during the reign of Amenemhat during mid 11<sup>th</sup>, both for royal and elite women.<sup>81</sup> Typically the title is denoted as the marker of a married women, however Stefanovic and Satzinger suggests that although this was a common implication, there other attested uses;<sup>82</sup> demonstrating that the title relates to the administrative head of the household, regardless of marital status, as well as distinguishing women who owned property.<sup>83</sup> The ancient Egyptian concept of marriage is not analogous to the modern legal and cultural practice of marriage, and it is erroneous to assume there is a direct collation.<sup>84</sup> Pflüger attributed the rise in popularity of the title to the an increasing 'emancipation' of women during the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, however there does not appear to be any evidence for this.<sup>85</sup>

The title could potentially reflect the status of women within the household. In the case of Tchat she is noted at the mother of two of Khnumhotep III children, *Nḥrj* and *Nṯr-nḥt(.w)*, but does not hold the title. Her exact relationship with the tomb owner has been the topic of much discussion. Simpson suggests that she may be a second wife, who remarried Khnumhotep II.<sup>86</sup> However, given his other wife is a *h3.tjt-ꜥ*, 'countess', a unique title to the site, it seems also possible that Tchat was outranked within the domestic hierarchy.<sup>87</sup> Her title of *sd3w.tyt*, 'sealer' is not held by any other wives within this corpus is held by household staff.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ward (1984: 15)

<sup>81</sup> Pflüger (1947: 133)

<sup>82</sup> Stefanovic & Satzinger (2008: 334)

<sup>83</sup> Stefanovic & Satzinger (2008: 334)

<sup>84</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 36)

<sup>85</sup> Pflüger (1947: 133)

<sup>86</sup> Simpson (1974: 2-3)

<sup>87</sup> Ward (1986: 22)

<sup>88</sup> Ward (1986: 17)

Both Karmin and Grajetzki categorise Khnumhotep II's marriage to Khety as political, with his relationship with Tchat, was a true romantic partnership.<sup>89</sup> Given the absence of any affectionate terminology, this also seems unlikely. Compared to Uhkhotep (B2) at Meir who consistently describes his wife Dhutyhotep as “*hm.t=f mrt=f nt st-jb*” or ‘his wife, his beloved, his favourite’.<sup>90</sup>

Likewise *Htp-Hwt-hr* in B2 at Beni Hassan does not hold the title. It has been suggested that this is a longer form of the known wife *Htp*, who does hold the title. The name *Htp-Hwt-hr* only appears to relation to his son, Khnumhotep.<sup>91</sup> She may not have been a wife in a true sense, and instead only be the mother of his child.

It appears to function primarily as a domestic title, rather than a marker of marital status; since it is not universally given the partners of the tomb owner. As marriage and domestic life overlaps, there is clear association between these associations.

In the tomb of Uhkhotep IV at Meir (C1), the title of *nb.t pr* is definitively attested for 4 wives.<sup>92</sup> The upper registers of the north are unfortunately damaged, but what is preserved seems to indicate that Uhkhotep had considerably more wives than are now preserved.<sup>93</sup> This grid like design depicts each wife with her titles consecutively, most notably *nb.t pr*. Simpson argues that “*careful attention seems to have been paid to indicate their equal status*”<sup>94</sup> The title of *nb.t pr* could therefore be shared amongst women in the same household, and between wives.

The wife of Senbi I (B1) does not hold this title. Instead Meres is described as the listed as the ‘*jmzhhjrt pr hmwt*’ ‘the honoured one in the house of women’, which implies the existence of multiple women.<sup>95</sup> This may refer to her position in the region, as the head of women in the region, or it may reflect her status within the household. The wife of Khnumhotep 1 (B14) at Beni Hasan also holds the title, Satip, but she holds the title *nb.t pr* as well, confusing the issue.<sup>96</sup>

One of the most common religious titles held by elite women from the old kingdom to the Middle Kingdom was “*hm.t-htr Hw.t-Hr*”, or ‘priestess of Hathor’.<sup>97</sup> Although there is

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<sup>89</sup> Karmin (1999: 63), Grajetzki (2006: 114)

<sup>90</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017:42)

<sup>91</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2016: pl.179)

<sup>92</sup> Blackman (1921: 8-9)

<sup>93</sup> Kanawati (2018: 38)

<sup>94</sup> Simpson (1974: 103)

<sup>95</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: pl.77)

<sup>96</sup> Newberry (1893: pl.46)

<sup>97</sup> Ward (1984: 20)

debate over whether it simply an honorific title, it does appear to have had accompanying roles within the cult of the goddess.<sup>98</sup> This title is held by 6 women at Beni Hassan, it is attested once at Meir, however there are no cases from Deir el- Bersha.

At Beni Hassan it is held by Wives Baket (B29), Hery-ib (B23) and Ary-hotep (B29) as well as 2 of Khnumhotep II daughters, and Meres and Baket and his wife Khety. There are variations on the title, such as *‘hm.t Hw.t-hr nbw’* ‘priestess of Hathor of gold’ which may allude to a specific duty within the local temple.<sup>99</sup>

At Meir the only known noble women to hold the title is Mersi of B3. As the third generation of rock cut tombs at this site, why this title is not attested at the other Middle Kingdom tombs is unknown. The priesthood of Hathor is depicted in both B1 and B2, with multiple women shown presenting sistrums to the Ukhhotep I (B2), and engaging in rites for the deceased.<sup>100</sup> As Meir was the burial ground for the elites of Cusae, an important centre for the worship of Hathor, which did not appear to be waning during this period.<sup>101</sup> There are other priestess titles attested from this corpus. Both Khety, the wife of Khnumhotep (B3) and Hetpet, the wife of Amenemhat (B2) are *hmt-ntr P<sup>h</sup>ht*, or ‘priestess of Pakhet’. They may have served as the female counterpart to their husbands who were *jmj-r hmw-ntr*, or ‘overseer of priests’.

The title *‘rht nswt’* or ‘acquaintance of the King’ is held by 3 women from Beni Hassan, Heryib in (B23), by Hetpet in (B2), and Khety (B3), all wives of the tomb owner, perhaps suggested a shared connection with court.

## 2.3 Kinship and Succession

Developments in naming conventions during the Middle Kingdom placed an increased emphasis on the mother. Offices could also be passed through the maternal line. It is also possible to infer kinship through the placement of figures within decoration. In the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan (B3) the children of the tomb owner are shown next to their respective mothers.<sup>102</sup>

Khnumhotep II (B3) from Beni Hasan is the best known example of matrilineal succession, due to his lengthy biography. He describes his ascension to the role of nomarch through his

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<sup>98</sup> Gillam (1995: 212)

<sup>99</sup> Ward (1986: 10)

<sup>100</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: pl.88)

<sup>101</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: pl.88-89)

<sup>102</sup> Kanawati & Woods (2014: p.115)

noble birth. Stating that he received the role ‘*sḥ.j tpj n mswt.j wd3*’, ‘on account of the nobility of his birth’, going on to describe the titles of his mother.<sup>103</sup> His maternal uncle Nahkt (B23) was the previous governor of the region. His father, Nehri was also a governor, but his origins are unknown, although Deir el Bersha, Hatnub and Tehna have all be proposed.<sup>104</sup> The status of both the mother and the father seem to have had an impact on this succession. As Favory notes, this indirect transmission of power was not uncommon, and the royal appointment of officials was done with the wider family context in mind.<sup>105</sup>

The biography goes on to describe the appointment Khnumhotep II son to the role of governor of the Jackal Nome. He states that it was on account of both the inheritance of his mother and father “*Nḥt ir n Htjj r ḥk3 Jnpwt r jwṯ jt mwt=f*”.<sup>106</sup>

The parentage of Dhutyhotep at B2 at Meir is unknown. Given the name Dhutyhotep is not known at the site. It seems likely that she may have been the daughter of a high ranking noble family from another province. Khemenu was a prominent cult centre for Thoth, and the name Dhutyhotep is well attested from the site.<sup>107</sup> These tombs were also constructed around the reign of Senusret I, so there is <sup>108</sup>

During this period there is increasing focus on the maternal relations of the tomb owner. There are several examples where the name of tomb owners father is not recorded. The tomb of Sep (B3) at Deir el Bersha appears to have been dedicated by a father to three sons. Although Griffith and Newberry attribute it to Sep, from the limited remaining inscriptions it appears to have been shared by 4 brothers, Sep, Dhutyhotep Aha, and Aha-nahkt. The name of the father is not preserved, but the name of the mother is recorded after each name of the three sons, namely *Wṯ-k3-es*.<sup>109</sup> Unfortunately this tomb is badly damaged and much of the decoration and inscriptions have been quarried away.<sup>110</sup>

Dhutyhotep (B2) at Deir el Bersha emphasises his mother within the decoration of the tomb chapel. He states he was “*ms n s3 ḥpr nb*” 6 times within his tomb. However, his father is only mentioned once on the inner wall of the shrine, as the ‘*s3 k3*’.<sup>111</sup> There are 3 instances

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<sup>103</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2014: 111)

<sup>104</sup> Newberry (1983: 11) suggested that Khnumhotep II father was from Dier el Bersha, on account of the prevalence of the name there. Redford (1967: 159) and Kanawati (2017: 268) instead agree that the nearby site of the 18<sup>th</sup> nome, Tehna, is a better fit.

<sup>105</sup> Favory (2016: 129-129)

<sup>106</sup> Kanawati (2014: 34)

<sup>107</sup> Grajetzki (2006: 107)

<sup>108</sup> For an overview of the dating of the various tombs see Grajetzki (2006), Kanawati & Woods (2010) and Kanawati & Evens (2017)

<sup>109</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1895: 26-27)

<sup>110</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1895: 26)

<sup>111</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1893: 30)

within this tomb where he is not distinguished as his mother's son; in a caption above men fishing, in the song of the herdsmen, and within the text in the shrine.<sup>112</sup> Within the shrine, he is instead described in relation to his father, as “s3 ky”<sup>113</sup> Likewise, Dhuty-nahkt in B1 is also referred within the shrine by his relation to his father Nehera.<sup>114</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusion

Women are featured throughout the text of the tomb. Within the few biographical examples, they are either spoken of in either general terms, or are part of recording the succession of the tomb owner to his position. They had a clear role in denoting the noble lineage of the tomb owner and the status of the mother was clearly something worthy of emphasis. Women had an important role in the transmission and legitimisation of offices, and the matrilineal line was considered an important part of a person's heritage. Despite the comparatively limited titles for women, they reflect a complex domestic hierarchy. Additionally, titles related to the priesthood reflect their role in the local religious cult and importance within the broader community.

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<sup>112</sup> P Griffith & Newberry (1893: pl.20-24)

<sup>113</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1893: pl.40)

<sup>114</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1895:pl.6)

## CHAPTER 4: ARCHITECTURE

### 4.1 Introduction

When applying gender to space, the focus typically centres on places with overt connections to gender, such as birthing rooms.<sup>115</sup> However, the influence of gender on space can also be seen in subtle choices in placement and design. Just as art reflects aspects of the society that created it, so too does spatial design. As the construction of a tomb was both labour and cost intensive, the allocation of space is also an indication of what was considered important. Furthermore, as decorated and inscribed tombs are a minority, considering how the use of architecture might reflect the position of women in society allows for a broader collection of materials to be examined. At Beni Hassan for example, of the 39 rock cut tombs only 12 are decorated, and many are unfinished.<sup>116</sup>

The architectural design of a tomb had both a functional purpose, as well as layers of symbolic meaning; reflecting the order of the cosmos and legitimised the role of the individual within it.<sup>117</sup> The tomb was not simply the symbolic space for the remains of the deceased, but also functioned as a space for the living to interact with the deceased. The numerous letters and petitions to the deceased found in tombs from throughout the dynastic period demonstrate the interactivity within the tomb space itself.<sup>118</sup>

It is difficult to separate art and architecture, as they were both constructed and experienced together. The style and design of tombs from the Middle Kingdom is similar to that of the Old kingdom, as they served the same basic function.<sup>119</sup> Both as a place to bury the dead, but also to perform the rites for the deceased, and ensure their endurance in the afterlife.<sup>120</sup> However there was considerable changes during this period, such as the increasing focus on statues and shrines within the tomb chapel.<sup>121</sup>

There are several styles of tombs chapel in this corpus but they all share the same basic architectural elements. Namely, shaft and burial chamber to house the remains of the deceased; a tomb chapel with or without decoration; and cult focus of the tomb, which could

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<sup>115</sup> Koltsida (2007:121)

<sup>116</sup> Kanawati & Woods (2010: 3)

<sup>117</sup> O'connor (1997: 155)

<sup>118</sup> Wentz (1990: 210)

<sup>119</sup> Robbins (2008:102)

<sup>120</sup> Robbins (2008:102)

<sup>121</sup> Robbins (2008:102)

take the form of a statue of the deceased, a shrine or a false door. The discussion here will focus on 4 different elements, namely the false door, niches, statuary and the tomb shafts.

## 4.2 False Doors

False doors are one of the focal points for the cult of the dead within the tomb. Broadly speaking, they can be understood as a transition point for the deceased to travel between life and the afterlife.<sup>122</sup> However they also provided an access point to the living, as a place to present offerings and direct communication to the dead. Although the bulk of the discussion here is regarding the decoration of the false door, they are included amongst the architectural features because they are symbolically an architectural feature, even when painted or in the form of a stela.

False doors developed during the old kingdom to allow the spirit of the deceased to travel between the realms of the dead and the living.<sup>123</sup> Initially they mimicked an elaborate doorframe, but became progressively more standardised. During the Middle Kingdom, this included features such as the *ḥtp di nsw* formula on the jambs, the invocation of mortuary Gods such as Anubis or Osiris, and the presence of a *wꜥꜥt* eyes. The centre of the false door contained an image of the deceased, with their names and titles.<sup>124</sup>

Within the context of the provincial tombs, false doors manifest both as features on the wall of the tomb, or as stelae. A total of 22 false doors dated to the Middle Kingdom were located from these sties, per appendix II. Women feature on only a total of 4. Although the limited number of false doors overall may be a product of preservation, it may also reflect shifts in how the false doors were utilised within the tomb itself. The larger offering table scenes and the rise in the statue shrine changing the cultic focus of the tomb.<sup>125</sup>

Every decorated tomb of the upper ridge from Beni Hassan contains the remains of a false door. The only exception being for the tomb of Baqet II (no.15) which has a raised offering platform. However overall at Beni Hassan there appears to have been a shift in the popularity of the false door. In his excavation of the over 900 burials of the site, Garstung only made

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<sup>122</sup> Dodson & Ikram (2008: 5)

<sup>123</sup> Kanawati (1987: 33)

<sup>124</sup> For an overview of the development of stelae during the Middle Kingdom, see Pflüger (1947)

<sup>125</sup> Karmin (1988: 47) uses the example of Khnumhotep II (B3) abbreviated false door

note of 10 false doors which were found.<sup>126</sup> This is considerably less than would be expected at a site of this size.<sup>127</sup>

At Meir, there are only 3 false doors in the major tombs, and no complete false doors are preserved from Deir el-Bersha. There are wall fragments with the *ḥtp di nsw* formula, a typical feature of false doors. These pieces may have been located in other parts of the tomb, and was not an uncommon feature on door lintels or above shrines.<sup>128</sup> The only tomb which Griffith and Newberry record preserving something akin to a false door is that of Aha-Nahkt in Tomb 8; describing it as ‘a kind of false door’.<sup>129</sup> This tomb is in a poor state of preservation, and the family of tomb owner is not mentioned.<sup>130</sup>

There are four examples from this corpus that feature a wife prominently on a false door. Amenemhat (no. 2) and Userheta (no.163) at Beni Hassan, Weser-nahkt (no. 283), and Mersi (B3) from Meir.

The most prominent example of a false door shared by a husband and wife is that of Amenemhat and his wife *Ḥtppt*. This false door is typical of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, featuring the *wḏst* eyes, cavetto cornice and torus moulding.<sup>131</sup> The layout of the inscription however is interesting. The *ḥtp di nsw* formula begins in the centre and proceeds in both directions, dividing the false door into two halves for both parties. This mirroring continues onto the inner jambs, with the similar titles represented in parallel, he is the *ḥst-ꜥ*, and she is the *sꜣ.t ḥst-ꜥ*. While it is true that symmetry was an emphatic part of Egyptian design, the choice here appears to be a deliberate in order emphasise their joint ownership of the false door, and the similar social standing of both parties.

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<sup>126</sup> Garstung (1908: 184-188)

<sup>127</sup> Garstung (1908: 184)

<sup>128</sup> Such as in (B2) at Meir, and (B3) at Beni Hasan.

<sup>129</sup> Newberry and Griffith, *Beni Hassan Part I*, p. 52

<sup>130</sup> There are no known wives for Aha-Nahkt. No wives are mentioned on this false door, and within the tomb the only reference to women is the royal harem. Newberry and Griffith, *Beni Hassan Part I*, p. 43

<sup>131</sup> Unfortunately the images supplied by Garstung is of poor resolution. Garstung (1908: 185)



Fig. 1 The false door of Amemhat, from Newberry (1892: pl.12)

This design choice is also seen in other stelae from Beni Hassan. On the stelae of Userheta and Nefer from tomb 163, the band of text begins in the centre and similarly divides the image of the seated couple. Although the stela is damaged, the name of the mother of Userheta is recorded as Meret.<sup>132</sup> As matrilineal naming conventions are not common, it is notable that this does not feature on any of the other false doors.

Another example is that of Weser-nahkt (no. 283). This stela is considerably less elaborate than that of Amenemhat, and was not carved into the wall of the tomb. It also does not come from the upper ridge of tombs.

<sup>132</sup> Garstung, 1908: 185)



Fig. 2 Stela of *Wrs-nht* and *Mrs*, from Orel (1995: pl.19.2)

*Hmny s3 Wsr-nht hm.t=f Mrs* "The Warrior Hemenys son Weser-nahkt and his wife Meres"<sup>133</sup>

Although this false door is broken, it preserves the husband and wife depicted on equal scale. He is shown extending an arm, placing his hand affectionately on her shoulder. One of her hands is placed over her breast, a gesture of respect before her husband.<sup>134</sup> Despite the name, it does not seem likely that she was a daughter of Khnumhotep II. The absence of titles and the poor quality of the decoration would suggest that this stela did not belong to a couple of noble birth.<sup>135</sup> Typically when couples are depicted together they face the same direction when standing, this would suggest more affection.

The tombs on the upper ridge were presumably the priority for local stonemasons.<sup>136</sup> As Orel notes, there was no single dedicated workshop. The diversity within the carving quality and design of the false doors and stelae, an indication that these were produced at the discretion of the commission, and highly personalised. Garstung attributed the presence of over 900 burials at the site to a thriving local industry that endured throughout the Middle Kingdom.<sup>137</sup> Given the lack of standardised forms, the absence of wives on false doors could therefore be seen as a deliberate choice.

<sup>133</sup> Orel (1995: 218)

<sup>134</sup> Brunner-Traut (1986: 575)

<sup>135</sup> Orel (1995: 219)

<sup>136</sup> Orel (1995: 220)

<sup>137</sup> Garstang (1908: 45)

The final example comes from B3 at Meir. This one is slightly different, as this is an example of a false door belonging entirely to the wife and sister of the tomb owner. Compared to the other tombs of Meir, there is minimal decoration in B3. Apart from the 2 false doors located on the south wall, there is only the inscription on the lintel and jambs between the two rooms of this tombs.

The false door of Mersi is the best preserved of the pair and contains many of the features typical of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. In the centre it shows her before an offering table, being presented with a goose by the overseer of the storehouse. Comparatively, the false door of Senbi only preserves a few lines of text, including his name and the start of the *htp di nsw* formula at the top of the stela; the trace of the wadjet eyes in the lintel, and sufficient space for a depiction of the deceased at an offering table.

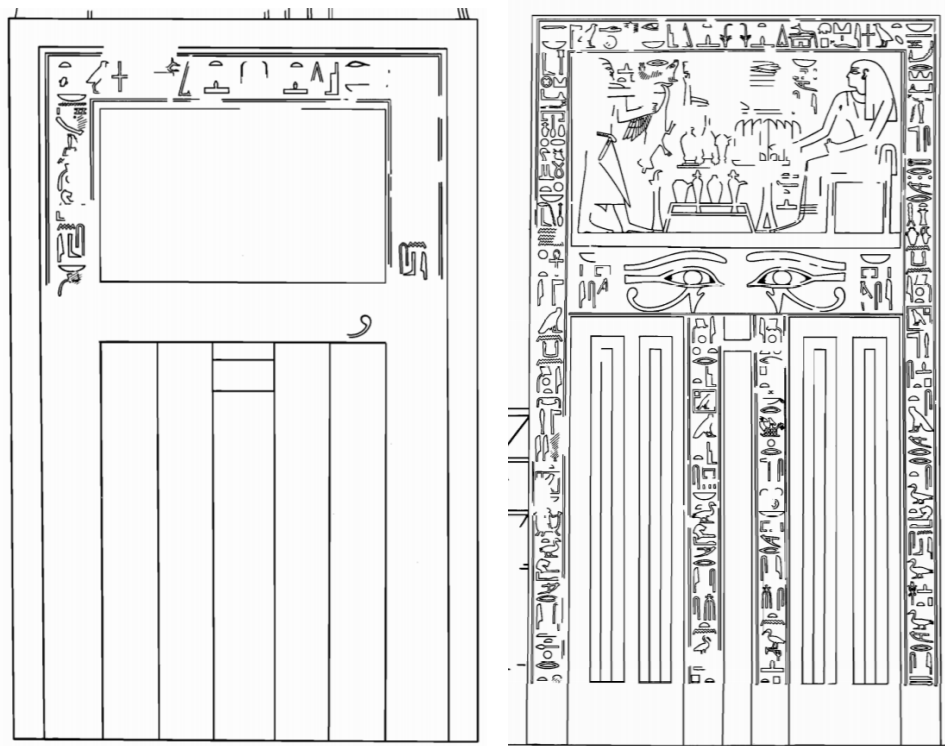


Fig. 3,4 False doors of Senbi and Mesi, from Blackman (1953: pl.6,7)

Although they are of similar design, there are some key differences between the two false doors. They both feature wadjet eyes, however they are reduced in size on Mersi's false door to include her title of *nb.t pr* and her name, which is repeated twice on both sides. An invocation to Anubis and Osiris is found on both, but the directions of the offerings formulas are switched, with the invocation of Anubis proceeding right on Mersi, and left on Senbi's.

The drum of Mersi's false door is also smaller than that of her husbands, perhaps his was originally inscribed.

She makes considerable note of her parentage on her false door. Noting both of their names, as well as her grandparent's names Senbi and Mersi.<sup>138</sup> Although this is certainly not uncommon, given the limited space on this false door, and her consanguineous marriage to her brother, there is a very deliberate attempt to emphasise her parentage. It seems likely that similar emphasis would have been found on that of her husband's false door as well.

Double false doors for husband and wife pairs gained considerable popularity during the 10<sup>th</sup> dynasty. During the Heracleopolitan period a shared false door was carved under one corveto cornice.<sup>139</sup> Perhaps it is this style that Senbi and Mersi were intending to emulate. Double false doors however have a longer history. There is a prominent 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty example for Neferikara and his wife Khentkaus who share a pair of neighbouring false doors.<sup>140</sup> Or the multiple instances of double false doors contained in the tomb of Kahai at Saqqara.<sup>141</sup>

The absence of women on false doors, and indeed the reduced amount of false doors at these sites could perhaps be attributed to rising popularity of the coffin texts and the image of the false door on coffins could account for this change. A painted false door, along with wedjet eyes and the list of offerings gained considerable popularity during this period.<sup>142</sup> The typical coffin style of the 11<sup>th</sup> and mid 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty included the false door. The rise of the wedjet eyes on carved false doors suggesting the coffins decoration may have influenced the design of the false door. There are numerous examples from the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty of coffins displaying the false doors including that of Gua EA 30839, EA30842, and EA55315. Dated from the Middle Kingdom they all contain this false door scene. 1995.112 in the Brooklyn Museum is an example of a contemporary female coffin of this style for a woman, and from nearby Assuyt. Interestingly, the inscription on this coffin seems to have been 'off the rack' as the suffix endings are masculine.<sup>143</sup> From Meir there is also the example of a certain Khnumnakht (15.2.2) in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, dated from Dynasty 13.

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<sup>138</sup> Newberry (1953: 6)

<sup>139</sup> Brovaski (2009: 370)

<sup>140</sup> EA 178

<sup>141</sup> Lashein (2013: pl.79-80)

<sup>142</sup> Capel & Morkoe (1999: 6)

<sup>143</sup> Capel & Morkoe (1999: 166)

Although these false doors either explicitly contained women or were intended for them, they may not be the only ones that functioned as such for wives and family members. Takenoshita suggests that undecorated false doors could have been utilised by multiple members of the family, especially in the tombs which interred multiple bodies. As false doors were costly to prepare, this was perhaps an effective way to serve the needs of the dead, while also not restricting the possible burials within a tomb. Although this is certainly not the case for all examples, several tombs at Beni Hassan would suggest this may have been the case. In particular tomb 32 is undecorated, except for a false door with no inscriptions. Given the limited size and minimal decoration, it is possible that the tomb owner died early in his career and was unmarried. However, it is also possible that this tomb was intended to be multipurpose and could service the need of any recently deceased. Blank false doors are not uncommon at these sites, tomb 38 from Beni Hassan also contains a singular blank false door and there is also the example of E.42.1902 in the Fitzwilliam.

Blank false doors therefore could be seen as a utilitarian approach to design. Especially in less elaborate tombs or the burials of women where less resources were directed.

Given the importance of including names and titles in the cult of the deceased, this idea is not without issues.<sup>144</sup> For example the tomb chapel of 17K74/2 at Deir el-Bersha was unfinished, and the chapel was sealed with large blocks and converted into a burial chamber to house the remains of the deceased.<sup>145</sup> Above the entrance, a small false door was carved, to ensure the name and identity of the deceased was preserved. Similarly, blank false doors may have lost all traces of pigment. For example on E.42.1902 there were some limited traces of decoration, including some brown pigment and chisel marks, however it is not possible to determine who this stela was originally dedicated for.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Orin (1995: 55)

<sup>145</sup> Griffith & Newberry (1895: 59)

<sup>146</sup> Martin (2005: 18)

### 4.3 Niches and Statues

Statues are another focal point in the cult of the deceased, as well as a key aspect of the design of the tomb. However, as most were robbed in antiquity, they are more difficult to conceptualise within the structure of the tomb. Ka statues are known from the old kingdom<sup>147</sup>, but were of increasing importance during the Middle Kingdom, gaining popularity with the burial of the Kings. Likewise, there were new types of statues emerging during this period, particularly the block statue, which is not attested during the old kingdom.<sup>148</sup> Compared to false doors, women have a greatly increased presence within the shrines and statues of these sites. Engaged rock statues were part of the structure of the tomb and carved into the native rock. Unlike portable statues which could be commissioned separately, these were constructed with the rest of the tomb.

All the Middle Kingdom tombs at Meir contain a statue shrine, intended to house a statue of the deceased. The following table presents the presence of women in the decoration of the statue shrine.

Meir Tomb	Women in decoration	Women in Text
B1		
B2	X	X
B3		
B4	X	X
C1	X	X

In B1 the statue recess is decorated but contains no images or names of the wife. Unlike other shrines from Meir, this one juts out from the wall and is considerably smaller than the rest of the examples from the B group tombs. It also contains the remains of hinges, and once contained a door.

In the tomb of Senbi 1 (B2), the left and right walls inside the shrine contain an image of the deceased with his wife. Like all images of Dhutyhotep in this tomb, she is the same size as her husband. It seems likely then that they would have had a joint statue. Potentially similar to other joint statues of husband and wives from the Middle Kingdom such as 05.89a-c.<sup>149</sup>

B3 has both a large statue shrine and several niches on the north wall, aligning with the shafts. They are too small to house a statue, but potentially a stela. Newberry suggests these may

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<sup>147</sup> Kanawati (1988: 40)

<sup>148</sup> Rzepka, S. (1995: 228)

<sup>149</sup> 05.89a-c, in Metropolitan museum of new York

have contained either stelae or statues.<sup>150</sup> Given the absence of decoration within the tomb, it seems likely that these may have supplemented the decoration.

Tombs 2 and 7 of Deir el-Bersha both contain the remains of statue shrines. The shrine of tomb 7 is too fragmentary to suggest what may have been recorded there. However tomb 2 preserves the speech of Dhutyhoteps father to him, and the performing of rites. There is no mention of a wife.

There are 2 examples of engaged statues from Beni Hassan. In the tomb of Amenemhat (no. 2) at Beni Hassan there is a trifold statue depicting the tomb owner, his wife and his mother. All three figures are labelled and of equal size. During the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty the importance of the mother increased, and this may account for her presence on this funerary monument as opposed to his son, or is his second wife.<sup>151</sup> Comparatively, the tomb of Khnumhotep II (B3) only contains a single statue, with inscriptions on the wall behind him recording his and wives.<sup>152</sup> B1 at Deir el Bersha contains the remains of a single statue.

Although there are few group statues from these sites, it is difficult to say with certainty whether these are representative of Ka statues. There are 2 group statues known from the tomb of C1 at Meir. While these were presumably designated for burial, they may reflect what kind of statuary was featured within the multiple niches in the tomb. Both group statues from the tomb C1 (CG 459, and Boston 1973.87) depict the tomb owner Ukhhotep with 2 of his wives, Nebkau and Khnumhotep, as well as his daughter Nephtsy-Henusen. As these statues are portable, several could be commissioned by the tomb owner.

#### **4.4 Shafts**

Shafts are arguably the most nebulous indicator of importance, as well as the most difficult to study. The majority of these tombs were robbed in antiquity, and the original excavations did not record sufficient details to definitively determine who was buried in which shaft. As most shafts were cut vertically into the rock, they were some of the most difficult aspects of the tomb to produce. Unfortunately many of the early tomb reports do not have detailed records of the shafts and burial chambers.

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<sup>150</sup> Blackman 1953: 5)

<sup>151</sup> Pflüger (1947: 127)

<sup>152</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2010: pl.42-44)

At Deir el-Bersha, many of the tombs are quarried away including the sloping shafts typical of this site. Comparatively at Meir, 3 of the 5 Middle Kingdom tombs have no known shafts.

However of the 39 tombs of Beni Hassan, there are trends which emerge. In the tomb of Amenemhat (no.2) the shafts align with the image of the offering tables on the south wall.

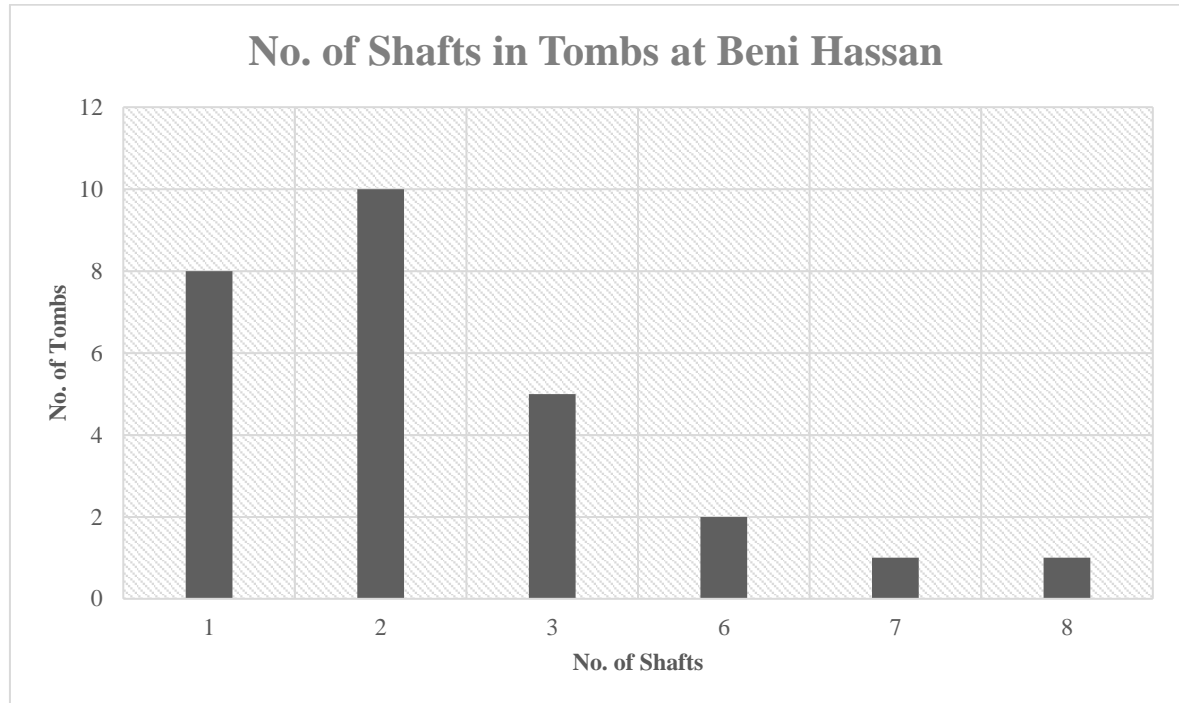


Fig. 5 See *Appendix Table IV* for a list of tombs and their shafts form Beni Hasan

The majority of tombs at Beni Hassan contain multiple shafts and burial chamber. This configuration affording the tomb owner and presumably his wife to be buried within the tomb. Given the cost of carving a shaft, this is a considerable concession to her burial.

At Meir, similar design choices are observed. B1 and B4 and have no known shafts that are definitively associated with the burial.<sup>153</sup> B3 however does contain 3 shafts. Located inside the first room of the tomb. One of which was found intact belonging to the daughter of the tomb owner, Nephthys.<sup>154</sup> B2 has two shafts, one 14.25m and one 19m deep,<sup>155</sup> presumably the tomb owner Uhkhotep was interred in the deeper shaft.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: 17)

<sup>154</sup> Blackman (1953: 7)

<sup>155</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: 38)

<sup>156</sup> Kanawati & Evans (2017: 38)

## 4.5 Discussion

An integral part of understanding the architectural features of the tomb is considering the experiential component. While the shaft and burial chamber were the domain of the deceased, the tomb chapel was intended to be utilised by the living and functioned more as a burial marker or time capsule of daily life scenes. Female family members were involved in the cult of the deceased, just as the cult of the wives of tomb owners was maintained within tombs.

Statue shrines are placed consistently opposite to the doorway of the tomb, and are the first thing that the eye is drawn to when entering the tomb. This does not mean they would have the universal effect on the visitor. For example, although every tomb at Meir contains a statue shrine, they are all placed at differing depths within the tomb. B3 has two rooms linked via a single doorway, and the statue would not have been well illuminated when first entering the tomb. Compared to B1 which shows remains of a hinge, it is very possible that this statue was covered for its

The choice to include women as part of the statuary has a significant impact, on how the tomb was interacted with; both as a memorial, but a place to focus remembrance and direct offerings. As Arnold states, "...in order to function properly, not only cult statues, but all three dimensional images, sanctuaries, tombs and probably palaces had to kept alive with offerings."<sup>157</sup> Thus the presence of female statutes indicates an intension to continue the cult of the deceased wife. In Ammenhet's (B2) tomb from Beni Hassan, the presence of his wife on the false door and accompanying him as a statue seem to suggest a conscious decision to focus on his wife.

There are numerous contemporary examples of letters to the dead directed at wives. An early 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty example records a man calling on his deceased relative to help a sick maid servant of the household.<sup>158</sup> From the first intermediate period, a husband writes to his deceased wife Tchat asking for assistance. Women also interacted with deceased as well, Lourve bowl E6134 records an example of a mother writing to her deceased son.<sup>159</sup> However to an illiterate visitor to the tomb, the statuary would provide an images to direct their offerings and invocations of food for the deceased. Which would have been important for many female members of the family who were less likely to be able to engage with the texts.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Arnold, (1991: 22)

<sup>158</sup> Wente (1990: 213)

<sup>159</sup> Wente (1990: 214)

<sup>160</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 14)

## **4.5 Conclusions**

It is considerably more difficult to extract an understanding of the position of women in society from Architecture alone. As the tomb is a symbolic reflection of the natural order, the presence of women in the architectural design would appear to reinforce the idea that women were subordinate to their husbands and the tomb space. However, a closer examination suggests this is not the case.

Although false doors themselves appear to be prominent design choices within the major tombs of the site, in many cases they are a more subdued element of the tomb. The false door of Khnumhotep II (no.3) is very simple, and is almost camouflaged with the dado of the tomb, reflecting the general trend away from grand false doors common in old kingdom tomb design. As such, the statue shrine which is a more ubiquitous feature of 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty onward tombs is a better indicator of the priorities of the tomb owner. While there is definite uncertainty as to what specific statues were housed within the shrine, it seems most likely that these were group statues which depicted the husband and wife.

Thus the presence of the wife on the false door must be considered in the broader context of features in the tomb. It is clear that considerable provisions were made to ensure the cult of the wife could be maintained within the tomb chapel, and she could have her own burial chamber where possible.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Discussion

The question that this thesis aimed to investigate is: *To what extent is the position of women in society expressed through tomb decoration?*

Within the broad and overlapping categories of art, text and architecture, the portrayal of women has been examined. Although the universal understanding of the role women in society is difficult to determine when focusing on a small selection of evidence, there are trends that emerge. Unlike settlement archaeology or the papyri of the Middle Kingdom, the tomb as a cult space presents the idealised portrait of society. The values of the tomb owner are manifested and preserved within the decorative program.

As such, the presentation of women in art serves to highlight their role as perceived by the tomb owner as manifested by the artists and sculptors. However, as the tomb was a highly idealised presentation of daily life, does it follow that this was an accurate portrayal of life within ancient Egyptian society? As Robbins stated regarding the interpretation of art. “... *it must be accepted that different levels of meaning exist.*”<sup>161</sup> The attention to detail found within art would suggest that there was a level of simply depicting daily life.

Most of the material coming from a short timeframe, from the late 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. This period both reflecting a rise and subsequent fall in the power of the provincial nobles, but also changes in funerary beliefs.<sup>162</sup> There were other significant changes going on during this period. The nature of burial equipment, and the popularity of the coffin texts was wanning.<sup>163</sup>

There is a considerable absence of activities engaged in by women within the artist program. Female figures are in the minority within the artistic program of the tomb, and when extrapolated out from the most complete tombs, it seems they only accounted for approximately 10% of all human figures within this corpus. Not only that, the scene types they are depicted in are considerably less diverse, and restricted to activities such as music and dance. There are several cases of women weavers from this corpus, at both Beni Hasan and Deir el Bersha, but these appear to have been exceptions in regard to industry.

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<sup>161</sup> Robbins (1990: 55)

<sup>162</sup> Grajetzki (2014: 4)

<sup>163</sup> Kamrin (2009: 29)

Many activities that would have undoubtedly been performed by women, such as childbirth had taboos regarding their depiction and are rare throughout Egyptian art. While there are certainly allusions to reproduction, such as in the case of Khety (B17) at Beni Hassan, this did not seem appropriate to represent.<sup>164</sup> Their role in child rearing is also subdued, with very few depictions of women and children, such as within the tomb of Khnumhotep II (B3) at Beni Hasan.

Within the architectural design of the tomb women feature in slightly different ways. Architectural features served to both accommodate the deceased, but also enable the maintenance of the cult of the deceased. Women feature on a very limited number of false doors, with only one example of a shared false door at Beni Hasan, and one false door carved for a woman at Meir. False doors, while still an important feature of the tomb were in part were increasing less prominent into the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Unfortunately, as the statues these once contained are no longer extant, it is difficult to say whether women were featured in the cult centre. The examples of the group statue from C1 at Meir would suggest it is possible, but it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty.

Titles were a key part of expressing rank, and many women from these sites hold a range of titles. The most common is *nb.t pr* which developed in the Middle Kingdom and became near ubiquitous for the wives of the tomb owner. During the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty there appears to have been an overall decline in certain priestly titles, including *hm.t-htr* *Hw.t-Hr*. The reasons for this shift are unclear. Other changes include the increasing matrilineal focus in naming conventions, with several tombs where the mother is not attested but the father is not. In B4 at Meir, there is also the highly unusual example of the family tree stretching into the old kingdom elites of Cusae. It is unknown specially what changes were made to provincial nobles after this period, as C1 is the last rock cut tomb from the Middle Kingdom at this site, there may be a link between the increasing use of royal symbols in their funerary monuments the solidification of provincial power under Senwasret III.<sup>165</sup>

Within the modern naming convention, either a numerical system is used, or the tomb is denoted by the name of the man buried there. To the ancient observers the chapel may not have been thought of this way. Instead the tombs were the resting places of a household, of

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<sup>164</sup> Newberry (1893: pl.14)

<sup>165</sup> Grajetzki (2009: 62)

multiple people. Framing the tomb and its decoration as a representation of the priorities of the household suggests that women had a highly restricted role in society.

However the underlying question behind this investigation also considers whether an understanding of the position of women can be extracted from the tomb decoration itself, and whether it is prudent to try. The modern scholar is not the intended audience, and while a great deal of care and skill went into the decoration of a tomb, the questions we ask of the evidence are not what the Egyptians were seeking to express. As funerary context is the main window by which ancient Egyptian culture is investigated, these are questions that are universal in the study of ancient Egyptian society.

## 5.2 The Position of Women

In considering all of these factors, the question then becomes what was the position of women in society? It is clear they were subordinate to the men in their lives, however this is something that is consistently shown throughout art, and certainly not a new conclusion.<sup>166</sup>

While the images may not have correlated to the everyday experience of women, as Freed *et al.* state “*Although this ideal may or may not have confirmed to anyone’s reality, it is safe to assume that gender roles and hierarchies from this life were to be maintained in the next.*”<sup>167</sup>

Moreover, women in Egypt were not a single homogenous group. Instead, different women had different roles and different positions within their society more broadly and within their homes. Polygamy was common, and even assuming that the multiple wives are attested within the tombs are successive rather than concurrent, the depiction of lesser wives and concubines shows that the status of the ‘wife’ changed. Indeed, perhaps the concept of ‘wife’ and ‘husband’ have no meaningful space within the discussion, as these concepts are bound up with modern ideas of marriage to which the ancient Egyptians did not ascribe.

It appears instead that they were of great importance in very specific roles. While overt depictions of motherhood are rare, lineage and maternal relations are emphasized within the tomb, even more than those of the father. Given it was possible for men to inherit titles and status through either their mother or father; the position of women is heavily associated with

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<sup>166</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 3), Robbins (1994: 2), Wilfong (2010: 164) to name only a few.

<sup>167</sup> Freed *et al.* (2009: 151)

securing alliances. Likewise, there appears to have been increasing focus on women within the context of the home and emphasis on their position within the domestic sphere.

There are also clear examples of affection and love shown within the tomb.. ‘*mrt=f*’ is a common descriptor for the wives of the tomb owner, and a subtle reminder that these spaces were memorials to the dead. The considerations made for their cult, and their detailing in statuary, while important indicators that women were valued within society, also can also be read with a more human lens. Despite this, the overarching design of these tombs served to legitimise and propagate the social order. It is certainly not a new observation that women were subordinate to their husbands, or women had less social and political power in ancient Egypt. Instead, the wives of tomb owners were afforded considerable power and this is reflected within the tomb. In the case of Satip (B14) at Beni Hasan and Mersi (B1) at Meir they stand in for a larger group of wives which were not afforded representation within the tomb.

### 5.3 Further Research

There are still many questions that could be asked regarding the position of women during the Middle Kingdom. There is ever emerging research on women from this period, including recent dossiers of known women from the Middle Kingdom, and new research on their titles.<sup>168</sup> This investigation only considers a very narrow selection of evidence, from a very small selection of sites. The focus has been the tomb chapel, and the decisions made in its design. A hallmark of this period is the use of models in burial equipment, many of which depict women and industry in great detail.<sup>169</sup> and further including these within the corpus would be an obvious expansion. There are also many provincial tomb centres from the Middle Kingdom which have been omitted from this study due to its constraints which could be expanded upon, such as Elephantine, and Qubbet el-Hawa. Abydos also features an elaborate decorative program and is a neighbouring province to Quisaya.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Stafanovic (2016) is the most recent publication, but there is ongoing work to catalogue the Middle Kingdom women and their titles and relations.

<sup>169</sup> Capel & Markoe (1996: 34-35)

<sup>170</sup> Smith (1953: 161) and Grajetzki (2006: 114)

## 5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the position of women in society is reflected through both subtle and overt means throughout the design of the Middle Kingdom tombs of Beni Hasan, Deir el-Bersha and Meir. Women overall did not hold the same status in society as men, and while there are examples of powerful women, such as Dhutychotep (B2) at Meir, these examples are the outlier rather than the rule. The overall design of tombs from this corpus, and particularly at Beni Hassan reflect the a range of changes in the position of women during this period. In titles, architectural features and in art.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty there are clear shifts in the prominence of female family members, particularly the mother. Her role becoming more central both the art and architecture of the tomb. New titles such as *nb.t pr* reflect the growing emphasis on women within the family, and the importance of wives within this context. Coupled with this is a reduction in the prevalence of the priestess titles. It is important to note that the tomb is a very limited slice of Ancient Egyptian society. There are large gaps within the decorative program. While we can identify these gaps, there are presumably more absences within the historical record.

With few exceptions noble women have little independent representation within the broader decorative program; and women across the board only accounted for approximately 10% of human figures. Likewise women have a limited presence within the cultic focus of the tomb during the Middle Kingdom, namely on the false door or within the shrine. This is paralleled with developments in female titles during this period.

The lives of women throughout history have been complex and nuanced. While there are certainly patterns and trends which appear to emerge, it is important to recognise the individuality of each tomb owner, and all the women depicted within. They had important functions within their spheres of influence, even if we must look behind the great men of this period to see them.

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## APPENDIX

**Table I: Elite Women Depictions in relation to their husbands**

Tomb	Noble Women	Location	With tomb owner?	Same size
<i>Meir</i>				
B2	<i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	South wall	X	X
		West wall wall north side	X	X
		West wall, south	X	X
		North wall, west	X	X
		Statue Recess, left and right side	X	X
B1	<i>Mrs</i>	South wall, west section	X	
		North wall, fishing and fowling	X	
B4	<i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	Outer room, south wall, centre	X	
	<i>Mr.s</i>	Outer room, south wall, centre	X	
		Inner room, offering table	X	
<i>Beni Hassan</i>				
B3	<i>Tzt</i>	East wal, fishing	X	
		West wall, boat cabin		
		South wall		
	<i>Htjj</i>	East wall	X	
		West wall, boat cabin		
		South wall, offering table		
	<i>Sz.t=s Htjj</i>	South wall, right side, register 2		
	<i>W<sup>c</sup>rjtt-ḥtp</i>	South wall, right side, register 2		
	<i>Sz.t=s Hnmw-nḥt</i>	South wall, right side, register 2		
	<i>Mrs</i>	South wall, right side, register 1		
	<i>Bzkt</i>	South wall, right side, register 1		
	<i>Tnt</i>	South wall, right side, register 1		
B2	<i>Ḥtpt</i>	West wall, south of the entrance, register 3	X	X
		South wall, entire wall		X
B14	<i>Sz.t-ḥp</i>	north wall, west side in standing in front of offering table	X	X
B15	<i>Ḥw.t-ḥr-nfr-hpw.ti</i>	North wall	X	
B17		North wall, west half	X	X

	<i>Hnmw-ḥtp</i>	North wall, east half	X	
		South wall, eastern half	X	
B23	<i>zy.y-ḥtp</i>	Eastern wall, northern end	X	X
	<i>Hr-ḥb</i>	Eastern wall, northern end	X	X
	<i>Htjj</i>	Eastern wall, southern end		
	<i>Htjj</i> (born of <i>Tnt</i> )	Eastern wall, southern end		
B29	<i>Dḥw.tj-ḥ</i>	North wall, eastern end	X	
<i>Deir el-Bersha</i>				
B2	<i>Hw.t-ḥr-ḥtp</i>	Outer chamber, inner wall, right side	X	
		Outer chamber, inner wall, left side	X	
		Inner chamber, right wall, left side	X	
		Inner chamber, inner wall, left side (standing before a pond)		
		Inner chamber, inner wall, right side		
		Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
	<i>Nbw-wnn.t</i>	Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
		Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
	<i>Sz.t-ḥpr-rḥ</i>	Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
	<i>Sz.t-ḥt-ḥtp</i>	Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
	<i>Mr.t=f</i>	Inner chamber right wall (fragmentary)	X	
B1	<i>Hw.t-ḥr-ḥtp</i>	Right hand wall, left side	X	

**Table II: False doors of Beni Hassan**

Tomb	No. False Doors	Names mentioned	Wife	Image
<i>Beni Hassan</i>				
BH 2	1	<i>Htpt, Imn-m-ḥst</i>	yes	Husband and Wife at offering table
BH 3	1	none	no	man offering table
BH 14	1	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
BH 15	1	<i>Htjj</i>	no	Offering table
BH 16	1	<i>Hnm-ḥtp</i>	Unknown	Seated figure
BH 17	1	<i>Htjj</i>	no	Husband at offering table

BH 22	2	Both Unfinished	Both Unfinished	Both Unfinished
BH 29	1	<i>Bꜣt</i>	no	Offering table
BH 33	1	<i>Bꜣꜣt</i>	no	Offering table
BH 27	1	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
BH 38	1	Undecorated	Undecorated	Undecorated
BH 85	1	<i>Ḥtp</i> and <i>Jmn.y</i>	Yes	Destroyed
BH 163	1	Userheta, nefer	yes	Husband and wife seated at offering table
BH 211	1	<i>Ḥr-rꜥ-rhyt-ḥtp</i>	No	Man at offering table
BH 283	1	<i>Wsr-nḥt, Mrs</i>	Yes	Destroyed
BH 320	1	<i>Nꜥḥt</i>	No	Destroyed
BH 360	1	Nehera	no	Destroyed
E.42.1902		Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
<i>Meir</i>				
B3	2	<i>Mr.s, Snb.j,</i>	yes	Wife at offering table
		<i>Snb.j</i>	no	Destroyed
B4	1	<i>Whw-ḥtp</i> , son of <i>Whw-ḥtp</i>	No	Damaged – appears to only be husband
<i>Deir el-Bersha</i>				
B8	1	Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
17K74/1	1	Fragmentary	none	Offering table

**Table III: Women and their titles**

Tomb	Name	Relations	Titles
Beni Hassan			
(2) <i>Jmn-m-ḥ3t</i>			<i>nb(t) pr rḥt nswt m3<sup>c</sup>t ḥmt-nṯr P<sup>c</sup>ḥt nbt Nfrw-sj ḥmt t3wj</i>
	<i>Htp</i>	Wife	
	<i>Htp-Hwt-ḥr</i>	Wife ?	
	<i>Hnw/Hnwj</i>	Mother of Tomb Owner	<i>nb(t) pr s3.t ḥ3tj-<sup>c</sup></i>
(3) <i>Hnmw-ḥtp(.w)</i> II			<i>jrjt-p<sup>c</sup>t ḥ<sup>c</sup>tjt-<sup>c</sup> nb(t) pr</i>
	<i>B3kt</i>	Mother of tomb owner	
	<i>Nṯrw</i>	Mother of <i>T3t</i>	
	<i>Tnt</i>	Mother of wife <i>Htjj</i>	
			<i>nb(t) pr rḥt nswt ḥ<sup>c</sup>tjt-<sup>c</sup> ḥm(t)-nṯr P3ḥt ḥm(t)-nṯr Hwt-ḥr</i>
	<i>Htjj</i>	Wife	
	<i>T3t</i>	Wife/Concubine	<i>rḥt nb.s ḥtmjt</i>
	<i>B3kt</i>	Daughter	<i>ḥm(t)-nṯr Hwt-ḥr</i>
			<i>ḥm(t)-nṯr P3ḥt nbt smjt</i>
	<i>Tnt</i>	Daughter	
(3) <i>Hnmw-ḥtp(.w)</i> II	<i>Mr.s</i>	Daughter	<i>ḥm(t)-nṯr Hwt-ḥr nb.t ʕrjtt</i>
	<i>S3.t-s Htjj</i>	Daughter	
(13) <i>Hnmw-ḥtp(.w)</i>	<i>S3.t-th</i>	Mother	
(14) <i>Hnmw-ḥtp(.w)</i> I		Wife	<i>ḥnwt ḥmwt nbwt nb.t pr jrjt-p<sup>c</sup>t</i>
	<i>S3t-jp</i>		
	<i>B3kt</i>	Daughter	
(15) <i>B3kt</i>	<i>Htp-r3w.y</i>	Mother	
	<i>Hw.t-ḥr-nfr-ḥpw.ti</i>	Daughter	
(17) <i>Htjj</i>	<i>Hnmw-ḥtp</i>	Wife	
(23) <i>Nṯr-nḥt</i>	<i>3y.y-ḥtp</i>		<i>nb.t pr ḥm-nṯr Hwt- ḥr</i>

	<i>Hr-ib</i>		<i>Nb.t pr ḥm(t)-ntr Hwt-ḥr nbt ʿrjyt rht nswt</i>
	<i>Htjj</i> (born of <i>Khua</i> )	Daughter	
	<i>Htjj</i> (born of <i>Tnt</i> )	Daughter	
(29) <i>B3kt</i>	<i>Dḥw.tj-ʿ</i>	Wife	<i>ḥm.t Hw.t-ḥr nbw</i>
(33) <i>B3kt</i>	<i>Dḥw.tj-ʿ</i>		
<i>Meir</i>			
B1 <i>Snb.j</i>	<i>Mr.s</i>	wife	<i>jm3hjt pr ḥmwt</i>
B2 <i>Whw-ḥtp(.w)</i>	<i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	wife	<i>nbt-pr</i>
B3 <i>Snb.j</i>	Mr.s	Wife/Sister	<i>nb.t pr s3.t hʿ.ty-ʿ ḥm(t)-ntr Hwt-ḥr</i>
	<i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	Mother	
	Mr.s	Wife	
(B4) <i>Whw-ḥtp</i>	<i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	Wife	<i>nb.t pr</i>
	<i>Mr.s</i>	Mother	<i>s3.t jrjt-pʿt</i>
	<i>Mr.s</i>	Sister	
	<i>Mr.s</i>	Daughter	
C1 <i>Whw-ḥtp(.w)</i>	<i>Hny-ḥr.y-ib</i>	Mother	
	<i>N.b-k3</i>	Wife	<i>nb.t pr</i>
	<i>Nb.t-Mhyt</i>	Wife	<i>nb.t pr</i>
	<i>Itʿ</i>	Wife	<i>nb.t pr</i>
	<i>Wʿrt</i>	Wife	
	<i>-ḥtp</i>	Wife	
	<i>Hp.w</i>	Wife	
	<i>ʿnh.w</i>	Wife	
	<i>Hnmw-</i>	Wife	
	<i>Nfr.w</i>	Wife	
	<i>Mereyt</i>	Wife	
<i>Deir el Bersha</i>			
(B2) <i>Dḥwtj-ḥtp</i>	<i>Nbt-ḥwt-ḥnwt-sn</i>	Daughter	
	<i>Hw.t-ḥr-ḥtp</i>	Wife	<i>nb.t pr</i>
	<i>Nbw-wnn.t</i>	Daughter	<i>n.t ḥ.t=f nb.t pr</i>
	<i>S3.t-hpr-rʿ</i>	Mother	
	<i>S3.t-ht-ḥtp</i>	Daughter	
	<i>Mr.t=f</i>	Daughter	
B1	<i>Hw.t-ḥr-ḥtp</i>	Wife	<i>r.t-pʿ.t nb.t pr</i>

	<i>S3.t-hz-ḥtp /</i>	Mother	
B3	<i>Usr-kꜥ-es</i>	Mother	
B4	<i>Kmi</i>	Mother	
B6	<i>ꜥnh</i>	Mother	

**Table IV: Tombs and their Shafts**

Tomb	No. of Shafts
<i>Beni Hasan</i>	
BH 2	2
BH 3	2
BH 7	1
BH 8	2
BH 9	2
BH 10	1
BH 11	1
BH 13	1
BH 14	2
BH 15	7
BH 16	3
BH 17	2
BH 18	3
BH 19	3
BH 20	2
BH 21	2
BH 22	1
BH 23	4
BH 24	1
BH 25	3
BH 26	2
BH 27	6
BH 28	8
BH 29	6
BH 30	1
BH 31	1
BH 32	2
BH 33	3
<i>Meir</i>	
B1	Unknown
B2	2
B3	2
B4	Unknown
C1	1

## Tables V: Figure Counts and Gender Proportions

Table V.1 Meir

Tomb No.	Nth Wall	Sth Wall	Est Wall	Wst Wall	Shrine	Side Room	Total Women	Total Male	Final Percentage
B1	5	2	1*	0	0	-	8	161	5%
B2	2	4	2	6	2	-	16	82	20%
B4	7	3	0	34 -	()	1	45	193	19%
C1	28	19	32	11	9	-	99	42	70%

Table: V.2 Deir el Bersha

Tomb No.	Outer Chamber	North Wall	Sth Wall	East Wall	Wst Wall	Shrine	Total Women	Total Male	Final Percentage
B2	4	4	35	0	2	0	45	532	8%

Table: V.3 Beni Hasan

Tomb No.	North Wall	Sth Wall	East Wall	Wst Wall	Shrine	Total Women	Total Male	Final Percentage (out of total figures)
Amenemhet (2)	7	4	6	13	4	34	628	5%
Khnumhotep II (3)	4	13	2	19	6	44	395	10%
Baket III (15)	49	13	0		nil	62	837 (West Wall missing)	7%
Khety (17)	54	4	nil	Nil (erasure of offering table)	nil	58	1057	5%
Nakht (21)*	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	0	23	0%
Netjernahkt (23)*	nil	nil	4	nil	nil	4	2	67%
Baket I (29)	1	nil	1			2	186	1%