

Assassination, Betrayal and the Reaction of Pepy I

Hannah Bryant (BA)

Macquarie University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Ancient History

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I,, certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a
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Abstract

This thesis examines the alleged assassination of Teti, and the subsequent succession of Weserkare followed by Pepy I. The apparent murder of his father and usurpation of the throne by Weserkare tempered the interaction between Pepy I and his officials. He altered the policy of government in the provinces, often dividing the high titles between a number of individuals. He attempted to create loyalty within the ranks of his officials by marrying into high ranking families, marrying his own relatives into others and educating the sons of provincial officials in the capital, where they also initially served in low ranking positions. Many of these were also policies of his father Teti. Despite this, Pepy I appears to have trusted very few, with a number of provincial officials also serving from the capital. This mistrust was well placed as he was the subject of an unsuccessful plot himself, one involving his nephew and vizier Rawer. While there were a great number of intriguing problems in the early Sixth Dynasty, it does not appear that there was a process of decentralisation occurring which would contribute to the fall of the Old Kingdom.

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Introduction

The early Sixth Dynasty is a particularly intriguing time in ancient Egyptian history. Generally regarded as the founder of the Dynasty, Teti was not the son, but the son-in-law, of his predecessor Wenis. Over a millennium later, Manetho wrote that Teti had been assassinated. The second king of the Sixth Dynasty, Weserkare, only ruled for a short period before the throne reverted back to the son of Teti, Pepy I. As a result, it has often been speculated that Weserkare was a usurper. Excavations in the Teti and Wenis cemeteries have now allowed for an examination into the assertion of regicide and succession issues that plagued the first three kings of this Dynasty. Archaeological evidence has allowed for insight into the perpetrators of a plot against Teti and the officials who individually supported both Weserkare and Pepy I in their accession. Likely as a result of the circumstances preceding his reign, Pepy I had an unusual relationship with his officials. He is the only Egyptian king known to have not made allowances for his top officials to be buried around his pyramid. It is evident that Pepy I trusted very few, and he appears to have had a number of policies designed to instil loyalty in his officials. Some of these policies, such as marriage, employing close relatives and the sons of trusted men in high positions all appear to be policies he followed from preceding reigns. However, there are also indications that Pepy I brought the sons of the provincial officials to the capital to be educated, and where they also commenced their careers.

The relationship between Pepy I and his provincial officials is of immense importance to scholars, as there have been theories presented which assert that the fall of the Old Kingdom may have been the result of processes of decentralisation. A number of scholars have claimed that the provincial governors already held this degree of power during the reign of Pepy I. Evidence from both the provinces and the capital instead appear to show that Pepy had control over the provinces, and was directly involved in the reorganisation of the administrative structure. However, despite the apparent control of the provinces, Pepy I appears to have suffered at least

one unsuccessful plot himself. There is evidence of punishment inflicted against his probable nephew and vizier, Rawer and a man who had previously supported Pepy in his accession. This plot apparently occurred late in his reign, and may have prompted Pepy I to further assert his legitimacy by holding a heb-sed, in which he may also have proclaimed his heir, his son Merenre, who did indeed successfully succeed his father approximately a decade later. The succession issues that plagued the reigns of Teti and Pepy I, and the probable assassination of Teti certainly had an effect on the relationship between Pepy I and his officials.

Chapter 1: The death of Teti and associated succession issues

Claims of assassination

Modern inquiries into whether Teti was assassinated stem from Manetho's third century B.C. claim that Teti was 'murdered by his bodyguards'.¹ Many scholars have discussed his claim and the lack of accompanying contemporary written evidence.² Opinions range from that of Gardiner, who does not have any confidence in this claim,³ Grimal who considers an assassination plausible, (saying that 'it is this claim that has led to the idea of growing civil disorder'),⁴ and Kanawati who believes Manetho to be correct in his assertions.⁵ Kanawati suggests that while Manetho possibly had access to oral or literary sources regarding the assassination of Teti, the archaeological evidence also lends to the theory.⁶ In order to examine the archaeological evidence for an assassination as claimed by Manetho it is important to first identify the Egyptian title equating to the term bodyguard. This title is most likely that of khenty-she (*hntj-š*).⁷ The title was probably introduced in the reign of Djedkare, but it was the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty that saw the khenty-she holding a wide range of positions in the palace, including many 'which no doubt put them in a close and more

¹ W.G. Waddell (trans.), *Manetho* (London, 1980), 51-3.

² N. Kanawati, *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I* (Oxon & New York, 2003), 4, 157 & 169; N. Kanawati, 'Saqqara Excavations Shed New Light on Old Kingdom History', *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 1 (1990), 60; N. Kanawati, 'Excavations in the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara, 1994', *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 6 (1995), 59; R. Stadelmann, 'König Teti und der Beginn der 6. Dynastie', in C. Berger, G. Clerc & N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* vol. I (Cairo, 1994), 331; M. Baud & V. Dobrev, 'de nouvelles annales de l'Ancien Empire égyptien: Une 'Pierre de Palerme' pour la Vie dynastie', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 95 (1995), 60; N. Kanawati, *Mereruka and King Teti* (Cairo, 2007), 23 & 80; S. Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende der 12. Dynastie* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 124-5.

³ A.H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1964), 93.

⁴ N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 1994), 81.

⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 169; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23.

⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 169; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23.

⁷ Traditional translations of the title include "tenant", "guard", and "attendant" – but one common denominator seems to have been service on the king.' Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 14-24; N. Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta, 2005), 28; N. Kanawati & M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tombs of Neferseshemre and Seankhuipthah* vol. III (Warminster, 1998), 39.

‘intimate’ relationship with the king.’⁸ This intimate relationship typically involved roles linked to the feeding, bathing and dressing of the king.⁹ Weni describes his responsibilities as the ‘overseer of the palace guards’ (*jmj-r hntj-š pr-ʿ3*) as involving ‘providing protection, in preparing the king’s way and in preparing the daises’ as well as all else for which the king would praise him, further emphasising the close relationship between the holders of this office and the king.¹⁰

Kanawati has examined the archaeological evidence relating to an assassination, from the Teti and Wenis cemeteries, in his text *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepy I*. He focuses on the evidence for punishments inflicted on officials, specifically the reallocation of tombs, damage inflicted to their names and figures and unfinished decoration. The evidence shows varying levels of punishment for several guards, a ‘chief physician’ (*wr swnw*), ‘overseer of weapons’ (*jmj-r ḥ3w*) and vizier.¹¹ While the deliberate damage to figures of officials and their inscriptions as punishment is not unusual in itself, the scale of damage and number of tombs targeted over such a short period makes the Teti cemetery an anomaly.¹² These officials all seemed to serve in the latter part of Teti’s reign with the *damnatio memoriae* occurring during the reign of Pepy I.¹³

The punishments evident in the Wenis and Teti cemeteries can be compared to a situation described in the Judicial Papyrus of Turin, dated to the end of the reign of Ramses III.¹⁴ This papyrus records the results of a trial surrounding a conspiracy in the harim, whereby a secondary wife was trying to install her son on the throne; twenty-eight were put on trial for the

⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 14-5 & 18; N. Kanawati, A. El-Khouli, A. McFarlane & N.V. Maksoud, *Excavations at Saqqara: North-West of Teti’s Pyramid* vol. I (Sydney, 1984), 15; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16.

⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 152 & 184; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16.

¹⁰ N. Kanawati, ‘A Female Guard Buried in the Teti Cemetery’, *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 12 (2001), 66.

¹¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 184.

¹² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 158-9; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24.

¹³ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24.

¹⁴ A. de Buck, ‘The Judicial Papyrus of Turin’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23:2 (Dec., 1937), 152-64; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 159.

conspiracy and seventeen were executed.¹⁵ The punishments for different levels of involvement in the crime are clear, as out of five judges arrested for relationships with the accused; one was sentenced to commit suicide for knowing of the crime and not reporting it, three were sentenced to have their noses and ears cut off for carousing with the accused, with the last reprimanded for his association with the other men.¹⁶ This papyrus provides explicit evidence for the severity of punishment for this type of crime, and correlates to the archaeological evidence in the Teti and Wenis cemeteries.¹⁷ The correlation thus also suggests 'that the damage to the name and/or figure in a tomb was also accompanied by a punishment in real life, thus the punishment was 'perpetual'.'¹⁸

Unfinished tombs from the end of Teti's reign are likely to be an indication that these officials were reprimanded by the courts. It can be assumed that such a reprimand would result in a loss of office and therefore a loss of funds to complete a tomb, even if they were not inherently forbidden to do so. One such an official is Geref/Itji, who held a number of titles relating to the service of the king, including those which are usually associated with the high titles within the palace guards – yet there is no evidence Geref/Itji held such a title.¹⁹ That his false door is unfinished, (with the upper lintel uninscribed, some figures only represented in paint and details of the relief on the remainder of the door lacking), indicates that work on the tomb was abruptly halted.²⁰ A number of stylistic features in his tomb lend to the theory that construction was started mid to late in the reign of Teti.²¹ Perhaps he was reprimanded for some deviancy (such as close association with guilty parties), failing to prevent an attack on Teti, or it is possible that

¹⁵ de Buck, *JEA* 23:2 (Dec., 1937), 154-6; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 159.

¹⁶ de Buck, *JEA* 23:2 (Dec., 1937), 156; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 159.

¹⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 159.

¹⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 160; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24.

¹⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 53-4; N. Kanawati & A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tombs of Nedjet-em-pet, Ka-aper and Others* vol. I (Sydney, 1996), 69-73.

²⁰ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 71-2; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 55.

²¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 54-5; Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 71; N. Kanawati & M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery: The Tombs of Shepsipuptah, Mereri (Merynebti), Hefi and Others* vol. VII (Warminster, 2001), 33-4.

the work was interrupted when either Weserkare or Pepy I ascended to the throne.²²

Also unfinished and dated to the same period as Geref is the tomb of Semdent/Semdenti.²³ In addition to the unfinished reliefs, his name has been haphazardly chiselled out throughout the mastaba.²⁴ He served as an ‘overseer of palace guards’, ‘controller of clothing’ (*hrj-tp d3t*) and ‘one who is privy to the secrets of the king in his every place’ (*hrj-sšt3 n nswt m st.f nb(t)*).²⁵ Fragments of a wooden coffin inscribed with his name, as well as the closed lid of his limestone sarcophagus, indicate that he was probably buried in the tomb.²⁶ It seems that many of those whose figures were only partly damaged were still granted burial.²⁷ The combination of his burial, relatively limited degree of *damnatio memoriae* displayed in the tomb, and his role as ‘overseer of palace guards’ perhaps suggest punishment for failure to prevent a crime rather than direct involvement.

The mastaba of Wernu, again dated to the end of the reign of Teti, also displays signs of *damnatio*.²⁸ His titles included ‘guard of Teti’s pyramid’ (*hntj-š dd-swt-Ttj*), ‘confidant of the king in his every place’ (*jmj-jb n nswt hntj jdbwj.f*) and ‘one who is privy to the secret of the house of morning’ (*hrj-sšt3 n pr-dw3t*).²⁹ In addition to unfinished reliefs, there is damage to his face (particularly his eyes) in some scenes, yet there is no damage to his inscriptions or name.³⁰ Not only was his figure targeted, but one of his sons

²² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 55.

²³ However, a possible date for mid Pepy I’s reign has also been discussed. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 123-4; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara* I, 15-6; A.B. Lloyd, A. J. Spencer & A. El-Khouli, *Saqqâra Tombs: The Mastabas of Meru, Semdenti, Khui and Others* vol. II (London, 1990), 21.

²⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 124; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara* I, 17-9 & pl. 5 & 6; Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs* II, 26-8 & pl. 33.

²⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 122-3; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara* I, 15, 17-8 & pl. 4-6; Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs* II, 23-4.

²⁶ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara* I, 17; Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs* II, 21-3, 28-31; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 26.

²⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 160.

²⁸ W.V. Davies, A. El-Khouli, A.B. Lloyd & A.J. Spencer, *Saqqâra Tombs: The Mastabas of Mereri and Wernu* vol. I (London, 1984); Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 131.

²⁹ The latter title held by ‘a rather small and specially favoured group of men within the royal court’. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 131; Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery* I, 36.

³⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 132.

also had his figures and inscriptions completely erased.³¹ Wernu probably had two eldest sons, the erased son and the palace guard Intef, which may indicate that the erased son was also a palace guard or similar.³² Perhaps Wernu was reprimanded for failing to recognise or report his son's role in a conspiracy. Yet, Wernu's is certainly not the only tomb from the period in which figures of sons or offering bearers are erased. In the tomb of the vizier Neferseshemre/Seshi, four small figures (probably of two sons) were erased along with their accompanying names and titles.³³ The only remaining part of the erased titles is the name of Teti's pyramid, suggesting that they were perhaps a guard and that whoever carried out the erasure was careful not to remove the name of Teti.³⁴ Also targeted were the images and inscriptions of several offering bearers in the tomb of Kagemni/Memi, who served under Djedkare, Wenis and Teti (under whom he was promoted to the vizierate and then probably died).³⁵ Even in the tomb of Mereruka, two of his brothers, a 'superintendent of the palace guards' (*shd hntj(w)-š pr-ꜥ3*) and an 'under-supervisor of the palace guards' (*jmj-ht hntj(w)-š pr-ꜥ3*), had their name completely removed.³⁶ However, it is impossible often to know exactly when this damage to the minor figures occurred, and as such some instances could be related to punishment for any of the conspiracies occurring during this period, or even family issues.³⁷

Another mastaba from the period which remained unfinished and displays signs of erasure is that of Irenakhti/Iri.³⁸ He is only known to have held four

³¹ *ibid.*, 132 & fig. 2.80.

³² *ibid.*, 132.

³³ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* III, 14 & 26-7; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 112-3, figs 2.68 & 2.69.

³⁴ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* III, 27; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 112.

³⁵ C.M. Firth & B. Gunn, *Excavations at Saqqara: Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* vol. I (Cairo, 1926), 20, 105-30 & pl. 7b; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 87 & 156; W. Stevenson Smith, *The Old Kingdom in Egypt and the Beginning of the First Intermediate Period* (Cambridge, 1962), 48.

³⁶ N. Kanawati, A. Woods, S. Shafik & E. Alexakis, *Mereruka and His Family: The Tomb of Mereruka* vol. III:1 (Oxford, 2010), 21-2 & pls 41, 46 & 94; N. Kanawati, A. Woods, S. Shafik & E. Alexakis, *Mereruka and His Family: The Tomb of Mereruka* vol. III:2 (Oxford, 2011), 30; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 102.

³⁷ Kanawati instead suggests that these sons may have been involved in a conspiracy against Pepy I, which is entirely possible and oftentimes impossible to discern. Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 26.

³⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 71; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara* I, 43.

titles; ‘overseer of the department of palace guards’ (*jmj-r st hntj-š pr-ꜣ3*), ‘superintendent of the palace guards’, as well as guard and priest of Teti’s pyramid.³⁹ There are several signs that work on the tomb was abandoned, including a second false door which is completely uninscribed (one which was probably intended for his wife), a blank entrance lintel (usually one of the last elements completed) and a scene in which the top row of offering bearers cease at the waist.⁴⁰ The block above the oddly terminated offering bearers has a projecting, rough, undecorated, surface.⁴¹ In another relief the lower part of the tomb owner remains, but the top has been removed and the front of the stone covered in thick mud plaster.⁴² As such, Kanawati suggests that the scene was damaged and then restored but not inscribed, with the restoration abandoned at an early stage.⁴³ Not only is the tomb unfinished, but the evidence again indicates that the owner received punishment. Irenakhti’s name was left intact on his false door, but his figure (particularly his face) was damaged six of the seven times it appears.⁴⁴ Again, the position of the sarcophagus lid indicates that a burial took place.⁴⁵ As he may possibly be the same official mentioned as ‘overseer of the expedition’ in a rock inscription of the unknown king, Ity (who some have speculated may be Weserkare),⁴⁶ it is possible that he, too, received punishment for association rather than active involvement in a crime.

The abovementioned, punished, officials have titles which indicate close personal service to the king, and as such these men are likely to be equated with Manetho’s ‘bodyguards’. Whilst an assassination of Teti would indeed, at the very least, require a lack of attention on their behalf, the lack of motive and benefit from the crime indicates that other, higher, officials are likely to

³⁹ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 43 & 45; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 71.

⁴⁰ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 43-5 & pl. 26; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 72-3 & 163.

⁴¹ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 45 & pl. 26; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 73.

⁴² Kanawati *e. al.*, *Saqqara I*, 46 & pl. 26; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 74.

⁴³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 74 & 163; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 45-6.

⁴⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 72 & 163; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 45 & pl. 27; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 26.

⁴⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 71; Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 44.

⁴⁶ To be discussed. Strudwick, ‘Inscription of Ity’, *Texts*, 140; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 35-42.

have been involved.⁴⁷ As such, Kanawati has also examined the tombs of higher officials from the end of the reign of Teti for indications of an assassination. These are the men who would have had possible motives for disposing of Teti, whether they had 'ideological differences with Teti, were dissatisfied for any important reason including financial, or stood to gain considerable professional advantages by their action.'⁴⁸ The evidence he collected clearly shows that those who received the harshest punishments were Seankhuptah ('chief physician'), Mereri ('overseer of weapons'), Hesi (vizier) and an unnamed official.⁴⁹

Seankhuptah/Hetepnuptah,⁵⁰ the 'chief physician of Upper and Lower Egypt' (*wr swnw Šmꜥw Mḥw*), has additional titles which show that 'he combined medical expertise with guard duties and was trusted and close to the king.'⁵¹ Again, his tomb was probably constructed late in the reign of Teti (due to his titulary, position in cemetery, surrounding tombs and decoration).⁵² His unfinished tomb also shows that his name and figure were deliberately chiselled out, yet despite this, in some places the outline of his figures is still visible (including some of the red outlines) and his name remains visible in others.⁵³ His wife's figure was also removed in one place but left intact in another.⁵⁴ In one instance an inscription was chiselled out but rewritten in black outline (it is possibly that it was accidentally removed or perhaps her

⁴⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 184; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 80.

⁵⁰ Translated as Sankhuptah/Nyhetepptah by Strudwick. Strudwick, 'Inscriptions from the Tomb of Sankhuptah Called Nyhetepptah at Saqqara', *Texts*, 309.

⁵¹ The 'Upper and Lower Egypt' addition to the title is rare. Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery III*, 39-62; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 117; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25, 41 & fig. 26.

⁵² However, Strudwick considers a date of Pepy I plausible; Strudwick, 'Inscriptions from the Tomb of Sankhuptah Called Nyhetepptah at Saqqara', *Texts*, 309; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 118; J. Swinton, *The Dating of the Tombs of Officials of the Old Kingdom of Egypt*, MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie University (Sydney, 2001), 135; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery III*, 40-1.

⁵³ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery III*, 47-62; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 118 & 165; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 42, figs 26 & 74-5.

⁵⁴ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery III*, 47, pl. 2 & 35; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 118; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 42.

verdict was overturned).⁵⁵ While Seankhuiptah's is one of the tombs in the Teti cemetery which underwent some of the most severe deliberate damage, it is less damaged than those of Mereri and Hesi.⁵⁶

Mereri's titles include 'overseer of weapons', 'superintendent of the king's house' (*shd pr-[nsw]t*), 'guard of Teti's pyramid', and further titles which illustrate his close relationship with the palace.⁵⁷ Dated to late in the reign of Teti,⁵⁸ his figures display definite signs of deliberate damage, especially the face and ankles, but his name is intact in some places.⁵⁹ The consistent damage to the face and feet of Mereri in the scenes of his tomb may well have been accompanied by the cutting of his nose, ears and feet in real life.⁶⁰ Unlike the previously mentioned punished officials, the tomb was then reused by Merynebty, a female guard.⁶¹ As female guards were rare, but may have been associated with the royal harim,⁶² it could perhaps be hypothesised that the tomb may have been granted as a special favour due to her role in uncovering a link between the assassination of Teti and the harim. Despite the punishment of many officials in the Teti cemetery, only Mereri and Hesi have had their tombs reassigned.⁶³ The confiscation of a tomb as punishment was 'presumably the equivalent of a 'perpetual death' sentence.'⁶⁴

Hesi's career can be divided into two phases. During the first he held scribal and judicial titles, preparing him for promotion to the second stage

⁵⁵ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* III, pl. 34; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 118; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 42.

⁵⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 165; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 68.

⁵⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 38 & 97; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 30-2; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 67.

⁵⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 97, 154, 156 & 165; Strudwick, 'Inscriptions over the Entrance to the Tomb of Mereri at Saqqara', *Texts*, 224; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 87-8; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 30-1; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 13.

⁵⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 97; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 30-40, pls 8 & 44-5; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25-6, 54, figs 27 & 104; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 68.

⁶⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 160; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24.

⁶¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 97 & 165; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 32-3; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 42, 54 fig. 76; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 65-70.

⁶² Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 67.

⁶³ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 42.

⁶⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 151; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 15.

culminating in the vizierate.⁶⁵ His tomb inscriptions expressly state that he worked under Djedkare, Wenis and Teti, with the latter being one with whom he tends to emphasise a personal relationship.⁶⁶ He says that 'His majesty knew my name while selecting a scribe because of his hand (i.e. ability), without any backer. He remembered the one who spoke to him wisely', was one who gave advice to the king even as a junior official and that he even received special privileges as a result.⁶⁷ The titles he held under Teti indicated that he was on the path to the vizierate, such as 'overseer of all the works of the king' (*jmj-r k3t nbt nt nswt*) and 'superintendent of priests of Teti's pyramid' (*shd hm(w)-ntr dd-swt-Ttj*) (a title 'held only by the most important officials, particularly the viziers'.)⁶⁸ However, the titles associated with the vizierate are only mentioned on two pillars and the architrave of the portico, and 'vizier' only appears on one of these pillars – leading to the possibility that he held the vizierate under Weserkare and not Teti.⁶⁹ Adding to this theory is his comparatively modest sized tomb, which was built quite late into Teti's reign, despite appearing to be on the career path to the top office.⁷⁰ His name and figure were chiselled out carefully, however one name was (probably) accidentally left intact above the entrance doorway inside the offering room.⁷¹ His tomb was then reused by Seshemnefer, who declares that the tomb was given to him by the king (probably Pepy I), further

⁶⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 57-8; N. Kanawati, 'The Tomb of Hesi', *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 10 (1999), 67; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 124; N. Kanawati & M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tomb of Hesi* vol. V (Warminster, 1999), 11-3; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24-5 & 38-9; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 65.

⁶⁶ Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Hezi from Saqqara', *Texts*, 276-7; Kanawati, *BACE* 10 (1999), 67; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* V, 15 & 37-8; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 24, 38 & fig. 16; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 58.

⁶⁷ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* V, 37-8; Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Hezi from Saqqara', *Texts*, 276; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 58; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 65.

⁶⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 58.

⁶⁹ However, it has been suggested that he and Khentika may have instead held the office contemporaneously under Teti, or alternatively during the first part of the reign of Pepy I. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 59 & 156; Kanawati, *BACE* 10 (1999), 68-70; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 32; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 124; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* V, 11, 15-6 & 20-3; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25.

⁷⁰ Kanawati, *BACE* 10 (1999), 70-1.

⁷¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 59; Kanawati, *BACE* 10 (1999), 67; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* V, 11, pls 2, 7, 8, 11, 16, 20, 32, 34 & 40-5; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25 & figs 22-3.

indicating punishment of Hesi.⁷² That Hesi's titles indicate that he was on the path to the vizierate yet his tomb was almost completely decorated by the time he reached the office, suggests that he may have actually had little hope of reaching the top position prior to the completion of his tomb at the end of the reign of Teti.⁷³ From the information provided by Hesi's tomb, it could be the case that he had an integral role in supporting Teti in his accession, for which he may have expected eventual promotion to vizier. If he did not reach the vizierate until the reign of Weserkare, a possible motive for his role in an assassination could be that he felt that the promotion to the vizierate was lagging or in jeopardy. Kanawati even remarks that many features of the decoration of his tomb 'reflect the character of a very ambitious man with great pride', despite the tomb's small size.⁷⁴

There is additional evidence of upheaval in the Teti Cemetery, with part of an entrance lintel found with no name, but the remaining titles include 'overseer of the great court' (*jmj-r hwt-wrt*), 'director of scribes of petitions' (*hrp zš(w) jrj-spr*), and 'judge and administrator' (*z3b 'd-mr*).⁷⁵ His false door is undecorated and rough, which is in juxtaposition to his high titles that are on the career path to the vizierate.⁷⁶ It is clear that construction on the tomb was abandoned, and it is possible that the tomb was then purposefully destroyed.⁷⁷ This is another man who was perhaps involved in the conspiracy against Teti, possibly with similar motives to Hesi.

Based on the above evidence, it appears that the lower officials who held offices in the palace guards and personal service to the king were not punished as harshly for their involvement in the crime as those who held

⁷² Previously, Kanawati had attributed the tomb as originally belonging to Seshemnefer, until further excavations were carried out. Kanawati, *BACE* I (1990), 61; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 61 & 165; Kanawati, *BACE* 10 (1999), 75; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* V, 11, 15, 21, 44-7, 61 & pls 40-5; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 68-9.

⁷³ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25.

⁷⁴ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25 & 39-40.

⁷⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 132; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 41, 43, pls 9 & 46.

⁷⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 133-4 & 164; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 41.

⁷⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 134.

higher titles.⁷⁸ This is linked to involvement, rather than rank. Kanawati has concluded, with strong evidence, that a natural death of Teti is very unlikely, 'the very nature of the positions held by the people punished would argue against such a scenario; for while the involvement of a vizier would be necessary for the success of any takeover of power, the participation of the chief physician is much more difficult to explain. The involvement of the palace guards and the overseer of weapons surely indicates a premeditated use of force, and a usurper who was prepared to use force and who has gathered the support of those who could provide it, would be unlikely to patiently wait for the natural death of the reigning monarch... Circumstantial as it is, the evidence suggests a successful conspiracy which brought about the end of Teti's reign.'⁷⁹ In addition to this, both the reuse of Mereri's tomb by the female guard Merynebty combined with a trial of a queen during the reign of Pepy I may indicate the involvement of a queen of Teti.

In the biography of Weni, buried at Abydos, he records that he oversaw a trial of a queen, who is solely identified by the epithet 'great of sceptre' (*wrt i3mt.s*).⁸⁰ However, the type of crime committed by the queen is not indicated.⁸¹ While many scholars have traditionally associated this text with a conspiracy during the reign of Pepy I,⁸² scholars are increasingly convinced that the trial instead refers to a queen of Teti which occurred during the reign of Pepy I.⁸³ With either interpretation, most see the trial as referring to an assassination attempt, but as Robins says, 'we cannot, however, rule out other possibilities, such as adultery.'⁸⁴ Some scholars have noted the

⁷⁸ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25.

⁷⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 169.

⁸⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 171; Strudwick, 'Inscription of Weni from Abydos', *Texts*, 353; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 50; K. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches* vol. I (Leipzig, 1933), 98-109:17; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 83; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 61.

⁸¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 155.

⁸² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 170-1; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 50; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 125 & 142-3; N. Kanawati, 'Deux conspirations contre Pépy I^{er}', *Chronique d'Égypte* 56 (1981), 209-17.

⁸³ Or perhaps even a queen who served as regent for Weserkare. W. Seipel, *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Königinnen der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches* (Hamburg, 1980), 246-7; V.G. Callender, *The Wives of the Egyptian Kings: Dynasties I-XVII* vol. III, PhD Thesis, Macquarie University (Sydney, 1992), 142; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 61 & note 110.

⁸⁴ G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2008), 39.

disjunction between the public statement Weni makes in regards to the queen and the divine nature of Egyptian kingship, especially considering the secret nature of the trial meant that the vizier and other higher officials were absent.⁸⁵ The tomb was built under during the reign of Merenre, yet it is still more likely that such a public statement would only be allowable if it was referencing an event which was already common knowledge, such as a trial relating to a successful assassination of a king – not an attempted one. Thus this discord could be better explained if the trial involved a queen of Teti, rather than Pepy I. Richards has even noted ‘that the unusual layout of this text parallels the arrangement of royal decrees.’⁸⁶ As such, allowing Weni to reference the trial could demonstrate that the wrong committed against Teti had been righted, thus also perpetuating the legitimacy of his line.

Weni relays that during the trial of the queen there was no vizier present, something which at the very least indicates a distrust of his top officials, yet may also imply involvement.⁸⁷ At least one vizier would have overseen such a trial during normal circumstances, and as such most scholars are in agreement that not only must the viziers have been connected to the crime, but that their support would have been necessary for the induction of any plot against the king.⁸⁸ Thus, while Weni doesn’t specifically state the involvement of viziers, it can be inferred.⁸⁹ Lending to the theory that Weni is referring to a queen of Teti, and not Pepy I is that there is evidence for the punishment of the last vizier of Teti, Hesi, yet no known evidence for the punishment of a vizier who served early under Pepy I.⁹⁰ However, as Pepy I’s officials are not buried in a cemetery surrounding his pyramid but are instead scattered among many, it is incredibly difficult to study a possible

⁸⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 151.

⁸⁶ Strudwick, ‘Inscription of Weni from Abydos’, *Texts*, 352; J. Richards, ‘Text and Context in Late Old Kingdom Egypt: The Archaeology and Historiography of Weni the Elder’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 39 (2002), 75-102.

⁸⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172-3 & 181; Strudwick, ‘Inscription of Weni from Abydos’, *Texts*, 353; H. Goedicke, ‘An Approximate Date for the Harem Investigation under Pepy I’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 89; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 63.

⁸⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172-3; Strudwick, ‘Inscription of Weni from Abydos’, *Texts*, 352-3.

⁸⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172-3.

⁹⁰ The unnamed official known only from his lintel in the Teti cemetery may also have been a vizier. *ibid.*, 173 & 181.

conspiracy early during the reign of Pepy I – especially as there is evidence of a plot sometime after the twenty-first year, involving the vizier Rawer, and thus differentiating between two possible plots is almost impossible.⁹¹

In addition to there being no current evidence for the punishment of any early viziers of Pepy I, neither is there evidence for any *damnatio memoriae* of any of his queens. The mention of the trial in this context implies a guilty verdict, and as such one would expect to see manifestations of the punishment of the queen in Pepy I's cemetery. In contrast, there are indications that a pyramid of a third queen of Teti may have stood in the site now occupied by Khentika/Ikheki's tomb (built in the reign of Pepy I), between the pyramids of Teti and his wife Khuit. Indeed, there have been other proposals that this queen was perhaps a regent to a young Weserkare and was therefore tried at the beginning of the reign of Pepy I.⁹² Seipel propounded the view that Weni is discussing a trial of this queen, while Callender agrees and Munro finds his proposal plausible – despite the claim being unable to be currently proven.⁹³

It is important that Weni's biography seems to be in chronological order.⁹⁴ Weni was first involved in the ousting of four 'overseers of the palace guards', before specifically stating that he oversaw the trial of the queen along with '(just) one other judge and mouth of Nekhen put it down in writing, although I was (just) of the rank of overseer of the *khenty-she* of the Great House'.⁹⁵ Following this trial, Weni recounts that, while holding the office of 'overseer of the palace guards', that he led the army against the Aamu and Sand-dwellers.⁹⁶ It appears that Weni led five or six expeditions,

⁹¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 173, 177-8 & 180; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 203 ff.

⁹² Baud & Dobrev, *BIFA0* 95 (1995), 61 & note 110.

⁹³ Seipel, *Königinnen*, 246-7; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 142; P. Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West: topographisch-historische Einleitung* vol. I (Mainz am Rhein, 1993), 22;

⁹⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 171.

⁹⁵ Strudwick, 'Inscription of Weni from Abydos', *Texts*, 353.

⁹⁶ Strudwick, 'Inscription of Weni from Abydos', *Texts*, 354; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 19; Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 96; E. Drioton & J. Vandier, *L'Égypte: Des origines à la conquête d'Alexandre* (Paris, 1984), 207-8; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 211.

which were likely to have been over a relatively long period of time.⁹⁷ It is not unreasonable to speculate that the trial may have occurred around Pepy I's fifth year, which would likely be too early for a conspiracy to ensure succession of a son.⁹⁸ However, if the trial is in reference to a queen of Teti, it is also not unreasonable that an investigation and preparations for such a trial take five years, especially considering the amount of trials of officials which were likely to have occurred prior to that of the queen. Pepy I's support system during the early part of his reign also appears strong.

Goedicke argues that the trial to which Weni refers is instead the later incident involving Rawer.⁹⁹ This is due to the mention of Weni as the 'overseer of the palace guards' on the Dahshur Decree, dated to the twenty-first year of Pepy I, on which the name of the vizier (probably Rawer) was erased.¹⁰⁰ As the Dahshur decree is dated to the twenty-first year, Goedicke believes 'the events leading to the erasure of the viziers name – which we consider to be connected with the trial against the queen – must have taken place after this date.'¹⁰¹ The chronological nature of the biography of Weni itself argues against such a late date for the conspiracy, with the implication that he received that office due to his role in the investigation of that very event.¹⁰² Additionally, as Weni specifically mentions this title in conjunction with the expeditions, it appears that he actively held this title for an extensive period of time. As such, it would be a fitting timeline that after an investigation into the death of Teti, the four overseers were expelled very early into the reign of Pepy I, the trial of the queen occurred, and Weni continued to serve as 'overseer of the palace guards' from that point until after the twenty-first year.

⁹⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 47; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 207.

⁹⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172.

⁹⁹ Goedicke, *JAOS* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 88-9.

¹⁰⁰ Goedicke, *JAOS* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 89; N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: The Highest Titles and Their Holders* (London, 1985), 303; H.G. Fischer, *Egyptian Studies I: Varia* (New York, 1976), 85; Sethe, *Urk.* I, 209:14; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 204-5 & 209.

¹⁰¹ Goedicke, *JAOS* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 89.

¹⁰² Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 211-2.

For a debate surrounding an assassination of Teti, it is also worth considering what could prompt an attempt against the life of a 'divine' king.¹⁰³ From the circumstances surrounding Teti's reign, such motivations could include issues stemming from his own succession, dissatisfied officials or lack of a clear heir. Generally regarded as the first king of the Sixth Dynasty, Teti was not the son of his predecessor Wenis. The general consensus is that Wenis did not have a surviving heir, and that Teti succeeded to the throne by marrying his eldest daughter (believed to be Iput, mother of Pepy I).¹⁰⁴ However, questions have been raised as to whether there may have been other semi-legitimate contenders, such as sons of Wenis by secondary wives.¹⁰⁵ Even in this circumstance, no surviving eldest son to the primary wife meant that Teti was the legitimate heir to the throne as the husband of the eldest daughter. In addition to his legitimisation through marriage, Teti has also now been shown to most likely be the nephew of Wenis, with Wenis being married to his mother's sister, providing 'some independent claim to the throne.'¹⁰⁶

Despite his seemingly legitimate claim, Teti's succession may not have been as peaceful as it would initially appear, as it is likely that the accession of a king legitimised through marriage would create more difficulties than the traditional father-son succession.¹⁰⁷ Drioton and Vandier are of the opinion that the transition seems to be without problem, however, a closer look at

¹⁰³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 148; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14-5.

¹⁰⁴ Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 56 & 58; H. Altenmüller, 'Bemerkungen zur Gründung der 6. Dynastie', *Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge* 30 (1990), 6; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 13 & 77; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 129; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 29 & 148; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 21; N. Kanawati, 'Nepotism in the Egyptian Sixth Dynasty', *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 14 (2003), 39; N. Kanawati, 'The Vizier Nebet and the Royal Women of the Sixth Dynasty', in Z. Hawass & S. Ikram (eds), *Thebes and Beyond: Studies in Honour of Kent R. Weeks* (Cairo, 2010), 122.

¹⁰⁵ Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 205; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 77; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 17-9.

¹⁰⁶ Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 120; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 13; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 19; H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz am Rhein, 1998), 5-20, 50-60, 82-6 & 126-132; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 113-5 & 122-3; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 56, 59, notes 73 & 90.

¹⁰⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14.

the current evidence is in opposition to a smooth accession.¹⁰⁸ Numerous other scholars are in agreement that his Horus name, 'Sehetep-tawy' ('he who pacifies the two lands'), is suggestive of such problems and later examples only 'appear in periods of difficulties'.¹⁰⁹ Grimal attributes the Horus name of Teti to an additional issue, the rising power of the provinces, yet believed that the succession of Teti was a solution to both the lack of heir and provincial strength.¹¹⁰ However, the provinces seem fairly well under control during the reign of Teti.

Succession issues may have culminated in Teti's assassination,¹¹¹ especially as there is archaeological evidence from the Wenis Cemetery suggesting that some of his officials may have fought Teti's accession. Kanawati has demonstrated that the last two viziers under Wenis may have opposed the accession of Teti, as both men, Ihy and Akhethetep/Hemi, committed an offence for which they lost their tombs.¹¹² Akhethetep/Hemi's mastaba was reused by Nebkauhor/Idu, and Ihy's by Idut/Seshseshet.¹¹³ Nebkauhor/Idu is titled 'eldest king's son of his body' (*z3 nswt n ht.f smsw*) and Idut/Seshseshet is similarly titled 'king's daughter of his body' (*z3t nswt n ht.f*).¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, it is unknown whether they were children or grandchildren of the king.¹¹⁵ However, it does appear that this king is Teti, despite the tombs' location. The names Idu and Idut suggest that the pair were siblings, Nebkauhor is also similar to the original throne name of Pepy I (Nefersahor), and Idut/Seshseshet shares her beautiful name Seshseshet

¹⁰⁸ Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 205.

¹⁰⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 148; J.-Ph. Lauer, 'Recherches et travaux à Saqqarah (campagne 1969-1970)', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 114:3 (1970), 501; M. Bárta (ed.), *Abusir XIII: Abusir South 2: Tomb Complex of the Vizier Qar, his sons Qar Junior and Senedjemib, and Iykai* (Prague, 2009), 302; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 331-2; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 18; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14; J. Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil: Des origines à la fin de l'Ancien Empire* vol. I (Paris, 1992), 318; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 80.

¹¹⁰ Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 80.

¹¹¹ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 57.

¹¹² Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 77.

¹¹³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 25, 28 & 30; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, & fig 4; R. Macramallah, *Le mastaba d'Idout* (Cairo, 1935).

¹¹⁴ The 'of his body' addition seemly indicates a true biological child. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 26 & 30; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14-5 & fig. 4; Macramallah, *Le mastaba d'Idout*, 14, 20-3, 25-6 & 28-9; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings I*, 42.

¹¹⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 150.

with other daughters of Teti (who were all named after his mother).¹¹⁶ However, Munro holds the opposing view that Nebkauhor/Idu was a son of Wenis.¹¹⁷ As the tombs were of a very high quality their reallocation is expected to have occurred quickly, and thus the usurpation can thus be dated to very early in the reign of Teti.¹¹⁸ This lends to the idea that the reallocation of the tombs may be linked to Teti's succession, and as such the transition may have been far more difficult than the archaeological and textual records suggest.¹¹⁹

Trouble in Teti's reign may also be assumed from his introduction of the title of 'overseer of the protection of every house of the king/palace' (*jmj-r stp-z3 pr-nswt nb*), first held by Mereruka, followed by Khentika and then Inumin, all of whom were also viziers.¹²⁰ However, they probably held this title prior to the vizierate as Inumin records this title in his chapel, seemingly decorated before becoming vizier.¹²¹ It was perhaps held by Mereruka from the beginning of Teti's reign (indicating accession issues), but could instead have been introduced in the middle of the reign (indicating issues in the first half of reign).¹²² The evidence indicates that 'Teti must have felt insecure or somehow threatened in order to initiate this position and consistently entrust it to the highest administrator in the country, the vizier – or at least reward its holder with the vizierate.'¹²³ Teti is also probably displaying his mistrust of others by granting the title to his son-in-law by his eldest

¹¹⁶ Also, an attendant of Idut is named Tetiankh, suggesting that the usurpation of the tomb took place in his reign. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 30-1, 148 & 150-1; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39 & 47; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14-5, 20 & 77; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 328-9; Altenmüller, *HAB* 30 (1990), 4-5; J.-Ph Lauer, 'Recherches et travaux à Saqqarah (campagne 1972-1973), *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 117:2 (1973), 329-30; J. Yoyotte, 'A propos de la parenté féminine du roi Têti (VI^e dynastie), *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 57 (1957), 94-8; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 113-127; Macramallah, *Le mastaba d'Idout*, 9-10 & 20.

¹¹⁷ Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 151.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, 151.

¹²⁰ Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 14; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 153 & 184; N Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 15-6.

¹²¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 153; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 15.

¹²² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 153-4.

¹²³ *ibid.*, 154.

daughter.¹²⁴ Teti also appears to have drastically increased the number of guards in the palace and his pyramid, further indicating unease during his reign.¹²⁵

While there is evidence that the last two viziers of Wenis may have opposed Teti, there are clear indications that he was also supported by a number of Wenis' officials. As he was not the son of his predecessor, his accession 'presumably depended on the support received from the powerful and no doubt influential administrative officials as well as the top hierarchy of the priesthoods of the main cults, and perhaps on the presence or absence of other aspirants to the throne.'¹²⁶ It appears that he did not have the support of many of these groups, as many of his senior officials (who were often descendants of officials buried at Giza) were elevated to these higher positions during his reign.¹²⁷ The tombs of Teti's top officials are also particularly rich in contrast to those of his other officials, which likely reflects his desire for their support.¹²⁸ This was, for all intents and purposes, an attempt to buy loyalty.¹²⁹ The marriage of his daughters to most of these top officials also strengthens the view that he needed their support and wanted to ensure loyalty, which Grimal calls 'a policy of co-operation'.¹³⁰

The vizier Qar, buried at Abusir, served under Teti and died during his reign or shortly after.¹³¹ His appointment as vizier appears to have been late in his career, as he modified his existing tomb which was begun when he was of lower status.¹³² As such, it would also appear that he never expected to reach such high office. Bárta has observed this likelihood in Qar's titles, stating that there is 'something strange about the sudden promotion of Qar to the office

¹²⁴ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16.

¹²⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 152 & 184; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16 & 77.

¹²⁶ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14.

¹²⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 19, 45-50, 55-6 & 77-8; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 119 & 123.

¹²⁸ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 19-20 & 31.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, 26.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 20-2 & 31.

¹³¹ M. Bárta, 'The Sixth Dynasty tombs in Abusir. Tomb complex of the vizier Qar and his family', *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology: Proceedings of the Conference held in Prague May 31 – June 4, 2004* (Prague, 2006), 49 & 52; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 87.

¹³² Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 49; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 67, 87, 92-109 & 302ff.

of the vizier. Only a brief comparison of his titles with those associated with late Fifth and Sixth Dynasty viziers shows clearly that there is a profound difference in terms of his status and executed duties.¹³³ Nor does Qar hold any of the traditional titles on the career path to the vizierate prior to his promotion.¹³⁴ Yet, it has been theorised that his only high title prior to the vizierate, 'true/real judge of Nekhen' (*r Nḥn (n) z3b m3ʿ*) could include the rare element 'm3ʿ' to emphasise his closeness to the king.¹³⁵ As the title appears on his first false door, it may have been held reasonably early in his career.¹³⁶ As such it is possible that he began his career under Wenis (for whose pyramid he was priest),¹³⁷ may have supported Teti's claim to the throne in his position as 'overseer of the great court' or in the palace administration,¹³⁸ and was thus then promoted to vizier during Teti's reign (after the ousting of the last two viziers of Wenis).¹³⁹ Interestingly, he was also, 'keeper of the secret(s) of the great court' (*ḥr(j)-sšt3 n ḥwt-wrt*), and perhaps the secret nature came into play during a trial of the two disgraced viziers.¹⁴⁰

Another official, Isi of Edfu, was active under Djedkare, Wenis and Teti.¹⁴¹ He was promoted to the southern vizierate late in his career, as is known from fragmentary texts.¹⁴² It appears that he began his career in the capital before being stationed in the province, being 'elder of the doorway who ...' (*smsw ḥ3jt* [...]) under Djedkare, 'estate manager' (*ḥq3 ḥwt*) under Wenis, then 'judge and boundary official' (*z3b ʿd-mr*) and 'great overlord of the province'

¹³³ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 56; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 309.

¹³⁴ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 57; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 51-3.

¹³⁵ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 49; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 51, 87-90, 307, fig. 5.3.1 & pl. 9; V.G. Callender, 'À propos the title of *r Nḥn n z3b*', in M. Bárta & J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), 371-3.

¹³⁶ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 49; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 51, 87-90, 307, fig. 5.3.1 & pl. 9; Callender, *Abusir 2000*, 371-3.

¹³⁷ Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 52, 97, 103 & 314.

¹³⁸ Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 52, 59 & 309.

¹³⁹ Callender asserts that the development of his tomb shows 3 major career stages, but instead proposes that he may have been involved in trying the same case as Weni. Callender, *Abusir 2000*, 369-70 & 374.

¹⁴⁰ Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 52 & 111.

¹⁴¹ Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Izi from Edfu', *Texts*, 340-1.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, 340-1.

(*hry-tp ʿ3 n sp3t*) in the reign of Teti.¹⁴³ He was probably Teti's first southern vizier, and also appears to have been married to a daughter of Teti (a Seshseshet),¹⁴⁴ and was thus Teti's support in Upper Egypt.

Teti was also probably supported in his accession by another of his early viziers, the high-ranking Neferseshemre, who owns what is probably the earliest tomb in the Teti cemetery.¹⁴⁵ The vizier Kagemni was another high-ranking supporter, who held many of the other titles associated with the highest office,¹⁴⁶ and thus may have always been on that career path. He too was married to a Seshseshet.¹⁴⁷ His biographical inscription clearly states that he began his career under Djedkare, before serving under Wenis and Teti (under whom he was promoted to the vizierate).¹⁴⁸ The official Neferseshemtah/Sheshi/Wedjahateti held a number of judicial titles, and was also married to an 'eldest daughter' of Teti, Seshseshet/Sheshit, but did not hold high ranks, being only 'royal chamberlain' (*hry-tp nswt*).¹⁴⁹ The mastaba of Nikauisesi/Isesy is another early tomb in the Teti Cemetery and supporter of Teti's kingship.¹⁵⁰ He held a number of important offices including 'overseer of Upper Egypt' (*jmj-r Šm(w)*). 'overseer of all the works of the king' and 'overseer of the two houses of gold' (*jmj-r prwj-nbw*).¹⁵¹ He probably began his career under Djedkare, and is presumably the same official depicted on the causeway of Wenis and mentioned in a royal decree

¹⁴³ Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Izi from Edfu', *Texts*, 341-2; E. Brovarski, 'Overseers of Upper Egypt in the Old to Middle Kingdoms', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 140 (2013), 92; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 57-8.

¹⁴⁴ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 47-8.

¹⁴⁵ He probably have died at an old age before it was completed. Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 19; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* III, 11-3, 15-6 & 25; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 111; Kanawati et al., *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 32; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 86-7; F.W. von Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gem-ni-kai* 2 vols (Berlin, 1905 & 1911).

¹⁴⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 87 & 156; Strudwick, 'Texts from the Facade of the Mastaba of Kaigemni at Saqqara', *Texts*, 286; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 157; Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 20, 105-30 & pl. 7b; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 48.

¹⁴⁹ As such, she was probably the eldest daughter by a secondary wife. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 108; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 35-6 & fig. 56; J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah* vol. II (Bruxelles, 1907), pls 75-101.

¹⁵⁰ N. Kanawati & M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tomb of Nikauisesi* vol. VI (Warminster, 2000); Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 100-1.

¹⁵¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 114.

of Teti.¹⁵² His date of burial is actually recorded in his tomb as the eleventh count/year (of Teti).¹⁵³ Another official who probably served under Wenis and subsequently became part of a reservoir of support for Teti was Ankhmahor/Sesi; a vizier, 'overseer of scribes of the king's documents' (*jmj-r zš(w) ʿ nswt*), 'master architect of the king' (*mdh zš nswt*) and 'overseer of the great court'.¹⁵⁴ Kanawati suggests that he held the vizierate simultaneously with Neferseshemre.¹⁵⁵

Despite the essential support of these officials, it appears that Teti's most trusted official was Mereruka/Meri. He held an excessively long list of titles, more than any other in the Old Kingdom, including 'chief justice and vizier' (*t3jtj z3b t3tj*) and its other associated titles.¹⁵⁶ However, many of his titles involved tasks far below his station, and by placing the supervision of such tasks in Mereruka's hands, another indication of the lack of trust in many of his other officials is provided.¹⁵⁷ Significantly, Mereruka was the 'overseer of the protection of every house of the king/palace' and 'overseer of the house of weapons', yet while the latter was an important office it was not usually the domain of the vizier.¹⁵⁸ That former title relates to the protection of the palaces and appears to have been created by Teti, and in addition to Mereruka being the only known vizier who was also 'overseer of the king's private apartment/harim' (*jmj-r jpt nswt*), again indicates a severe distrust in others and unease on behalf of Teti.¹⁵⁹ The decoration in his tomb is even particularly violent and present him as having 'a severe and merciless nature. Whether these were actual characteristics of Mereruka, or merely the

¹⁵² *ibid.*, 114.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, 114.

¹⁵⁴ Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries I*, 93-102; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 51; Strudwick, 'Text of Ankhmahor from Saqqara', *Texts*, 264; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 63; N. Kanawati, 'Ankhmahor, a Vizier of Teti', *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 8 (1997), 65; N. Kanawati & A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tomb of Ankhmahor* vol. II (Warminster, 1997), 11-2.

¹⁵⁵ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 34; Kanawati, *BACE* 8 (1997), 65.

¹⁵⁶ Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries I*, 131-6; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 13-8; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 99-101; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 53.

¹⁵⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 54.

¹⁵⁸ Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries I*, 136; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 13-4; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 101; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 55; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 154; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 13.

image he wished to convey, is uncertain. But considering the political, religious and financial difficulties which Teti probably faced during his reign, such an apparently harsh and unforgiving personality like that projected by Mereruka would have been considered as ideal for a vizier of the period.¹⁶⁰ Themes of aggression are also evident in the decoration of other viziers' tombs of the period.¹⁶¹

Mereruka married a 'king's eldest daughter of his body' (*z3t nswt (smswt) nt ht.f*), Waatetkhethor/Seshseshet, who was probably the daughter of Teti and his principal wife.¹⁶² Mereruka also has the rare title 'foster child of the king' (*sdtj nswt*).¹⁶³ This rare title of Mereruka, combined with the titles of their son Meryteti, 'eldest king's son of his body' and 'the honoured one before his father and before the great god' (*jm3hw hr jt.f hr ntr-ꜥ3*), indicate 'that Meryteti was Teti's heir apparent until Pepy I was born'.¹⁶⁴ Kanawati suggests that Teti's original heir was probably Nebkauhor/Idu, the 'eldest king's son of his body' through his principal wife, whom he believes to be Iput.¹⁶⁵ After his premature death, Teti had another probable heir, Tetiankh-Kem, who also held that title.¹⁶⁶ Hawass believes Weserkare to be a usurper, and this combined with the death of Tetiankh-Kem, at around age twenty-five, indicates that Manetho was correct in his statement that Teti was killed by his bodyguards.¹⁶⁷ While this evidence is not strong enough to prove Manetho's claim on its own, it does provide further evidence to this effect. However, Hawass is likely correct in his theory that the death of the heir

¹⁶⁰ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 58.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, 58 & 79.

¹⁶² Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 22-3 & 32; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 101; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 20-2, 54-5, 59 & 65.

¹⁶³ Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries I*, 134; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 17; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 154 & 194, note 300; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 53.

¹⁶⁴ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 49-51, 74 & 78; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 24-5 & 32; N. Kanawati & M. Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family: The Tomb of Meryteti* vol. I (Oxford, 2004), 13-5.

¹⁶⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 26; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14-5, 50-1, 77-8 & fig. 4; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 48.

¹⁶⁶ Z. Hawass, 'Recent discoveries in the pyramid complex of Teti at Saqqara', in M. Bárta & J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), 420-2; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 30 & 50-1.

¹⁶⁷ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 422 & 430-1; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 139; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 302.

most likely contributed to the motivations behind the assassination of Teti.¹⁶⁸ Roth views the conspiracy against Teti as the result of a plot instigated by a queen of Teti, probably the mother of Weserkare, in order to place her son on the throne.¹⁶⁹

A number of officials who appear to have been unhappy serving under Teti may have first used the lack of a clear heir and then the young age of the new heir Pepy I as an opportunity to form a plot to depose the king and his line. With the deaths of Teti's earliest supporters, those upon whom he depended and whose children with Teti's daughters were too young for office, a change of policy regarding officials appeared to have occurred.¹⁷⁰ The volume of responsibilities and power granted to Mereruka was not carried over to the next generation of officials, instead many of his responsibilities were distributed among other, lower, officials.¹⁷¹ This is likely to be a reflection of the reduced level of trust in his remaining officials, that Teti was hesitant to grant the same level of power to his remaining men as he had previously to his most senior son-in-law, perhaps justifiably.¹⁷² It also seems certain that 'Teti had less material benefits available for the next generation of officials, especially those not in absolute top positions. Comparing themselves with their immediate predecessors, these men were understandably dissatisfied and, one would imagine, less supportive.'¹⁷³ It is this generation of officials who have been implicated in the assassination of Teti by the aforementioned archaeological evidence.

The Accession of Weserkare

Following the probable assassination of Teti, Weserkare ascended to the throne. The identity and kinship of this king is heavily speculative, and while

¹⁶⁸ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 431-3.

¹⁶⁹ Roth, *Königsmütter*, 124-5.

¹⁷⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 156.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, 156.

¹⁷² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 157; Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 13-8.

¹⁷³ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 26 & 31.

he may be a relative of Teti, this lacks evidence,¹⁷⁴ with Hawass instead being of the view that Weserkare was not kin to Teti but instead one of his high officials involved in the plot against him.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, it is plausible that Weserkare is synonymous with one of the officials whose tombs show signs of the harshest punishments in the Teti or even Wenis cemeteries. Goedicke and Munro have also suggested that Weserkare may be linked to the assassination of Teti itself.¹⁷⁶ However, it could be argued that Weserkare just took advantage of the situation to take the throne due to Pepy I's young age.¹⁷⁷ Some scholars postulate that he may possibly be the descendant of a Fifth Dynasty king (due to his name elements), yet others instead believe that he is the son of a minor wife of Teti.¹⁷⁸

A popular, albeit tenuous, view is that Weserkare may be identical with a king named Ity.¹⁷⁹ While many believe that there is no real evidence to support this idea,¹⁸⁰ one inscription in Wadi Hammamat records the 'Year of the first occasion' of this king and also lists the officials Ihyemsaf and Irenakhti as 'overseer of the army' (*jmj-r mš*).¹⁸¹ These two officials may be identical with those of the same name buried in the Teti cemetery.¹⁸² Ihyemsaf/Meru/Merugem/Tetiseneb, an 'overseer of the palace guards' and an 'overseer of the department of palace guards', certainly served under

¹⁷⁴ Baud and Dobrev have further discussed the possibility of a familial link between Teti and Weserkare. Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 56 & 60.

¹⁷⁵ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 431.

¹⁷⁶ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 60; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 21-2.

¹⁷⁷ However, Stadelmann even suggests that Weserkare was a child himself when he ascended to the throne. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 158; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 50-1; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 335.

¹⁷⁸ Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22.

¹⁷⁹ Strudwick, 'Inscription of Ity', *Texts*, 140; W.M.F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt: From the Earliest Times to the XVIth Dynasty* vol. I (London, 1899), 88-9; H. Gauthier, *Le Livre des Rois d'Égypte* I (1907), 144-6; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 205-7; A. Roccati, *La Littérature Historique sous l'Ancien Empire* (Paris, 1982), 34 & note (g); Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322.

¹⁸⁰ Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 48-9; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 60; Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 232.

¹⁸¹ His inaugural year. Sethe, *Urk.* I, 148:34; Strudwick, 'Inscription of Ity', *Texts*, 140; Roccati, *Littérature Historique*, 34:4, note (g) & 258:256-8; M. Couyat & P. Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouadi Hammamat* (Cairo, 1912), 94:169; Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322.

¹⁸² However, even if they are the same officials, it is not certain that this part of the text belongs to the inscription of Ity. Strudwick, 'Inscription of Ity', *Texts*, 140; Roccati, *Littérature Historique*, 258:256-8.

Teti.¹⁸³ His false door is unfinished, with the inscriptions on the left jambs being only in black paint, which could indicate that he was reprimanded for allegiance to Weserkare or a similar offence.¹⁸⁴ Irenakhti/Iri was another ‘overseer of the department of palace guards’ under Teti and whose tomb displays harsher punishment than the former, with purposeful damage seen throughout the tomb.¹⁸⁵ There were no human remains found, but the position of Irenakhti’s sarcophagus lid indicates that a burial took place.¹⁸⁶ The burial and degree of punishment again indicate persecution possibly for loyalty to Weserkare rather than involvement in the probable assassination of Teti. The mention of these two officials in the inscription adds to the case that Ity is the birth name of Weserkare. However it is possible that the cartouche could be from an earlier or later period, and may not even match the accompanying list of officials. Drioton and Vandier suggest that the inscription of Ity is similar in time and style to the nearby inscription of Imhotep, possibly from the Fourth Dynasty or after the Sixth.¹⁸⁷

A large amount of the discussion surrounding the identity of Weserkare has revolved around the possibility that he was the son of Teti through a minor wife. It has been suggested that he may be the son of Khentet-[?], who was possibly a wife of Teti but is only known from a relief fragment used in the foundation wall of the mortuary temple of Pepy I.¹⁸⁸ She held the title of ‘mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt’ (*mwt nswt bjtj*).¹⁸⁹ It has been suggested that she may have been the owner of a tomb that lay south of those of Iput and Khuit, which was destroyed and built over by the mastaba

¹⁸³ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 21-4 & pls 9-10; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 66.

¹⁸⁴ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 21-4 & pls 9-10; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 66.

¹⁸⁵ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 43-6 & pls 26-7; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 72-3 & 163.

¹⁸⁶ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 44; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 71.

¹⁸⁷ Drioton & Vandier, *L’Egypte*, 233-4.

¹⁸⁸ Seipel, *Königinnen*, 244-247; P. Jánosi, ‘The Queens of the Old Kingdom and Their Tombs’, *Bulletin of The Australian Centre for Egyptology* 3 (1992), 53; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 141; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 21; J. Leclant, *Recherches dans la pyramide et au temple haut du Pharaon Pépi Ier, à Saqqara* (Leiden, 1979), 26; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 118-9 & 124-5.

¹⁸⁹ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 141-2; A. El-Khouli & N. Kanawati, *The Old Kingdom Tombs of El-Hammamiya* (Warminster, 1990), 1, 13-8, 27, 30, 35-6, 39-45, pls 8-16, 38, 43-9a; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 118; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 48; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 21.

of Khentika during the reign of Pepy I.¹⁹⁰ Kanawati has suggested that if Weserkare was indeed the son of this queen then a motive would be provided for the possibly deliberate destruction of the tomb.¹⁹¹ There is, however, uncertainty as to whether there was actually ever a pyramid of a third queen of Teti on this site.¹⁹² Nor is the existence of this queen, as a wife of Teti, certain.¹⁹³ The block containing the only evidence of her existence was reused in Pepy I's mortuary temple, and as such may not have even originated in the Sixth Dynasty. It also seems unlikely that Pepy would reuse blocks mentioning the name of that king's mother in his own mortuary temple.¹⁹⁴ However, some believe that this in itself is an act of *damnatio memoriae*, and thus would strengthen the case for this queen being the mother of Weserkare.¹⁹⁵ This argument is unlikely as blocks from a destroyed monument of Teti's mother, Seshseshet, were also incorporated into Pepy I's mortuary temple.¹⁹⁶ The reuse of a block with the name of Khentet-[?], along those of Seshseshet, has resulted in the proposal that the group of hieroglyphs, *hntt*, could instead be part of an epithet of Seshseshet, rather than a name.¹⁹⁷ In the same vein as that argument, it could alternatively indicate that this was a second name of Teti's mother. Jánosi and Stadelmann instead propose that Weserkare could be son of Teti and Khuit, which others including Callender believe unlikely, as her monuments

¹⁹⁰ Seipel, *Königinnen*, 246-7; Jánosi, *BACE* 3 (1992), 53; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 141; V. Maragioglio & C.A. Rinaldi, *Notizie sulle Piramidi di Zedefrâ, Zedkarâ-Issi, Teti* (Turin, 1962), pl. 7; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22; T.G.H. James, *The Mastaba of Khentika, called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953).

¹⁹¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 158.

¹⁹² Firth & Gunn noted that 'on the north side of the Teti Pyramid Temple is a very deep shaft near which in the quarry debris were a number of blocks of Pyramid casing extensively patched as if another small pyramid had existed here. The shaft over forty metres deep ended in water and it may only have been a well.' Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 8.

¹⁹³ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 61; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22.

¹⁹⁴ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 60-1; Lauer, *CRAI* 114:3 (1970), 501; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 141.

¹⁹⁵ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 142; Seipel, *Königinnen*, 244-247; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 21.

¹⁹⁶ Some hypothesise that a monument to Seshseshet was destroyed by Weserkare and is thus used as further evidence for a usurpation, however it is entirely possible that either Teti or Pepy I rebuilt part of a monument for Seshseshet, and thus spare blocks were reused by Pepy I. J Lauer, *CRAI* 114:3 (1970), 501; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 60-1; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 141; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 116-8.

¹⁹⁷ A title with this element is, however, unknown in this period. Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 142; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 329 & note 14; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 61; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 119.

have not been deliberately damaged.¹⁹⁸ It is unfortunate that a son and daughter depicted with Khuit in her mortuary temple are not named.¹⁹⁹ However, as the perpetrators of the assassination were rewarded under Weserkare,²⁰⁰ would seemingly indicate that he was not a biological son of Teti. It seems more likely that Weserkare was a son-in-law (or similar) of Teti, if he was any relation at all.

If Ity is an alternate name of Weserkare, it is also interesting to note that one of the officials seemingly most severely punished for his role in the assassination of Teti, Seankhuipthah was married to a woman with the dual names of Iti and Khenti-kaues.²⁰¹ Khenti-kaues, Khent[kaues III?] and Khentit-kaues are alternate full renderings of the name elsewhere given as Khentet-[?].²⁰² It is also possible that Wenis had another daughter named Khenti-kaues, a 'king's daughter of his body',²⁰³ making it possible that Seankhuipthah was married to the daughter or granddaughter of Wenis. It is also entirely plausible that she was the mother of,²⁰⁴ or a daughter of, Weserkare, which would make Weserkare the grandson of a king, probably Wenis.²⁰⁵ Another similarity lies in the name of the mother of Mehi/Mehnes (an official who appears to have changed allegiance from Teti to Weserkare), Khenti.²⁰⁶ Due to this similarity of names, it may be the case that the wife of the conspirator Seankhuipthah, wife of Mehi/Mehnes, the queen of Teti who possibly owned a ruined pyramid and Weserkare were closely related.

¹⁹⁸ Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 334-5; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 61 & note 107; P. Jánosi, *Die Pyramidenanlagen der Königinnen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grabtyp des Alten und Mittleren Reiches* (Vienna, 1996), 43ff; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 145.

¹⁹⁹ A. Labrousse, 'Les reines de Têti, Khouit et Ipout I^{re}: recherches architecturales', in C. Berger, G. Clerc & N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* vol. I (Cairo, 1994), 242 & note 45; B. Porter & R.L.B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* vol. III² (Oxford, 1981), 397.

²⁰⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 157.

²⁰¹ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* III, 40 & 60.

²⁰² A. Dodson & D. Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo, 2010), 73 & 76; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22; Seipel, *Königinnen*, 246.

²⁰³ Dated by Porter and Moss to the Sixth Dynasty. Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22-3 & note 152.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 23 & note 152.

²⁰⁵ Especially as she was apparently not buried in her sarcophagus, the bones belonged to a male and the associated goods included weapons. *ibid.*, 22.

²⁰⁶ A. El-Khouli & N. Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara: North-West of Teti's Pyramid* vol. II (Sydney, 1988), 12.

Not only is the identity of Weserkare a concern to scholars, but whether he usurped the throne is also matter of debate. Kanawati even points out that if he was a usurper, this again lends to the evidence supporting an assassination of Teti.²⁰⁷ The majority of the argument for legitimacy stems from his mention in the Abydos king list, and it appears that there is space for his name on the Turin papyrus and the annals of Ankhesenpepy.²⁰⁸ However, Kanawati has argued that inclusion in the king lists has nothing to do with how a king attained the throne, only that those who ruled over the entire country were included, and thus has no bearing on a possible usurpation.²⁰⁹ Nor is a regency on behalf of Pepy I possible, also due to his inclusion in the king lists.²¹⁰ The opposing view in regards to regency is held by those such as Stevenson Smith, with Grimal furthering that Weserkare may have been a stopgap ruler who supervised the regency of Queen Iput.²¹¹ Roth, too, believes Weserkare to be a legitimate king who ascended to the throne due to the young age of Pepy I and his own links to the royal family.²¹² Yet, Weserkare held full titulary (unlike other regents) and there are no such

²⁰⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 185; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 80.

²⁰⁸ However, if he was a usurper and not related to Teti then it seems odd that he would be included in annals which appear on the coffin of the wife of Pepy I and mother of his son. The drawing provided by Lepsius appears to have accidentally inverted the cartouches of Teti and Weserkare. R. Lepsius, 'Die Sethos-Tafel von Abydos', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde* 2:15 (1864), 81-3; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 157; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 81; H. Goedicke, 'Zur Chronologie der sogenannten „Ersten Zwischenzeit“', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 112 (1962), 245 & 253; Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 430; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 27-8, 48, 59-61 & figs 1 & 3; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 305 & note 76; Lauer, *CRAI* 114:3 (1970), 501; J. Málek, 'The Original Version of the Royal Canon of Turin', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 68 (1982), 96 & fig. 1; K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Bibliographical* vol. II (Oxford, 1970), 827.10-844.5; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 21; Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322-3; V. Dobrev, 'The South Saqqara Stone and the sarcophagus of Queen Mother Ankhesenpepy (JE 65 908)', in M. Bárta & J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), 382; Strudwick, 'Annals on the Sarcophagus of Ankhesenpepy from South Saqqara', *Texts*, 75.

²⁰⁹ It has also been suggested that perhaps Userkare only ruled over Lower Egypt until reunification by Pepy I. Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 157-8; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 61 & notes 108-9; Goedicke, *ZDMG* 112 (1962), 254; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 232; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23.

²¹⁰ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 49.

²¹¹ W. Stevenson Smith, *The Cambridge Ancient History: Early History of the Middle East* vol. I:2 (Cambridge, 1970), 179; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 81.

²¹² Roth, *Königsmütter*, 126.

examples of stopgap rulers in ancient Egyptian history.²¹³ Some such as Drioton, Vandier and Málek are not even convinced of Weserkare's existence, and Berlev believed the name to be another of Teti.²¹⁴ However, in addition to his possible appearance on a number of king lists, his name may also appear on a fragment found by Montet in Tanis, which Goedicke restores as Weserkare.²¹⁵ There are also two cylinder seals and a copper mallet known with the name of Weserkare, and there may also be space for his name on the South Saqqara Stone.²¹⁶ This is despite his absence in the Saqqara king list and that his name 'is not even mentioned in biographies of officials who most certainly also served under him.'²¹⁷ That the throne reverted to Pepy I after the reign of Weserkare, a son of Teti, and not a son or son in-law of Weserkare also adds to the argument that he was not a legitimate heir.

It is possible, however seemingly unlikely, that Weserkare was a legitimate king. The main scenario in which Weserkare could be a legitimate king would be if he was the son of a wife of Teti, and it was she and not Iput who was the principal wife. Unfortunately, for this period there is no real criteria in order to determine the ranking of concurrent queens.²¹⁸ However, an

²¹³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 4, 158 & 169.

²¹⁴ Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 232; J. Málek, 'The Old Kingdom', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford & New York, 2003), 104; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 305 & note 76.

²¹⁵ Goedicke, *ZDMG* 112 (1962), 245 & note 27; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 59 & note 94; P. Montet, *Les nouvelles fouilles de Tanis (1929-1932)* (Paris, 1933), fig. 33 & pl. 83.

²¹⁶ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 27-8, 48, 59, note 92 & fig. 1 & 3; V.G. Callender, 'Princess Inti of the Ancient Egyptian Sixth Dynasty', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 273, note 24; G. Magli, 'Archaeoastronomy and Archaeo-Topography as Tools in the Search for a Missing Egyptian Pyramid', *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 7:5 (2010), 1; A.M. Roth, *Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom: The Evolution of a System of Social Organisation* (Chicago, 1991), 122-3; A. Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, Scaraboids, Seals and Amulets in the Palestine Archaeological Museum* (Cairo, 1936), 283-9; P. Kaplony, *Monumenta Aegyptiaca: Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reiches* vols IIA & B (Brussels, 1977), 361-2 & pl. 98; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 305 & note 76; H. Goedicke, 'Userkare', in W. Helck, E. Otto & V. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* vol. 8 (Wiesbaden, 1986), 901; P. Kaplony, 'Bemerkungen zu einigen Steingefäßen mit archaischen Königsnamen', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 20 (1965), 36, 38-9, fig. 90 & pl. IX; P. Kaplony, *Beschriftete Kleinfunde in der Sammlung G. Michailides* (Istanbul, 1973), 24 & pl. 13; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 81; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 232.

²¹⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 95, 157, 169-70 & note 350; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 81; Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 430; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 21; Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322.

²¹⁸ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I, 11.

examination into the titles held by Khuit may give an indication into her standing. Khuit held the titles 'king's wife' (*hmt nswt*) and 'great of sceptre' (*wrt hts*), a title which is often thought to only be associated with the principal wife of the king.²¹⁹ However, Callender has noted that 'great of sceptre' is part of the titulary of most queens in the Old Kingdom and is instead thought to have a ritual function.²²⁰ Inscriptions also call Khuit the 'king's wife, his beloved' (*hmt nswt mrjt.f*), another title which is often believed to be indicative of rank.²²¹ Hawass has noted that the program in her temple focuses on her titles, relationship with her father and as the wife of the king.²²² As daughter of the king, one must assume that she, as well as Iput, is a daughter of Wenis.²²³ If she was the elder daughter, as Stadelmann assumes,²²⁴ then it would also be more likely that it was through her that Teti attained legitimacy, not Iput. However, Kanawati had previously asserted that the notion that she is a daughter of Wenis cannot currently be proved.²²⁵

Khuit as the principal wife of Teti would solve a quandary confirmed by the 1996 excavation; while Khuit was buried in a pyramid, Iput was originally buried in a mastaba that was converted into a pyramid with accompanying funerary temple by Pepy I.²²⁶ It is clear that Iput's pyramid was built by Pepy I, as his name is mentioned a number of times, and his heb-sed and their

²¹⁹ The title 'Great Royal Wife' was only introduced to designate the principal wife in the Thirteenth Dynasty, it is also possible that there was no such differentiation between the wives in the Old Kingdom. János, *BACE* 3 (1992), 51-2 & note 3; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 37-8 & 47ff.

²²⁰ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I, 12, 19, 29-31.

²²¹ Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 334; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I & III, 33 & 144; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 21.

²²² Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 430; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 334.

²²³ Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 302.

²²⁴ However, Stadelmann still asserts that Iput was Teti's principal wife. Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 331-4.

²²⁵ Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59 & note 2.

²²⁶ The pyramid of Khuit is also seen to be earlier than that of Iput. Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 414, 416, 426 & fig. 8; Callender, *JNES* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 273; János, *BACE* 3 (1992), 53; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 22; Labrousse, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* vol. I (Cairo, 1994), 238; S. Roth, 'Bemerkungen zur Rolle der Königs mutter von der Fruuzeit bis zum Ende der 12. Dynastie', in R. Gundlach & W. Seipel (eds), *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum: Akten des 2. Symposiums zur ägyptischen Königsideologie in Wien, 24.-26.9.1997* (Wiesbaden, 1999), 119; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 53-4 & 127-8.

relationship are major themes.²²⁷ Hawass has suggested that 'Pepy I changed the mastaba of his mother to be a pyramid to announce her status as Hathor-Isis to give him the legal right to the throne.'²²⁸ Khuit's pyramid is also closer to that of Teti and almost all elements are of a superior quality, as a result Callender concludes that Iput must not have been held in very high regard by the king.²²⁹ Stadelmann is also of the opinion that she was Teti's preferred queen, but not the principal wife.²³⁰ Others have suggested that she may be an earlier wife of Teti, prior to his marriage to Iput.²³¹ Roth, however, does suggest that Iput was originally only buried as a 'simple king's wife', but also that the relative state of her tomb may be due to her premature death and not standing.²³² Despite these arguments, there is no convincing reason for Khuit to be favoured in a mortuary setting if Teti relied on Iput to attain the legitimate kingship. Thus it seems likely that Khuit was also a daughter of Wenis, and was the principal wife of Teti.²³³ Despite this, it is only speculation that Weserkare was the son of Teti and Khuit, and as the possibility that he may have been the legitimate heir will remain uncertain (and unlikely) until further evidence is uncovered.

One of the arguments against the legitimacy of Weserkare are the signs of changes of allegiance in the Teti cemetery. With a legitimate succession, even one which may not involve an eldest son of the principal wife, there is no need for officials to display a change of loyalty in their tombs.²³⁴ Teti succeeded the throne through marrying the daughter of Wenis, yet many officials record careers under both pharaohs with pride. Iri/Tetiseneb, an 'overseer of the department of palace guards' has removed the name Tetiseneb a number of times on his false door, entrance lintel and

²²⁷ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 414, 417 & 429; Labrousse, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 238; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 22; Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries I*, 91-2 & pls 56-7.

²²⁸ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 431.

²²⁹ Callender, *JNES* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 273; Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 413, 424 & 428; Strudwick, 'From the Pyramid of Iput, Wife of Teti and Mother of Pepy I, at Saqqara', *Texts*, 383.

²³⁰ Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 334.

²³¹ Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 21.

²³² Roth, *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, 119; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 132.

²³³ If there was a pyramid of a third queen even closer to the pyramid of Teti, it could be argued that she was the principal wife, and both Iput and Khuit secondary.

²³⁴ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 58; Altenmüller, *HAB* 30 (1990), 6; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 13 & 23-4; Roth, *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, 111-2.

architrave.²³⁵ The change of name negatively affects the appearance of the work, and as such appears to be a deliberate distancing from Teti.²³⁶ Although the work was clearly started under Teti, one can infer that he may have been working on his tomb and served under Weserkare.²³⁷ Kanawati suggests that 'his title as guard in the pyramid of Teti was not damaged, presumably because, except in very unusual circumstances, the cult of the dead king had to be maintained. But bearing an official title in Teti's funerary cult was obviously less personal than being named Tetiseneb.'²³⁸ His change of allegiance may not be surprising considering the limited resources that he relays were available for the building of his tomb under Teti.²³⁹ Another official, Mehi/Mehnes, 'overseer of the palace guards' and 'overseer of the department of the palace guards' appears to have replaced a small piece of stone on his architrave having the cartouche of Teti inserted, replacing another name.²⁴⁰ Kanawati suggests that the architrave was originally inscribed with the name Teti, that this was removed after the accession of Weserkare but then again replaced by the name Teti during the reign of Pepy I.²⁴¹ That the false doors of Iri and Mehi were not finished may also indicate that they were not forgiven by Pepy I for supporting Weserkare.²⁴² The archaeological evidence indicates that they were probably not involved in the assassination of Teti but were still reprimanded. Thus the evidence of loyalty changes in the Teti cemetery indicate that the succession of Weserkare was not legitimate, and in fact was a usurper.

²³⁵ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 7, 9-10 & pls 3-4; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 74-5 & 163; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 25 & figs 24-5; Kanawati, *BACE* 12 (2001), 65.

²³⁶ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, pls 3-4; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 75 & 163.

²³⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 75 & 142.

²³⁸ *ibid.*, 163.

²³⁹ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 31 & fig. 34.

²⁴⁰ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 12, 14 & pl. 6; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 94; Kanawati, *BACE* I (1990), 61 & pl. 3; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23-4 & fig. 20.

²⁴¹ He had earlier stated the belief that the original cartouche held the name of Weserkare. El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 12; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 94-5, 162-4 & 170.

²⁴² El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 8, 13 & pls 4, 7-8; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 95 & 164.

That Iput may not have been the principal wife of Teti raises an uncomfortable question regarding the legitimacy of Pepy I's reign. Many scholars believe that Iput was the principal wife of Teti, and as such Pepy I belonged to the 'main line of succession', and even if Weserkare was another son of Teti, he could not be legitimate.²⁴³ This is despite acknowledgments that the location of Khuit's pyramid 'closer than that of Iput to Teti's pyramid suggests that she was the first and elder of the two queens'.²⁴⁴ While it is almost undeniable that Iput was the daughter of Wenis, wife of Teti and mother of Pepy I,²⁴⁵ her titles are not overly helpful in ascertaining her rank amongst the wives. Unfortunately, as Iput's tomb was rebuilt by Pepy I, it is almost impossible to determine which of her titles may have actually been held before his accession. Additionally, it has recently been suggested that Pepy I was the son of Weserkare,²⁴⁶ however this is not supported by the evidence as there is no apparent reason that Pepy I would obliterate the memory of his own father, nor punish officials who supported him.

A number of inscriptions provide a list of Iput's titles. These include 'king's mother' (*mwt nswt*), 'mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt', 'king's wife', 'king's wife, his beloved', 'great of sceptre' (*wrt ḥst*), 'daughter of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt' (*s3t nswt bity*), 'this daughter of the god' (*s3t ntr tw*) and 'king's daughter of his body'²⁴⁷ Callender notes that the title 'mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt' is rarely attested, but was also

²⁴³ Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 48; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 148 & 169; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 119; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 331 & 333; Lauer, *CRAI* 114:3 (1970), 501; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 23; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 80-1.

²⁴⁴ Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 332-3.

²⁴⁵ Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 331 & 333; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 47-8; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 58; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 149.

²⁴⁶ R. Guérin, V. Dobrev, C. Camerlynck & F. Rejiba, 'In Search of the Pyramid of a Missing Pharaoh at South-Saqqara (Egypt)', *Second International Conference on Engineering Geophysics* (Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, 24-27 November, 2013), 2.

²⁴⁷ Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 14, 89-90 & fig. 7; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 145-8; Strudwick, 'From the Pyramid of Iput, Wife of Teti and Mother of Pepy I, at Saqqara', *Texts*, 383-4; G. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit* (Cairo, 1933), 52; Dobrev, *Abusir 2000*, 381 & 393; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 24, 28, figs 1, 3 & pl. 4; Strudwick, 'Annals on the Sarcophagus of Ankhesenpepy from South Saqqara', *Texts*, 75; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 127; Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 416-8; V. Loret, *Fouilles dans la nécropole memphite (1897-1899)* (Cairo, 1899), 2 & 5.

held by Seshseshet, Khentet-[?], and the sisters Ankhesenpepy.²⁴⁸ Her research showed that, interestingly, in half of the occurrences the title seems to belong to the ‘mothers of kings who did not immediately succeed their fathers’ and it is possible that the title was used to cement the status of the queen and thereby also the succession of her son.²⁴⁹ However, this is possibly coincidence, and others have stated that it is more likely to be simply an expanded version of the title ‘king’s mother’.²⁵⁰ Her other rare title, ‘daughter of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt’ is only known to be held by one other queen.²⁵¹ While the title may have been applied to the most senior daughter, Callender also points out that our knowledge is poor regarding the familial relationships within the royal family during this period and that this title may instead be similar in meaning to the stance which she takes on ‘mother of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt’, a title used more as propaganda during less than clear successions.²⁵² However, it again may be simply an expanded version of the more common title. It is also noteworthy that Iput is never referred to as the ‘king’s eldest daughter’, and thus it is entirely plausible that Khuit was her elder sister. Like Khuit, she is said to be ‘great of sceptre’ and ‘king’s wife, his beloved’ which while often thought to be an indication of rank, can therefore offer no distinction between them.²⁵³

However, Iput appears to be the first to hold the title ‘this daughter of the god’, perhaps granted after her death, which was also later granted to Ankhesenpepy I and II (despite their not being daughters of a king).²⁵⁴ The title ‘daughter of the god’ (*s3t ntr*) has a very uncertain meaning, while some have suggested that the title denoted the ‘king’s heiress’, it has also been

²⁴⁸ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I, 35.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 35-6.

²⁵⁰ M. Baud, ‘Les formes du titre de “mère royale” à l’Ancien Empire’, *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 96 (1996), 51-71; L.K. Sabbahy, ‘The King’s Mother in the Old Kingdom with Special Reference to the Title *s3t-ntr*’, *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 25 (1998), 305; Roth, *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, 113; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 44-6.

²⁵¹ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I, 44-5.

²⁵² *ibid.*, 44-5.

²⁵³ János, *BACE* 3 (1992), 51-2 & note 3; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 37-8 & 47ff; Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 89-90; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 33 & 144-8; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 334; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 21.

²⁵⁴ Dobrev, *Abusir 2000*, 393.

suggested it denoted a queen of common background (clearly not the case with Iput).²⁵⁵ It is more likely, as Callender suggests, that the title is simply a special honour granted to some mothers of the king or perhaps connected to the above titles, in that it denoted a new genealogical line.²⁵⁶ She also notes that ‘the preferred ruler was the firstborn son of the king. If, due to accident, conspiracy or deliberate decision, a monarchy experienced a change of designated crown prince, it would be only natural for some affirmative action to be taken regarding the new incumbent The queen’s religious title of *s3t ntr* gave her son the imprimatur of legitimacy, as one who had been justified in his position by the court of the gods’.²⁵⁷ Roth agrees with the argument that the title aides in the divine legitimisation of the son.²⁵⁸ However, Sabbahy believes that nearly all (if not all) queen mothers of the Old Kingdom held this title.²⁵⁹ It does appear that there was a particular emphasis on the role of the king’s mother in situations when there was not an ‘ideal’ succession, when there would be a heavier burden placed on the king to prove his legitimacy.²⁶⁰ Jánosí also believes that legitimisation purposed are behind the stress placed on his mother.²⁶¹ That Pepy I focused on these attributes of his mother and his relationship with her,²⁶² is no surprise considering the problems with his own accession, it would have been critical for him to emphasise his legitimacy. Unfortunately, as this evidence is from the reign of Pepy I, it cannot help in determining Iput’s status under Teti.

Jánosí has put forward the idea that Iput ‘was buried as a ‘simple’ wife of the king (*hmt nswt*) in her tomb. In the course of events her son, Pepy I, who was probably not originally designated as heir, became king.’²⁶³ Iput had five funerary vessels (as opposed to the common four), each with a different

²⁵⁵ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* I, 50-2.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 53-4 & 60-1.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 60-1.

²⁵⁸ Roth, *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, 122; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 131-2.

²⁵⁹ She was unaware of the confirmation of the title for Iput and it is not known for Ankhesenpepy I. Sabbahy, *SAK* 25 (1998), 307.

²⁶⁰ Roth, *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum*, 112 & 120-1.

²⁶¹ Jánosí, *BACE* 3 (1992), 54.

²⁶² Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 429.

²⁶³ Jánosí, *BACE* 3 (1992), 54.

series of titles all ending with that of 'King's wife'.²⁶⁴ Jánosi and Roth believe that these funerary vessels may reveal Iput's titles before Pepy I's accession (as they could be some of the few objects to be reused from her original burial miscellanies), and strangely the title of 'king's daughter' is absent from these funerary vessels.²⁶⁵ However, it does appear that the title 'great of sceptre' is present on the vessels.²⁶⁶ Munro suggests that she may have only been granted the titles 'king's daughter of his body' and 'daughter of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt' posthumously by her son Pepy I in order to strengthen his legitimacy.²⁶⁷ His constant repetition that she is the 'daughter of the king' is a testament to the emphasis placed by Pepy I on his own legitimacy through her line.²⁶⁸

Due to evidence such as the above, Hawass has concluded that Iput was a secondary wife of Teti, particularly as Iput's tomb was altered into a pyramid and the funerary temple added by Pepy I.²⁶⁹ Despite this, as Hawass believes that Weserkare had no connection to Teti and he still asserts that, after the death of Tetiankh-Kem it was Pepy I who was to succeed his father.²⁷⁰ It is entirely possible that Iput was the principal wife of Teti, but the evidence suggests that if this is the case, she may have only attained such a position after an event such as the death of the original principal wife. If this scenario occurred, Pepy I would indeed be the legitimate heir, but his very young age and his mother's original position amongst the wives may have muddled the situation and allowed for other contenders to the throne. Alternatively, if Iput was never the principal wife of Teti and as it is unlikely that Weserkare was a son of Teti, Pepy I may not have been legitimate himself but had more of a claim to the throne than Weserkare (especially if he was embroiled in the assassination of Teti). Kanawati has observed that the large number of royal children to different wives had the ability to create tension within the

²⁶⁴ Jánosi, *BACE* 3 (1992), 53-5; Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 148; Firth & Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* I, 13 & fig. 8.

²⁶⁵ Callender, *Wives of the Egyptian Kings* III, 148-9; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 129 & note 722.

²⁶⁶ Roth, *Königsmütter*, 129.

²⁶⁷ Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West* I, 17 & 22; Roth, *Königsmütter*, 129.

²⁶⁸ Roth however, suggests that the title is purely honorific. Roth, *Königsmütter*, 129-30.

²⁶⁹ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 416, note 10 & 431.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 431.

palace, and that this tension could have particularly dire consequences 'when a king with no royal blood acceded to the throne by marrying the daughter of his predecessor, for in such case the real eldest son by an earlier marriage was likely to compete with the son of the princess for the throne'.²⁷¹

The problem of the identity of Weserkare may be solved through further excavations in the Teti cemetery, especially around the mastaba of Khentika, in order to compile information about a possible third queen of Teti. Even more important to this question would be the discovery of a pyramid of Weserkare, which many scholars are certain exists and is a focus of future research in the field.²⁷² Such a discovery would have the potential to reveal the parentage of Weserkare or alternate names, extremely important information in order to decipher the succession problems after Teti.

The Accession of Pepy I

Following the reign of Weserkare, the son of Teti ascended to the throne. The overwhelming majority of scholars are in agreement that Weserkare's reign was brief, usually suggested to be in the region of between one to four years.²⁷³ Kanawati also points out that with such a short reign, it is particularly unusual that there are not more officials who served under both Teti and Pepy I, itself indicating trouble relating to the transition between reigns.²⁷⁴ While Grimal propounds that the accession of Pepy I was unopposed,²⁷⁵ Pepy I was not Weserkare's son and even with a natural death

²⁷¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 155.

²⁷² Magli, *PJAEE* 7:5 (2010); Guerin *et al.*, *Second International Conference on Engineering Geophysics*.

²⁷³ Goedicke is in the opposing group, suggesting twenty to thirty-three years, while Stadelman suggests even less than a year. N Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 4, 158 & 169-70; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 53, 60-2 & note 98; Goedicke, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 8, 901 & note 4; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant* I, 335; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 205; Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil*, 322; Kanawati, *BACE* I (1990), 60; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 59; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 306; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 49; Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts*, 9; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 41; Magli, *PJAEE* 7:5 (2010), 1.

²⁷⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 141.

²⁷⁵ Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 81.

one would assume a less than smooth succession. Unfortunately, with current evidence it cannot be known whether Weserkare died or was deposed from the throne. In either scenario, both the succession of Weserkare (who was likely not the son of Teti) and the proceeding reversion of the throne back to the line of Teti with Pepy I, mean the accession of both kings would have relied on the strong support of a group of officials, and also possibly that of his mother.²⁷⁶ Indeed, Hawass states that it was Iput who can be credited with returning the throne to her son Pepy I,²⁷⁷ yet however true this may be, there is no real proof that she was even alive at his accession. Kanawati has observed that Weserkare was likely to have been supported in his claim to the throne by officials who were unhappy during the reign of Teti, possibly headed by Hesi, and to regain the throne Pepy I relied on another group of officials who remained loyal to Teti and as such may have been disadvantaged under Weserkare, including Khentika and Inumin.²⁷⁸ It was through the vital support of numerous officials that Pepy I was able to ascend the throne as the heir to his father.²⁷⁹

It can be assumed that the officials shown to have been severely punished (presumably in connection with the assassination of Teti), such as Hesi, also supported Weserkare. In addition to those men are others such as Merefnebef/Wenisankh/Fefi and Kaaper whose tombs display signs of punishment for loyalty to Weserkare. The vizier Merefnebef was buried at North Saqqara, and strangely absent in his tomb are many of the other titles associated with the vizierate.²⁸⁰ The titles he did hold included 'keeper of the head ornaments' (*jrj nfr ḥ3t*), 'one who is privy to the secret of the house of morning' and positions in Teti's pyramid.²⁸¹ While Djedkare, Wenis and Teti

²⁷⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 155.

²⁷⁷ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 431.

²⁷⁸ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 26 & 80.

²⁷⁹ Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 61.

²⁸⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 134; K. Myśliwiec & K. Kuraszkiewicz, 'Recent Polish-Egyptian excavations in West Saqqara', in M. Bárta & J. Krejčí, *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), 502; K. Myśliwiec, *Saqqara I: The Tomb of Merefnebef: Text* (Varsovie, 2004), 247.

²⁸¹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 134; Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 48-50.

are mentioned in his tomb,²⁸² the title of vizier appears only once in his first rock-hewn chapel, while his other mid-ranked titles are far more in keeping with the modest tomb.²⁸³ As such, it has been suggested on a number of occasions that he spent most of his career as a mid-ranked official under Teti, before being promoted to vizier under Weserkare and then dismissed by Pepy I.²⁸⁴ 'Such a scenario would well explain the short period during which Merefnebef enjoyed the function of vizier (it seems that many of the usurper's dignitaries were dismissed by Pepy I at the moment when he regained the throne), as well as the fact of leaving the tomb in its unfinished state, and the traces of *damnatio memoriae* inside it.'²⁸⁵ There is more evidence of a change of loyalty in his tomb, as two inscriptions in the tomb link Merefnebef to Teti's pyramid, one of which was later erased.²⁸⁶ While he was vizier, it seems that an enlargement of the tomb was planned, but never completed.²⁸⁷ However, this could be the result of a number of factors including poor quality rock, premature death or, indeed, disgrace under Pepy I.²⁸⁸

Merefnebef's tomb may also provide hints that members of Teti's own family were involved in the conspiracies of the period. He had at least four wives, all identified as *hmt.f*.²⁸⁹ While it is unusual for a vizier in the Sixth Dynasty to have so many wives, there are another two women depicted in the tomb, whose exact relationship to Merefnebef is unknown but it appears to be a marital relationship.²⁹⁰ One, Meresankh, is depicted accompanying Merefnebef opposite a similar scene in which the vizier appears with a

²⁸² Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 502; Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 247.

²⁸³ Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 246-7.

²⁸⁴ Previously Kanawati had suggested that the vizierate was held under Pepy I. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 135; N. Kanawati, 'New evidence on the reign of Userkare?' *Göttinger Miszellen* 83 (1984), 31-8; Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 502-5; K. Myśliwiec, *Saqqara I: The Tomb of Merefnebef: Text* (Varsovie, 2004), 247-8; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 50; K.O. Kuraszkiewicz, 'False-Door Stele of Meref-nebef', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean, Reports* 10 (1998), 101-5.

²⁸⁵ Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 505; Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 248.

²⁸⁶ Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 502.

²⁸⁷ Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 248.

²⁸⁸ Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 248; Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 502-5.

²⁸⁹ Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 503; Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 251.

²⁹⁰ Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 503-4.

Seshseshet.²⁹¹ With the name Seshseshet it can be reasonably concluded that she is a relative of Teti, probably a daughter but it is also possible that she was a granddaughter or even aunt. That Seshseshet has a prominent place in the tomb accentuates the probability that she is a daughter of Teti or at the very least she was a wife with royal kinship.²⁹²

Another probable supporter of Weserkare, Kaaper, had a career consisting of two stages.²⁹³ His lower honorific and functional titles are found on the sarcophagus and in the offering room (usually the first to be inscribed), yet the inscriptions on the entrance (usually the last to be inscribed) are of a better quality and include the high ranks along with higher administrative titles held by Kaaper.²⁹⁴ The important administrative titles (which usually accompany the vizierate; however this is not present but may have been included on the now missing lintel) are listed on the entrance, including 'overseer of scribes of the king's documents' and 'overseer of all the works of the king'.²⁹⁵ 'It seems therefore that Ka-aper was either designated as future vizier or that he actually held this office which is not preserved in his surviving inscriptions.'²⁹⁶ If he held the positions of 'overseer of the great court' and 'overseer of the workcentre' (*jmj-r gs-pr*) under Teti, his support would certainly be advantageous to Weserkare, as Kaaper would be easily capable of taking over the positions such as 'overseer of all the works of the king' and 'overseer of Upper Egypt'.²⁹⁷ There is evidence of deliberate damage in his tomb, with his name and figure being removed in places, and the whole surface of the left entrance jamb was completely chiselled out.²⁹⁸

²⁹¹ They may be the same woman, identified by two names. Myśliwiec & Kuraszkiewicz, *Abusir 2000*, 503-4; Myśliwiec, *Merefnebef*, 251, pls XVII, XLVI d-e & XLVII g; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 50.

²⁹² Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 50.

²⁹³ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 35-6 & 43; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 65.

²⁹⁴ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 35-6 & 43; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 65.

²⁹⁵ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 35-6; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 65.

²⁹⁶ Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 65.

²⁹⁷ The titles which appear on his false door and sarcophagus. Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 35-6 & 46-9.

²⁹⁸ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 39-40, 45 & pls 14-5 & 49a; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 85-6; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 65.

Others were untouched, however, including the right entrance jamb and inside the offering room, leading Kanawati to suggest a lighter punishment or a change of verdict.²⁹⁹ He notes that there was no attempt to repair the damage, but that Kaaper was clearly buried in the tomb (as the sarcophagus lid is in place and was sealed with plaster).³⁰⁰ This type of punishment supports the notion of punishment due to support of Weserkare.

Further officials who served under Weserkare may yet be discovered if archaeologists are able to locate his cemetery, as they may have built their mastabas around his missing pyramid. Guerin et. al. believe that they may be on the brink of doing so, speculating that a recently discovered Sixth Dynasty cemetery in South Saqqara (Tabbet al-Guesh) may have been oriented around the pyramid of Weserkare.³⁰¹

In opposition to these officials who supported Weserkare were those who supported Pepy I in his claim to the throne. These men appear to include Mehu, Khentika, Meru/Tetiseneb/Pepyseneb/Meryreseneb, Inumin, the family of Qar at Abusir and sons of Mereruka (Meryteti and Pepyankh). It appears that Mehu (buried in the Wenis cemetery) and Khentika (Teti cemetery) were both viziers of Teti and Pepy I.³⁰² Kanawati notes that they appear to have 'remained loyal to Pepy I and may have played a role in his coming to the throne. Whether they also served in the same capacity under Userkare, or were excluded and hence possibly reacted, we do not know.'³⁰³ It is not surprising that Pepy I should be supported in his accession by Mehu, as there is reasonable evidence that he is the brother of Teti and therefore Pepy I's uncle.³⁰⁴ His tomb displays a number of constructional phases (not

²⁹⁹ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 40; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 85-6.

³⁰⁰ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery I*, 43; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 86; Kanawati, *BACE* 6 (1995), 63.

³⁰¹ Magli, *PJAE* 7:5 (2010); Guerin et al., *Second International Conference on Engineering Geophysics*, 2.

³⁰² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 170; Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 85; James, *The Mastaba of Khentika*, 9.

³⁰³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 170.

³⁰⁴ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 39; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 328; Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 56, 59, notes 73 & 90; Altenmüller, *HÄB* 30 (1990), 6-20; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 119.

surprising with the sudden rise in the family's prominence).³⁰⁵ Altenmüller concludes that the first phase was constructed under Wenis and decorated under Teti.³⁰⁶ In addition to holding the vizierate, he was the 'overseer of Upper Egypt', 'overseer of the two granaries' (*jmj-r šnwtj*), 'overseer of the two treasuries' (*jmj-r prwj-ḥd*) and 'overseer of the six great courts' (*jmj-r ḥwt-wrt 6*).³⁰⁷ Pyramid titles relating to both Teti and Pepy I are also present in Mehu's tomb.³⁰⁸ His support may well have been vital to Pepy I's claim, as was Khentika's, who had multiple titles connected to the personal service of the king as well as a son granted the names Tetidjedi and Pepydjedi.³⁰⁹ It is Khentika whose mastaba occupies the odd position in the Teti cemetery between the pyramids of Khuit and Teti, where there may once have existed a pyramid of a third queen of Teti.³¹⁰ Khentika, interestingly, also has the rare element 'm3' attached to the end of many of his titles.³¹¹

An official working within the palace and with some religious authority was Meru/Tetiseneb/Pepyseneb/Meryreseneb, who also backed the accession of Pepy I. He held offices in the pyramids of Teti and Pepy I, with his false door only containing the name Meru and including titles relating to Teti's pyramid

³⁰⁵ Strudwick, 'Architraves from the Tomb Mehu at Saqqara', *Texts*, 294; Strudwick, 'From the Tomb Mehu at Saqqara', *Texts*, 407; Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 18-19.

³⁰⁶ While Strudwick dates 'perhaps to the reign of Teti to that of Pepy I', the location, context and titles are more suggestive of the earlier date. Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 18-9 & 82; Strudwick, 'Architraves from the Tomb Mehu at Saqqara', *Texts*, 294.

³⁰⁷ Strudwick, 'From the Tomb Mehu at Saqqara', *Texts*, 405; Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 34-42.

³⁰⁸ Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 83.

³⁰⁹ James, *The Mastaba of Khentika*, 9-10 & 13-4; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 89, 139 & 141.

³¹⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 158.

³¹¹ Various theories have been put forward as to the meaning of this extension, from extended duties to honorific titles, yet Callender highlights that many of these explanations cannot be reconciled with its addition to courtly titles. Instead, she proposes that in the context of the early Sixth Dynasty, the title may belong to men who were acquitted by the court and were asserting their loyalty. However, if Khentika had ever been on trial in connection with the assassination of Teti, he is hardly likely to have regained the trust of Pepy I and granted such a position of honour in his burial. Much more investigation into this title needs to take place, yet within this context it is possible that the term is still connected with Khentika asserting his loyalty to the king, and the trust that the king had in him. There is the possibility that this was particularly important to Khentika during these turbulent times, and perhaps hints that he was related to a queen, whose destroyed funerary site was instead granted to him for his loyalty to Pepy I and with whom he also shares the beginning element of his name. Yet, the title does not appear attached to all titles and there is also the possibility that it is simply a space-filling device. Callender, *Abusir 2000*, 371-2.

or temple.³¹² He is shown to have multiple titles connected to the personal service of the king, and in the chapel he is also mentioned to be ‘one who is privy to the secret of the house of morning’, ‘chief lector priest’ (*hrj-ḥbt hrj-tp*) and ‘priest of Hathor’ (*ḥm-ntr Ḥwt-ḥr*).³¹³ On the façade it appears that the progression of his career is explained;³¹⁴ on the east side he calls himself Tetiseneb and lists himself as ‘sole companion’ (*smr w^ctj*), ‘overseer of the two cool rooms of the palace’ (*jmj-r sqbbwj pr-^c3*) and ‘overseer of the palace guards’.³¹⁵ On the west side he is Meryreseneb and includes his higher religious titles and ‘director of every kilt’ (*hrp šndjt nbt*).³¹⁶

Another supporter of Pepy I appeared in Inumin, the probable father of Khui (the father-in-law of Pepy I).³¹⁷ He was an ‘overseer of Upper Egypt’, possibly late into the reign of Teti (probably succeeding Nikauisesi) and was promoted to the vizierate, early during the reign of Pepy I.³¹⁸ The time and location indicates that Inumin would have been Pepy I’s invaluable support in the provinces, and would likely have allayed any possible fears that his accession may cause a schism between the provinces and the capital. Like the other supporters of Pepy I, it is possible that Inumin served under Weserkare,³¹⁹ however it is also possible that they were (self-?) excluded from office due to loyalty to Teti.³²⁰ Some of the decoration of his tomb clearly took place very early in the reign of Pepy I, as one inscription originally gave his throne name as Nefersahor, before Pepy I changed the name to Meryre and the inscription was also altered.³²¹ He held a long list of other important titles, including ‘overseer of the two treasuries’, ‘overseer of the protection of every house of the king/palace’ and ‘one who is privy to the

³¹² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 103 & 141; Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 6-8, 16-8 & pl. 10; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 86-7.

³¹³ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 9-18; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 103.

³¹⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 105.

³¹⁵ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 105.

³¹⁶ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 8-9 & pl. 4; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 103 & 105.

³¹⁷ N. Kanawati, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara: The Tomb of Inumin* vol. VIII (Oxford, 2006), 14-5 & 29; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49.

³¹⁸ Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 11-3, 16-7 & 25; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 66, 69, 71 & 141; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 40.

³¹⁹ Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 17.

³²⁰ Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 206 & note 3.

³²¹ Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 17, 32, pls 7 & 44; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 70.

secret of the house of morning'.³²² He may have been the vizier for the south while Meryteti was vizier for the capital.³²³ There is no damage to his tomb, to his figures or that of his sons (unlike most of the tombs of top officials in the Teti cemetery), and as such Inumin 'and his family must have been among the very few officials trusted by Pepy I'.³²⁴ The violent nature of politics at the time may also be reflected in the unusually violent desert hunt scenes found in his tomb as well as that of Mereruka and in the chapel of his son Meryteti.³²⁵

The family of Qar at Abusir, after the father seemingly having underpinned the accession of Teti, also proffered support for Pepy I. One of his sons, Qar (Junior), certainly served under Pepy I and II, with pyramid titles associated with both.³²⁶ Another son, Inty 'succeeded his father in the office of a judge', becoming '*ḥr(j) sšt3 n wdt-mdw (n) ḥwt-wrt, ḥr(j) sšt3 n wdt-mdw (n) ḥwt.wrt 6'*, with most of the domain names listed in Inty's entryway being connected to Teti.³²⁷ Most of those in the cemetery were judges, with the title 'of 'judge of Nekhen of the King' (already attested on the false door of Qar) seeming to be the principal office that was delegated from generation to generation.'³²⁸ Holders include Qar and his three sons, Qar junior, Inty and Senedjemib.³²⁹ Qar Junior's wife was named Iput,³³⁰ and one has to wonder whether she was a close relative of Pepy I, instead of merely named after his mother (as Bárta suggests).³³¹

Meryteti and Memi/Pepyankh, sons of Mereruka, were also undoubtedly a strong source of support for Pepy I. Meryteti appears to have held the

³²² Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 11-2; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 66 & 156; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 40.

³²³ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family I*, 18.

³²⁴ Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 14.

³²⁵ *ibid.*, 17, 37-8 & pls 13-4.

³²⁶ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 49; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 147-8 & 177.

³²⁷ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 53, 56 & note 28; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 51, 53, 101, 103, 107 & 310.

³²⁸ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 56; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 147-8 & 307.

³²⁹ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 56; Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 102, 147-151 & 177.

³³⁰ Bárta, *Abusir XIII*, 148 & 181-2.

³³¹ *ibid.*, 310.

vizierate under Pepy I.³³² He holds many of the titles traditionally associated with that office,³³³ and as the grandson of Teti and son of Mereruka, it is likely that he was already on that career path under Teti. His (probably half-) brother Pepyankh held the titles, '[confidant of] the king presiding over his two (river) banks' ([*jmj-ib n*] *nswt hntj jdbwj.f*), 'one privy to the secret of the king in every place' (*hrj-sšt3 n nswt m st nb(t)*), 'scribe of the god's book' (*zš md3t ntr*) and 'sole companion', probably under Pepy I.³³⁴ As their father Mereruka appears to have been Teti's most trusted official, and Meryteti actually heir to the throne himself for a period, their support would have certainly been beneficial to Pepy I.

Weni, possibly due to his role in uncovering or investigating a plot against either Teti or Pepy, appears to have been highly trusted by Pepy I.³³⁵ Prior to expulsion of the four overseers, Weni was employed in the royal harim, and as such it is plausible that his role in the prosecution of the case may be linked to his earlier employment in which he could have discovered the plot and thus become trusted by the king.³³⁶ It is not surprising that the man whom Pepy I trusted was placed in the position of 'overseer of the palace guards', after others in that position were punished in relation to the assassination of Teti.³³⁷ Indeed, Pepy I may have only trusted Weni in the position and hence the length of active office, with the result that Weni was not promoted to the position of 'overseer of Upper Egypt' and vizier until the reign of Merenre.³³⁸ The massive numbers of men led by Weni against the Aamu as head of the army again indicates the trust and power Pepy I was willing to bestow on this official.³³⁹ Yet, despite the seemingly close relationship with Weni, 'Pepy I was much less inclined to bestow honorific

³³² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 102.

³³³ Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family* I 13-5.

³³⁴ Kanawati *et al.*, *Mereruka and His Family* III:1, 23-4.

³³⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 83 & 155.

³³⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 172; Kanawati, *BACE* I (1990), 63.

³³⁷ As well as Pepy I himself, if Weni is referring to a queen of Pepy I. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 19 & 171.

³³⁸ Strudwick, 'Inscription of Weni from Abydos', *Texts*, 355; Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 97; N Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 47; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Egypte*, 212; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 92.

³³⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 171; Kanawati, *BACE* I (1990), 63.

titles than Teti, as even Weni did not receive the rank of count until the reign of Merenre and it is uncertain whether he was ever a hereditary prince despite becoming vizier.³⁴⁰ He was Pepy I's most trusted official, yet the offices he held during his reign were mid-ranked.³⁴¹ While all initial impressions are Weni was a man who rose to high office from obscurity,³⁴² after beginning his career under Teti as an 'overseer of the storeroom' (*jmj-r prw-šn*),³⁴³ it has been shown that his father was a vizier (Iuu of Abydos), and thus he was instead likely to have always been destined for this office.³⁴⁴

Just as Teti appears to have attained legitimacy through the marriage to a daughter of his predecessor Wenis, so too it appears that Pepy I may have used marriage to enhance his claim. One Inti apparently had a tomb north of the pyramid of Teti, but it is now lost.³⁴⁵ As she is referred to as an 'eldest king's daughter of his body' of the pyramids of Teti and Pepy I, it is possible that she is a daughter of either of these kings.³⁴⁶ Málek is inclined to see her as the daughter of Pepy I and Berger has suggested that her mother is Innek-Inti, a wife of Pepy I.³⁴⁷ However, Callender has provided a convincing argument that the opposite is the case, that Inti is a daughter of Teti and the mother or grandmother of Innek-Inti.³⁴⁸ She has also noted that if Inti 'were the mother of Innek-Inti, the pyramid title [granted by Pepy I] would have been an honor that would then have reflected on this particular wife of Pepy I.'³⁴⁹ Conferring a pyramid title on Inti, as the daughter of Teti, Pepy I's sister and mother-in-law, would thus indicate a further use of propaganda to cement Pepy I's own claim to the throne.³⁵⁰ By marrying his niece Innek-Inti,

³⁴⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 83.

³⁴¹ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 47.

³⁴² Drioton & Vandier, *L'Egypte*, 212; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 171; Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 94-5; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 47; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 63.

³⁴³ Strudwick, 'Inscription of Weni from Abydos', *Texts*, 352.

³⁴⁴ Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts*, 18; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 7; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 16.

³⁴⁵ Strudwick, 'Texts of Inti from Her Tomb at Saqqara', *Texts*, 387; Callender, *JNES* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 267.

³⁴⁶ Strudwick, 'Texts of Inti from Her Tomb at Saqqara', *Texts*, 387; Callender, *JNES* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 268.

³⁴⁷ Callender, *JNES* 61:4 (Oct., 2002), 267.

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 270-2.

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 272.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 272.

the daughter of an 'eldest king's daughter of his body' (and also his probable half-sister) Inti, another avenue of legitimacy was provided to Pepy I.

Chapter 2: The relationship between Pepy I and his officials

Pepy I and his Upper Egyptian provincial officials

After the assassination of Teti and the accession of Weserkare followed by Pepy I (each supported by a different group of officials), it is not surprising that Pepy I had a particularly interesting relationship with his officials. At some stage Pepy I married two daughters of Khui and Nebet, an 'overseer of Upper Egypt' and southern vizier respectively.³⁵¹ His mother-in-law Nebet is the first known case of a female vizier, with the next not appearing until the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.³⁵² Some scholars have viewed this anomaly with suspicion, and have thus proclaimed that her title of vizier was merely honorific with the function probably performed by her husband.³⁵³ However, there is no reason to think that the title was honorific, in this case nor in any other.³⁵⁴ Pepy I appears to have had an enormous amount of trust in Nebet, as he did in Weni. Strudwick has noted that 'it should never be forgotten that the power of the king was absolute and the path to high office was as much due to one's standing with him as birth or ability.'³⁵⁵ It appears that both Weni and Nebet held all three of these qualities.

In the Teti cemetery is a small tomb has been identified as belonging to a woman named Nebet.³⁵⁶ This Nebet was clearly married, but her husband's name is unknown and independent tombs for women are rare.³⁵⁷ If this Nebet is synonymous with Pepy's mother-in-law, then perhaps she was granted this tomb for some outstanding action before being posted to Abydos.³⁵⁸ Nebet may also have been of royal birth, as Wenis was married to a queen named

³⁵¹ Sethe, *Urk.* I, 117-9:24; Strudwick, 'Stela of Nebet and Khui from Abydos', *Texts*, 395; Strudwick, 'Inscription of Djau from Abydos', *Texts*, 357-8.

³⁵² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 173; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 65-6; N Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 115; Fischer, *Varia*, 74; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 211.

³⁵³ Fischer, *Varia*, 74-5; Strudwick, *Administration*, 303 & note 10; W. Helck, *Untersuchungen Zu Den Beamtentiteln: Des Ägyptischen Alten Reiches* (Hamburg, 1954), 116-7 & 136ff.

³⁵⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 174; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 115.

³⁵⁵ Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts*, 28.

³⁵⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 176.

³⁵⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 65-6.

Nebet and daughters and granddaughters of queens were often named in their honour – combined with the unusual titles of the vizier Nebet (such as ‘daughter of Horus’ (*z3t Hr*)) – she was likely a descendant.³⁵⁹ If so, she would either be the (half-) sister or niece of Pepy I’s mother, Iput.³⁶⁰ If she is a granddaughter, as opposed to daughter, it is also possible that she is a daughter of Pepy I’s probable uncle and supporter, Mehu, who was also married to a woman of that name.³⁶¹ Just as Weni had an unusual career due to the king’s trust, so it also appears in the case of Nebet, as opposed to the need for the support of an Abydene family.³⁶²

Scholars have often tended to view the family of Khui and Nebet as native to Abydos,³⁶³ yet there are a number of signs that the pair originated in the capital and were posted to the province by Pepy I. In addition to the mastaba of Nebet in the Teti cemetery, there is a nearby mastaba of a Khui.³⁶⁴ The size and simplicity of his burial chamber indicate that it was prepared during his early career, under Teti, and the façade was decorated under Pepy I.³⁶⁵ This Khui was an ‘overseer of Upper Egypt’ and ‘priest of Pepy I’s pyramid’ (*hm-nṯr mn-nfr-mrjj-rꜥ Ppjj*).³⁶⁶ Both the tomb in Saqqara and the stela from Abydos mention sons of the same names, Khui Junior and Idi.³⁶⁷ Another son of Khui, Djau makes a specific reference to Abydos as ‘the province in which I was born’, a deliberate statement ‘probably to remind his townspeople that he was born at Abydos, even though perhaps his parents were known to have come from elsewhere. In fact it is reasonable to think that all the early provincial appointments, such as those of Nebet and Khui, originated from the capital. If

³⁵⁹ However, Fischer believes the phonetic writing of the name Horus to indicate non-royal status. Strudwick, ‘From the Tomb of Nebet, Wife of Unas, at Saqqara’, *Texts*, 383; H. Stock, *Studia egyptiaca II: Die Erste Zwischenzeit Ägyptens* (Rome, 1949); Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 118-9; Fischer, *Varia*, 74-5.

³⁶⁰ Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 119.

³⁶¹ Altenmüller, *Mehu in Saqqara*, 56 & 78.

³⁶² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 175.

³⁶³ Strudwick, ‘Introduction’, *Texts*, 51; E. Drioton & Vandier, *L’Égypte*, 205; H. Goedicke, ‘The Abydene Marriage of Pepi I’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75:3 (Jul.-Sept., 1955), 180; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 83; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 50.

³⁶⁴ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 33-40; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 90-2 & 176; Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 65.

³⁶⁵ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 92.

³⁶⁶ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 35; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁶⁷ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 35-7; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

Nebet was sent to Abydos where she gave birth to Djau, then she must have received the vizierate at a relatively young age, another similarity to Weni who was given important tasks at a young age.³⁶⁸ It is probable that this is the same Khui whose two daughters married Pepy I.³⁶⁹

It is almost certain that the Saqqara Khui was the eldest son of Inumin, whose tomb is nearby and in which he is mentioned.³⁷⁰ This eldest son Khui was an 'overseer of the department of the palace guards', a title also held by a son, another Khui, in the tomb of Khui in Saqqara.³⁷¹ Inumin was a valuable supporter of Pepy I in the provinces as an 'overseer of Upper Egypt'.³⁷² He then appears to have been promoted to the southern vizierate under Pepy I, and his burial in the capital cemetery suggests that he operated this post from the capital and such viziers perhaps only carried out visits to the provinces.³⁷³ As an 'overseer of Upper Egypt', it is extremely likely that Inumin's son succeeded him in office, and the Khui who has a tomb nearby is his son and successor.³⁷⁴ Inumin's decoration on his façade is unfinished, and it may be the case that his son was unable to complete the work due to his relocation to Abydos.³⁷⁵ Strengthening this argument is the lack of a burial pit or sarcophagus in the burial chamber of the mastaba of Khui in the Teti cemetery.³⁷⁶ Unfortunately, just as there is no husband mentioned in the Saqqara tomb of Nebet, there is no wife in the surviving scenes of this tomb.³⁷⁷ However, the evidence does point towards equating the Saqqara Khui and Nebet with the Abydene pair. Kanawati has suggested that if the two couples are one and the same, then Khui's experience with the administration of Upper

³⁶⁸ Sethe, *Urk.* I, 117-9:24; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 175.

³⁶⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 92-3.

³⁷⁰ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 92 & 176; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 40-1.

³⁷¹ Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 14; Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 35; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 92.

³⁷² Kanawati, *Teti Cemetery VIII*, 11-3, 16-7 & 25; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 66, 69, 71 & 141; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 40.

³⁷³ N. Kanawati, 'Interrelation of the Capital and the Provinces in the Sixth Dynasty', *Bulletin of The Australian Centre for Egyptology* 15 (2004), 51; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁷⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 176.

³⁷⁶ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 35; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁷⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

Egypt may have aided Pepy I's decision to appoint his wife Nebet to the southern vizierate.³⁷⁸

The origins of Khui and Nebet are important due to arguments regarding the strength of the provinces versus the king and possible processes of decentralisation. Scholars hold two basic views of the situation; either decentralisation was in process and strength of the provinces was causing problems for the central administration, or there was a process of centralisation occurring and Pepy I had control over the provinces. Málek is of the opinion that the marriage of Pepy I to the daughters of Khui and Nebet indicates a reliance on powerful local administrators due to a weakening of the authority of the capital.³⁷⁹ Drioton and Vandier hold a similar view, even stating that the nomarchs (especially of Abydos) had little regard for the king, and yet still appeared to be rewarded.³⁸⁰ Gardiner characterises the reign of Pepy I as a time when 'past and gone was the extreme centralization of the previous periods, when it was every nobleman's highest ambition to be accorded a tomb beneath the shadow of the sovereign's pyramid. The generosity of the pharaoh towards his favourites was now finding unwelcome reward; not only was his own wealth becoming depleted, but that of his nobles was so greatly increased that they could almost vie with him in power and importance.'³⁸¹ This does not seem to be an accurate representation as the provincial officials appear to have been subordinate to their counterpart in the capital and hold fewer administrative titles, which argues against decentralisation.³⁸² While they did not strive to be buried around their king's pyramid, Pepy I did not allow any of his officials to be buried in his cemetery, even those to whom he was closest.³⁸³ This is likely due to the number of officials who were granted burial in the Teti cemetery and subsequently betrayed him,³⁸⁴ and Pepy I not wanting any opportunity for men who may

³⁷⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 176.

³⁷⁹ Malek, *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 104-5.

³⁸⁰ Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 211-2.

³⁸¹ Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 91-2.

³⁸² Strudwick, *Administration*, 334.

³⁸³ Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 206.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 206.

betray him to be buried close to his final resting place. Pepy I's own extraordinary building projects throughout the temples of Egypt are not able to be reconciled with the view that his own funds were depleted. Indeed, Kanawati instead argues that Pepy I's system for governing the provinces was more centralised as opposed to less, with close family members carrying out the administration of Upper Egypt from one, central, location – Abydos.³⁸⁵

That provincial governors were buried in the capital under Pepy I is in itself evidence against decentralisation, especially as the nomarchs of the Fifth Dynasty appear to have resided in their province.³⁸⁶ These men include Iri (tomb at South Saqqara) and Gegi (false door apparently found at Saqqara), the 'great overlord' for Akhmim and Abydos respectively; dated by Kanawati between the reigns of Pepy I and Merenre.³⁸⁷ They are roughly contemporary, probably both beginning their career later in the reign of Pepy I.³⁸⁸ Both men also appear to have served as 'overseer of the palace guards' during their appointment in the capital.³⁸⁹ It appears that the burial of these men in the capital coincides with the periods in which the southern vizierate was held by a different official in their province.³⁹⁰ In Gegi's case, his transferal to the capital apparently coincided with the appointment of the royal in-laws to the province, as does the removal of a southern vizierate from Akhmim to Abydos.³⁹¹ Kanawati suggests that this was an attempt to avoid conflicts due to the presence of multiple high officials in a province.³⁹² Other officials, such as Isi of Edfu, Hem-re/Isi and Henku of Deir el-Gebrawi held the southern vizierate and also governed their province.³⁹³ It is likely that another factor in the removal of Gegi to the capital was an attempt to place the important

³⁸⁵ N. Kanawati & A. McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I: Chronology and Administration* (Sydney, 1992), 87.

³⁸⁶ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 51; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 23-46.

³⁸⁷ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 51; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 55 & 83-9; L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches II* (Cairo, 1964), 142-3; G. Jéquier, *Deux pyramides du Moyen Empire* (Cairo, 1933), 39-43

³⁸⁸ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 86.

³⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 87.

³⁹⁰ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 53.

³⁹¹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 86 & 292.

³⁹² Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 53; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 196.

³⁹³ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 53.

province under stricter control.³⁹⁴ Further evidence for the removal of provincial officials to the capital are also evident in the twelfth and fourteenth nomes of Upper Egypt, where the establishment of new cemeteries at the beginning of the reign of Pepy II also probably indicate that the succession of office within the province was interrupted.³⁹⁵

Studies have shown that ‘the presence of a residing vizier in the extended southern part of Egypt, a position first created by Teti not by Pepy I, was necessary for the good administration of the country, but at the same time this placed great power in the hands of one person at a distance from the capital. The central government was probably well aware of the dangers inherent in the system, and accordingly did not allow the position to remain for a long time with the same family or in the same province. Thus the office moved between Edfu, Deir el-Gebrawi, Akhmim, Abydos, Meir and Coptos. For the same reasons, the government would have been unlikely to give the position to a strong family at Abydos, if such a family existed.’³⁹⁶ In this way it appears that Pepy I continued the provincial policy implemented by his immediate predecessors, with a southern vizier, but the position appears to have changed hands between families and provinces, probably as to limit the power of these individual families and the province itself.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, moving the southern vizierate from Edfu to Abydos was a practical move for the monarchy, geographically and strategically.³⁹⁸

In addition to this, a number of the ‘overseers of Upper Egypt’ and southern viziers who died during the reign of Teti and Pepy I were buried in the capital, suggesting that they served their provincial appointments from the capital. These overseers include Neferseshemre/Seshi, Kagemni, Inumin and Mehu, who were also viziers, as well as Nikauisesi who did not hold the vizierate.³⁹⁹ The probable sons of Wenis and Teti; Wenisankh, Nebkauhor/Idu and

³⁹⁴ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 85.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 87.

³⁹⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 175.

³⁹⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 21; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52.

³⁹⁸ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49.

³⁹⁹ Brovarski misdates Mehu to Pepy II. Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 92.

Tetiankh-Kem were also ‘overseers of Upper Egypt’ who were buried in the capital.⁴⁰⁰ While some scholars have argued that the sheer numbers of ‘overseers of Upper Egypt’ during this period suggest that the title was honorary,⁴⁰¹ it has since been shown that the title was an administrative one. The large number of holders instead illustrates that they probably only had control of a limited area of Upper Egypt, perhaps only their own province.⁴⁰² Slightly later there is evidence of the titles of ‘overseer of Upper Egypt in the middle provinces’ (*jmj-r Šmꜥ m sp3wt hrjt-jb*) and ‘overseer of Upper Egypt in the northern provinces’ (*jmj-r Šmꜥ m sp3wt mḥtt*), who were perhaps superiors to the individual ‘overseers of Upper Egypt’.⁴⁰³ Strudwick also tends towards a centralised view of the reign of Pepy I, stating that he suspects that the strength of provincial officials under Pepy I would not have caused decentralisation until the administration itself became weak under Pepy II.⁴⁰⁴ He is also of the opinion that Pepy I’s reign provided stability through his changes to the provincial administration which limited the power of the nomarchs.⁴⁰⁵

Pepy I certainly did not seem to be in such a position of weakness that he would require marriage alliances with provincial officials in order to provide him with strength. Málek believes the expeditions described by Weni were not defensive,⁴⁰⁶ and as such their success would have generated an enormous amount of revenue. Trade expeditions to Nubia are also known,⁴⁰⁷ which in combination with the numerous references to ‘pacified Nubians’ suggests that this group probably saw Pepy I as a king of strength.⁴⁰⁸ In addition to this,

⁴⁰⁰ Brovarski misassigns the title of vizier belonging to the original owner as belonging to Nebkauhor/Idu. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 139; Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 420-1; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 48; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 14-5; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 93; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 119 & 122.

⁴⁰¹ Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 95.

⁴⁰² *ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁰³ E Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 96-7; A. El-Khouli & N. Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna: The Tombs of Pepy-ankh and Khewen-wekh* (Sydney, 1989), 20.

⁴⁰⁴ Strudwick, ‘Introduction’, *Texts*, 10.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰⁶ Malek, *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 105; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 19.

⁴⁰⁷ Baud & Dobrev, *BIFAO* 95 (1995), 32-5; Strudwick, ‘Annals on the Sarcophagus of Ankhesenpepy from South Saqqara’, *Texts*, 76.

⁴⁰⁸ Strudwick, ‘Decree of Pepy I from Dahshur’, *Texts*, 104; Strudwick, ‘Annals on the Sarcophagus of Ankhesenpepy from South Saqqara’, *Texts*, 76.

Pepy also carried out an extensive building program all over Egypt, as excavations have shown that he built temples at numerous locations including Heliopolis, Elephantine, El-Kab, Akhmim, Tanis, Bubastis, Abydos, Dendera and Coptos.⁴⁰⁹ Two copper statues of Pepy I were also discovered in the cache at Hierakonpolis, some 'of the finest specimens of metalwork that have survived from the Old Kingdom.'⁴¹⁰ Many of his temple works appear to have been the first to incorporate stone into the previously mud-brick structures.⁴¹¹ This would have been of a huge expense to Pepy, but the stability of his reign is evident in his ability to carry out such projects. A significant portion of the buildings are ka-chapels for his mother, suggesting that through this program Pepy I was asserting his legitimacy both through the gods and Iput.

There is a curious contrast between the huge expense of Pepy I's temple building project and the increasingly small size and poor quality tombs of his high officials.⁴¹² Many middle officials appear not to have had the opportunity to build an independant tomb at all.⁴¹³ It is often assumed that there were not the financial means for high quality tombs during his reign. However, a more fitting explanation is that perhaps the low quality of the tombs of the officials is representative of a lack of access to experienced craftsmen (who may have been otherwise understandably occupied on the official building program) rather than a lack of funds.⁴¹⁴ The loyalty of his officials was understandably vital to Pepy I after the events of the preceding reigns, and as such it cannot be reconciled with the idea that he reduced their funds. There are signs, despite the appearance of the tombs, that officials of varying ranks did have

⁴⁰⁹ In the Ptolemaic period he was even described as the founder of the temple at Dendera. Drioton & Vandier, *L'Egypte*, 205; Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts*, 9 & 36; Strudwick, 'Texts of Pepy I and Teti from Tell Basta', *Texts*, 92; Strudwick, 'Decree of Pepy I from Koptos (Koptos A)', *Texts*, 105; Strudwick, 'Naos of Pepy I from Elephantine', *Texts*, 133; Strudwick, 'A Selection of Graffiti from el-Kab', *Texts*, 163; Strudwick, 'Fragments of the Biography of Iy Mery at Hawawish', *Texts*, 360; Stadelmann, *Hommages à Jean Leclant I*, 330; Munro, *Das Unas-Friedhof Nord-West I*, 22; Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 93; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 83-4 & 93.

⁴¹⁰ Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 93.

⁴¹¹ Strudwick, 'Introduction', *Texts*, 9.

⁴¹² Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 131 & 177; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, note 36; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 19-20; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 51-2, 86 & 184; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 208.

⁴¹³ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 20.

⁴¹⁴ However the decrease in tomb size is seen across the whole of Egypt, not just the capital.

disposable income. Six jars from the Levant were found in the burial chamber of Pepy I's supporter, Qar Junior, with many other examples from this period.⁴¹⁵ Other excavations have shown that even lower officials during this period could afford such luxury items,⁴¹⁶ and as expensive objects this is evidence that the appearance of the tombs of the officials of Pepy I are not necessarily indicative of their wealth.

Instead of the opportunity to create a beautiful tomb, Pepy I had other methods to ensure the loyalty of his officials, especially those in the provinces. He used methods such as marriage and education in the capital. He also chose men from trusted families and provincial officials began their career in the capital, further allowing for Pepy I to gauge their character and build a trusting relationship. In many ways Pepy I appears to have continued many of his father's policies, including that of granting the top offices to extended family members.⁴¹⁷ If Khui and Nebet originated in Memphis, as appears to be the case, then Inumin had apparently already proven the family's loyalty to Pepy I. Pepy I's marriage to his granddaughters may have been a form of reward, as well as cementing the loyalty of their parents when he sent them to govern Upper Egypt. It is not known exactly at which point in his reign that Pepy I married the two daughters of Khui and Nebet, both named Ankhesenpepy (also called Ankhesenmeryre).⁴¹⁸ The sisters were probably a considerable age apart, given that the mother of Pepy II married her stepson and nephew, Merenre, following the death of Pepy I.⁴¹⁹ Perhaps the marriage to the second sister occurred after the death of the first. The marriage to the

⁴¹⁵ Bárta, *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 60.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, 60-1.

⁴¹⁷ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 49.

⁴¹⁸ Dobrev, *Abusir 2000*, 381ff; Strudwick, 'Texts of Two Queens of Pepy I Named Ankhesenpepy from Saqqara', *Texts*, 384; Strudwick, 'Annals on the Sarcophagus of Ankhesenpepy from South Saqqara', *Texts*, 75; Strudwick, 'Decree of a Successor of Pepy II from Saqqara', *Texts*, 115-6; Drioton & Vandier, *L'Égypte*, 205 & 211; Malek, *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 104-5; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 173; Goedicke, *JAOS* 75:3 (Jul.-Sept., 1955), 182-3; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 83; Stevenson Smith, *Old Kingdom in Egypt*, 49.

⁴¹⁹ Which also may indicate that he, and not Pepy I is the father of Pepy II (further indicating a considerable age difference between the two sisters). Strudwick, 'Texts of Two Queens of Pepy I Named Ankhesenpepy from Saqqara', *Texts*, 384; Dobrev, *Abusir 2000*, 392; A. Labrousse, 'Une épouse du roi Mérenrê I^{er}: la reine Ânkhessenpépy II', in M. Bárta & J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Praha, 2000), 485-90.

daughters of Khui and Nebet was probably due to a combination of tactic (creating a close familial bond with those whom he was placing in the most powerful administrative positions outside the capital) and reward for the loyalty and support given by both Inumin and Khui.

Not only were Khui and Nebet likely to have been seen as more trustworthy by Pepy I due to his marriage to their daughters, but Weni also has a link through marriage. It appears that Weni's father, the vizier Iuu, was probably the brother of these sister queens, as an Ankhesenpepy appears in equality with him at his offering table.⁴²⁰ Another link to this family is the wife of Meryteti, named Nebet, and as such could easily have been a relative of the woman who became Pepy I's mother-in-law.⁴²¹ The real eldest son of Mereruka, Pepyankh, was also seemingly married to a royal and posted in the provinces.⁴²² A man named Pepyankh and his wife, a Seshseshet (who was therefore likely to have been a daughter of Teti and Pepyankh was the brother in-law of Pepy), were buried at Quseir el-Amarna after he was sent to govern the province by Pepy I.⁴²³ This man is generally regarded as the founder of the Pepyankh family of Meir, and therefore known as Pepyankh the Elder.⁴²⁴ This tomb shows that he was 'overseer of priests' (*jmj-r hm-ntr*), but while he also held the title 'treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt' (*sd3wtj-bjtj*), there are no surviving indications that he was also a southern vizier (despite the office being held by his descendants buried at Meir).⁴²⁵ The appearance of the office of vizier in this province coincides with the loss of the vizierate from the officials of Deir

⁴²⁰ L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches I* (Cairo, 1937), 121 & pl. 31; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 47 & note 135; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 116; N. Kanawati, 'Weni the Elder and his Royal Background', in A.-A. Maravelia (ed.), *En Quête de la Lumière: Mélanges in Honorem Ashraf A. Sadek* (Oxford, 2009), 5-21.

⁴²¹ However, there are no titles in her titulary indicating such. Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Mereruka and His Family I*, 15-6; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 57; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 122.

⁴²² Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 75.

⁴²³ If this is the same man, then he would also have married a sister/half sister of his step-mother. El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 16, 19 & 27; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 75; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 55-6; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 51-2 & 58; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴²⁴ He is also known as Pepyankhwer. El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 12-3; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 75.

⁴²⁵ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 15, 19 & 27; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 76-7.

el-Gebrawi, thus illustrating a reorganisation of the provincial government probably late during the reign of Pepy I.⁴²⁶ It seems that Pepyankh the Elder was considered more trusted, able and connected than the previous high officials in the area, as he succeeded the previous 'overseer of priests', despite not being a relative.⁴²⁷ For whatever reason, Pepy I replaced the previous governing family of Khewen-wekh/Tjetj in this province.⁴²⁸ Pepyankh also held much higher titles than his predecessor, with his tomb also being much larger, which is extremely strange for the period.⁴²⁹ His promotion to the provinces could 'have resulted in the chapel [adjoining Mereruka's tomb] being repossessed by Meryteti and perhaps resolving any possible strain in relationships among Mereruka's descendants.'⁴³⁰ While Pepyankh the Elder was promoted to the province, his son, Sebek-hetep/Hepi, was instead employed in the palace,⁴³¹ as was also a policy designed to create and maintain loyalty within the provincial officials. As such, Weni, Meryrenefer/Qar of Edfu and Sebek-hetep/Hepi were all stationed in the capital amongst the ranks of the palace guards.⁴³² Sebek-hetep/Hepi was never sent to govern the province and was buried at Saqqara,⁴³³ and it was in following reigns that the nomarchs returned and established a new cemetery at Meir.⁴³⁴ Likely as a result of his post in the capital, the tomb of his father Pepyankh remained unfinished.⁴³⁵

Pepy I intended to instil loyalty in his provincial officials from a young age. In order to do so, the sons of high officials in the provinces were also brought to

⁴²⁶ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 78.

⁴²⁷ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 14-16, 18 & 20; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 76-7.

⁴²⁸ Perhaps this man was related to Wernu, who was implicated in a plot during either the reign of Teti or Pepy I, as it appears that this man also originated in the capital and his titulary is very similar to that of Wernu. El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 11-26 & 33-57; Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 55-6.

⁴²⁹ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 22-3; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 77.

⁴³⁰ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 76.

⁴³¹ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 13-5 & 28; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52.

⁴³² Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52 & 57-8.

⁴³³ N. Kanawati, 'Niankhpepy/Sebekhetep/Hepi: Unusual Tomb and Unusual Career', *Göttinger Miszellen* 201 (2004), 49-61.

⁴³⁴ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 11-20.

⁴³⁵ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 77.

the capital to be educated. The sons of the provincial officials then also began their career in the capital, in apparently minor positions. Weni, the son of a southern vizier, is clearly seen to have begun his career in the capital as a junior official. While it is traditional for a son to succeed his father in office, it is understandable that these men still had to work their way through the lower offices, gaining experience and showing their competency to continue to the higher offices (especially before being posted away from the capital). There is a specific reference to the education policy of Pepy I in the tomb of Meryrenefer/Qar of Edfu. He explains that he rose to 'overseer of the palace guards' and 'sole companion' under Pepy I, after he brought him to the capital as a boy to be 'educated with the children of the provincial governors' (*hrjw-tp*).⁴³⁶ Under Merenre he became a provincial governor, following in the footsteps of his father, Isi who was vizier.⁴³⁷ As part of his position Meryrenefer/Qar states that he was 'controlling matters for the Residence', which does not appear to be a description of decentralisation.⁴³⁸ He is also likely to be the same Meryrenefer/Qar who started building a tomb in the Teti cemetery – in the same street as those implicated in the assassination of Teti, Seankhuiptah, Mereri and Hesi, but blocking the end of the street.⁴³⁹ In that tomb he is also listed as 'overseer of the department of the palace guards'.⁴⁴⁰ This tomb is small and the only decorated element, his false door, is unfinished.⁴⁴¹ This is presumably due to his promotion to the provinces under Merenre, probably replacing his father as provincial governor.⁴⁴² It appears that those men who were on the path to becoming provincial governor still built a tomb in the capital upon reaching a certain age, probably due to the

⁴³⁶ Sethe, *Urk.* I, 254:1-4; N Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 20; Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Meryrenefer Qar from Edfu', *Texts*, 343; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 51; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 47 & 86; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 116.

⁴³⁷ Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Meryrenefer Qar from Edfu', *Texts*, 343; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 51; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 94.

⁴³⁸ Strudwick, 'Inscriptions of Meryrenefer Qar from Edfu', *Texts*, 344.

⁴³⁹ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 44-5.

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁴¹ *ibid.*, 44-5.

⁴⁴² *ibid.*, 44-5.

possibility of premature death.⁴⁴³ Even the biography of Weni suggests that he originally built himself a tomb in the capital.⁴⁴⁴

Oddly, while there are indications in the biography of Weni and Meryrenefer/Qar that there were a number of 'great overlords' for different provinces, Isi's is the only confirmed holder for the reigns of Teti and Pepy I.⁴⁴⁵ However, Kanawati has reasonably argued for the re-dating of the tombs of Nehewet-deshet/Meri and his son and successor, Shepsi-pu-min to the end of Teti's reign and beginning of Pepy I respectively.⁴⁴⁶ They held the titles 'overseer of priests' and 'great overlord of the province' in Akhmim.⁴⁴⁷ Nehewet-deshet may have followed his father in the position of governor, and it is likely that he served in the capital before being posted in the province, especially with titles such as 'privy to the secret of the god's treasure' (*hry-sšt3 n sd3wt-ntr*) held by Nehewet-deshet and 'overseer of noblemen' (*jmj-r špsw*) held by both he and his son Shepsi-pu-min.⁴⁴⁸ Nearby the tombs of these two men is that of a southern vizier, Bawi.⁴⁴⁹ The isolated location of his tomb, high on the cliff probably illustrates his high standing.⁴⁵⁰ However, like other

⁴⁴³ *ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁴⁴ Kanawati, *BACE I* (1990), 65.

⁴⁴⁵ Isi's career probably ended during the reign of Pepy I, as he has a son named Pepyseneb. The form of the title 'great overlord of the province' (*hrj-tp 3*) seems to have been introduced under Teti and was usually combined with the title 'overseer of priests' (*jmj-r hm-ntr*). There appear to have been at least two southern viziers earlier under Teti, one in the second Upper Egyptian nome and the other in the twelfth. Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 47-8 & 291; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 116; M. Alliot, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Tell Edfu 1933* (Cairo, 1935).

⁴⁴⁶ Predating the posting of Kaihep/Tjeti to the province, probably under Merenre. Brovarski disagrees with the re-dating of many of these officials, mainly due to stylistic reasons and the formation of titles. However, the arguments for the re-dating are reasonably strong and rectifies the lack of previously known residing high provincial officials between the reigns of Teti and Pepy I. Dating based on stylistic grounds is particularly tenuous in the provinces, and the lack of synchronicity between the formation of titles could be due to their recent introduction. N. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish: The Cemetery of Akhmim* vol. VIII (Sydney, 1988), 9; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 49-52; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 108-11.

⁴⁴⁷ A title probably introduced by Teti, and appear to have changed form under Pepy I. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* VIII, 7 & 14; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 5-6, 9, 49 & 51.

⁴⁴⁸ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* VIII, 7-8; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 51.

⁴⁴⁹ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* VIII, 20-3; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 52.

⁴⁵⁰ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* VIII, 20-1; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 52.

officials in the reign of Pepy I, his tomb is 'exceptionally small'.⁴⁵¹ Kanawati proposes that he is likely to be contemporaneous with Isi of Edfu, perhaps serving in this office between Isi and Nebet of Abydos.⁴⁵² The evidence also suggests that while at Edfu the positions of 'great overlord' and southern vizierate were held by the same man, at the more central Akhmim the responsibilities were divided between the vizier Bawi (perhaps following a predecessor) alongside Nehewet-deshet and Shepsi-pu-min.⁴⁵³ Kanawati describes Bawi's appointment as southern vizier while the nomarch was removed to the capital as 'a major reform'.⁴⁵⁴ It appears that Pepy I changed policy and divided the offices in locations throughout Egypt after Isi left office, just as he divided the office of 'overseer of Upper Egypt' and southern vizier between Khui and Nebet in Abydos.

The convincingly reassigned dates to the reigns of Teti to Pepy I for several tombs in other provinces has led to a successful argument that a number of officials buried in Deir el-Gebrawi also served during this period.⁴⁵⁵ It is generally accepted that the earliest tomb in the northern cemetery belongs to a man named Hemre/Isi.⁴⁵⁶ This man had a number of titles in common with his close contemporaries, including Isi and Qar of Edfu, as well as Tjemereri.⁴⁵⁷ He is likely to have served as vizier and nomarch at a similar time to Isi of Edfu, with the pair also both holding the titles of 'judge and administrator' (*z3b ʕd-mr*), 'he who belongs in the foremost place' (*nj nst hntjt*) and 'greatest of the ten of Upper Egypt' (*wr md šmʕ*).⁴⁵⁸ Hemre/Isi's successor to the vizierate was his brother Henku/li...f, who expressly states in his tomb that he was *hq3* in the province along with his brother.⁴⁵⁹ However, in the tomb of Hemre's eldest son, he is also already described as 'great overlord', and he may be identical

⁴⁵¹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 52.

⁴⁵² Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish VIII*, 21; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 52-3.

⁴⁵³ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 53-4.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 292.

⁴⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 61-9.

⁴⁵⁶ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 62; N.de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi* vol. II (London, 1902), 21ff.

⁴⁵⁷ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 66.

⁴⁵⁸ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 66 & 68; Alliot, *Tell Edfu 1933*, 22 & 27.

⁴⁵⁹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 68.

with Henku/Khetti who was nomarch and ‘overseer of Upper Egypt’, but not vizier, probably during the reign of Pepy I.⁴⁶⁰ Isi was the last provincial governor during this period, and is likely to have been the son of either Henku/Ii...f or Henku/Khetti.⁴⁶¹ That they did not appear to hold the vizierate is likely due to transferal of the office from the twelfth to the fourteenth Upper Egyptian nome.⁴⁶² There appears to be an emerging pattern in which offices, especially those in the provinces, that were held by a single individual under Teti were then separated during the reign of Pepy I, reflecting his desire not to place too much power in the hands of a single man. The re-dating of the tombs in this cemetery has resulted in the province having four ‘great overlords’ assigned between the reigns of Teti and Pepy I, from the introduction of the title to the appointment of Ibi.⁴⁶³ However, the number of these officials at Deir el-Gebrawi fits with the evidence from the other provinces for this period, particularly Akhmim.⁴⁶⁴

In the Teti cemetery is the tomb of Inkaf, which originally belonged to a Kaihep/Tjeti who has been shown to be another official that began his career in the capital under Pepy I before promotion to the provinces.⁴⁶⁵ This tomb shows that Kaihep held the titles of ‘overseer of all the works of the king’ and ‘overseer of priests of Min of Akhmim’.⁴⁶⁶ The latter title is known to only be held by the governors of Akhmim and some of their eldest sons and successors.⁴⁶⁷ Kaihep did succeed his father as governor of Akhmim and thus abandoned his tomb in Saqqara and built a new tomb in the province, probably after being promoted to this position by Merenre.⁴⁶⁸ He was ‘great

⁴⁶⁰ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 69-70, 73 & note 386; Davies, *Deir el-Gebrawi II*, pl. 28.

⁴⁶¹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 70.

⁴⁶² *ibid.*, 70-1, 86 & 292-3.

⁴⁶³ *ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁶⁵ Kanawati had previously believed these titles to originally belong to Inkaf, before the identity of the original tomb owner was deduced. Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 43-4; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52-5; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 109.

⁴⁶⁶ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 44; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 94 & 109.

⁴⁶⁷ Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 44.

⁴⁶⁸ It had suggested that he may previously be the brother of Nehewet-desh (Nhwet-dšr). N. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish: The Cemetery of Akhmim* vol. III (Sydney & Warminster, 1982), 7-32; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 44; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 49-52; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 94 & 109.

overlord of Akhmim' (*hrj-tp ʿ3 n Hnt-Mnw*), 'overseer of Upper Egypt' and 'overseer of priests'.⁴⁶⁹ His tomb in el-Hawawish also reveals that he was also 'overseer of the king's private apartment/harim' and also, curiously, the High Priest of Re (*wr m3w*) (earlier held by Teti's son in-law Mereruka and also Kagemni).⁴⁷⁰

The governors of Edfu, Abydos, Akhmim and El-Qusiya during this period all appear to have close royal links.⁴⁷¹ Both Isi of Edfu, the father of Meryrenefer/Qar, and Pepyankh of El-Qusiya were married to a Seshsheshet, and thus likely to have been 'brothers-in-law of Pepy I'.⁴⁷² His father-in-law, Khui was the governor of Abydos with his wife operating as southern vizier from the province.⁴⁷³ However, there are no confirmed familial connections between Pepy I and his later high officials at Akhmim; Kaihep/Tjeti, a provincial governor who clearly spent much of his early career in the capital, and Bawi, a southern vizier residing in Akhmim.⁴⁷⁴ Yet indications of a possible kinship are present in the cemetery in which they are buried, El-Hawawish, which also contains the independent graves of a Nebet and Ankhesenpepy.⁴⁷⁵ The names of these two women probably indicate a kinship with Nebet, the southern vizier, as do their independent tombs and a number of epithets of this Nebet.⁴⁷⁶ That she 'was described as honoured before Ptah-Sokar, Onuris and Min, the gods of Memphis, Abydos and Akhmim, may suggest a link with the royal in-laws now residing in the neighbouring province of Abydos', as she probably lived in all three of these areas.⁴⁷⁷ In addition to this, the rendition of Kaihep/Tjeti's title 'overseer of priests of Min of Akhmim' on the left middle jamb of his original Saqqara tomb contains the

⁴⁶⁹ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* III, 7-9; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 94.

⁴⁷⁰ He is the only known provincial governor to hold the title. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* III, 7-8; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52.

⁴⁷¹ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52.

⁴⁷² Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴⁷³ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52.

⁴⁷⁴ Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴⁷⁵ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* III, 37-42; N. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish: The Cemetery of Akhmim* vol. IX (Sydney, 1989), 9-12; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴⁷⁶ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴⁷⁷ Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of el-Hawawish* III, 40; Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52 & 57; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

ithyphallic figure of Min, which for this period is in only otherwise attested in connection with royalty.⁴⁷⁸ As such, he may have further royal kinship of which we are hitherto unaware. Nor in Deir el-Gebrawi are there confirmed kinship ties between the southern viziers and the crown under Pepy I, but Henku/Khetti; a descendant of Hemre-Isi was married to a Nebet, who had a place of honour in his tomb.⁴⁷⁹ Indeed, while often circumstantial, there is much evidence suggesting that during the Sixth Dynasty, the majority of the high provincial officials, as well as those in the capital, were related to the monarch.⁴⁸⁰

Further evidence for close royal relatives being stationed in the provinces during the reign of Pepy I comes from the tomb of Webenu in El-Hawawish.⁴⁸¹ Unusually, he is the only ‘overseer of priests’ in that cemetery who is not also a provincial governor or vizier.⁴⁸² In addition to this, curiously, he does not seem to hold any administrative titles.⁴⁸³ This may be due to his own royal connections, as the only other known attestations of the name appear in the tomb of Meryteti, son of Mereruka,⁴⁸⁴ and as such he is likely to have been his son and a blood relative of Pepy I, as well as also having ties through his in-laws. Interestingly, Webenu’s appointment to Akhmim coincides with Iri, the overseer of that province who coincidentally was not an ‘overseer of priests’, being recalled to the capital, where he built his tomb.⁴⁸⁵ It is plausible that the two men were related, and indeed there were obvious conflicts between the branches of Mereruka’s family.⁴⁸⁶ Such removal of officials and families from positions of power in the provinces could perhaps be described as ‘vigorous interference by Pepy I in the affairs of the provinces’,⁴⁸⁷ and is certainly not indicative of decentralisation.

⁴⁷⁸ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 54-6 & note 28; Kanawati, *Mereruka and King*, 43-4.

⁴⁷⁹ Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 117.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁸¹ Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 52; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 88.

⁴⁸² Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 57; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 54, 88 & note 243.

⁴⁸³ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 88.

⁴⁸⁴ Both tombs are comfortably dated to the reign of Pepy I. Kanawati, *BACE* 15 (2004), 57.

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 58 & 88.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 58.

Stationed in the Thinite nome, as were Khui and Nebet, yet buried instead at Naga ed-Dêr, are another group of officials who have no apparent link to the king.⁴⁸⁸ It also seems that no residing nomarchs were appointed while the in-laws of Pepy I held office in the region, 'and the administrative responsibilities of that province were first transferred to the capital under Pepy I.'⁴⁸⁹ Gegi has also been re-dated to the reigns of either Pepy I or early Merenre, but prior to this time it appears that an official by the name of Tjemereri was a residing 'great overlord' of the Thinite nome and 'overseer of priests'.⁴⁹⁰ Despite a previous dating of the late Eighth Dynasty, it is instead probable that he and another official (who is likely his son), Hagi were instead contemporaneous with Nehewet-deshet and Shepsi-pu-min during the early part of the Sixth Dynasty.⁴⁹¹ Additionally, the way in which Tjemereri wrote his title of provincial governor is most similar to the rendering of the title given by Meryrenefer/Qar of Edfu during the reign of Merenre.⁴⁹² Both Tjemereri and Hagi also held the title 'overseer of the army', both with an unusual phonetic rendering.⁴⁹³ Perhaps this title indicates an appointment mainly due to ability. Just as there is evidence that many of these other provincial officials served in the capital, Tjemereri held the title of 'judge and administrator', which was likely, only held while in Memphis.⁴⁹⁴

Wenisankh, another 'great overlord' buried in Thebes, is also believed by Saleh and Kanawati to belong to the early Sixth Dynasty.⁴⁹⁵ This man also held the office of 'overseer of Upper Egypt', probably late during the reign of Teti to early in that of Pepy I.⁴⁹⁶ He is believed to be contemporary with

⁴⁸⁸ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 55.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁹⁰ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 58 & 89.

⁴⁹¹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 57-61.

⁴⁹² There are suggestions that perhaps the variations are due to the title being held prior to standardisation. Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 57-61.

⁴⁹³ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 59.

⁴⁹⁴ A title also held by Isi and Meryrenefer/Qar. Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 60.

⁴⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 71-4.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 73.

Henku/Khetti and Wiu/Iu of Sheik Said, and also possibly Hagi.⁴⁹⁷ Thus he may have served from Pepy I into the reign of Merenre. Wiu/Iu was a 'great overlord of the province' and 'overseer of Upper Egypt' in Sheik Said, possibly only beginning his career under Merenre.⁴⁹⁸ Preceding him in office were the nomarch Tetiankh/Imhotep, who was also connected with the estate of Pepy, and Meru/Bebi, who had links with the estates of Teti and Pepy and was the first 'overseer of Upper Egypt' in the region who did not hold the title of 'great overlord'.⁴⁹⁹ There is little knowledge regarding the sixteenth Upper Egyptian nome, yet Harpur has dated the tombs of Kai-wehem and Niankhpepy in Zawiyet el-Maiyitin to the reign of Pepy I, and Kanawati agrees that this dating is likely.⁵⁰⁰ However, Martin-Pardey is not convinced that Niankhpepy was a provincial governor at all.⁵⁰¹ Yet, he did however hold the title 'overseer of commissions in 9 nomes' (*jmj-r wpt m sp3wt 9*) – one of 'the most essential of the titles of a nomarch'.⁵⁰² The province of Dendera was also home to nomarchs dating to this period. Idu and Ni-ibu-nswt/Bebi were both 'great overlord of the province', 'judge and administrator', 'he who belongs in the foremost place', 'greatest of the ten of Upper Egypt' and 'estate manager'.⁵⁰³ Idu was also 'overseer of Upper Egypt' and his unusual combination of titles are the same as those held by Meryrenefer/Qar of Edfu, indicating that they were most likely to be contemporaries.⁵⁰⁴ Another signal that many of Pepy I's provincial officials served in the capital is the number of officials who were granted the opportunity to incorporate the king's cartouche into their own

⁴⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 73-4.

⁴⁹⁸ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 78-9; Davies, *Deir el-Gebrawi II*.

⁴⁹⁹ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 78-9; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 95-6; K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago, 1974), 81 & 290; Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom: Studies in Orientation and Scene Content* (New York, 1987), 280.

⁵⁰⁰ Possibly slightly later for the latter. Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 79-80; Harpur, *Decoration*, 20;

⁵⁰¹ E. Martin-Pardey, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Provinzialverwaltung bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches* (Hildesheim, 1976), 120.

⁵⁰² Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 96; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 179.

⁵⁰³ H.G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millenium B.C. Down to the Theban Domination of Upper Egypt* (New York, 1968), 93-100 & 114-9; Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 74-5.

⁵⁰⁴ Kanawati & McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom I*, 74; Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 96.

name. Martin-Pardey has proposed that these officials were given this honour after being employed in the palace.⁵⁰⁵

Pepy I and his officials in the capital

While employing family seems to have been quite an effective method of control in the provinces during this time, the same cannot be said in the capital. Kanawati has noted that 'while nepotism presumably aimed at a better support for the king, in practice it probably resulted in creating more jealousy and divisions among members of the extended ruling family and became itself a problem that the monarch had to deal with.'⁵⁰⁶ Indeed it does appear that Pepy I incurred a problem amongst his close relatives in the capital. The combination of the possibility that the queen to whom Weni refers conspired against Pepy (not Teti) and the *damnatio memoriae* against some of the top officials who served later in his reign, make it apparent that Pepy I experienced at least one conspiracy himself. Goedicke has argued that the trial of the queen and the punishment of Rawer resulted from the same event.⁵⁰⁷ However, the chronological nature of the biography of Weni argues against this, as the Dahshur Decree in which the name of the vizier was erased also names Weni as 'overseer of the palace guards'.⁵⁰⁸ This erased vizier has been associated with Rawer, due to the presence *damnatio* in the tomb of the vizier Rawer in the Teti cemetery.⁵⁰⁹

Rawer's mastaba in the Teti Cemetery reveals that he held titles including 'chief justice and vizier', 'overseer of Upper Egypt', 'treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt' and 'director of every kilt'.⁵¹⁰ He also held the rare epithet of

⁵⁰⁵ Dating is less clear with the name Pepy than Meryre, as it could refer to I or II. Martin-Pardey, *Provinzialverwaltung*, 135; El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 15-16.

⁵⁰⁶ Kanawati, *BACE* 14 (2003), 57.

⁵⁰⁷ Goedicke, *JAOS* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 88-9.

⁵⁰⁸ Strudwick, 'Decree of Pepy I from Dahshur', *Texts*, 103; Goedicke, *JAOS* 74:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1954), 89; Strudwick, *Administration*, 303; Fischer, *Varia*, 85; Sethe, *Urk. I*, 209:14; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 204-5, & 209-12; S.A. el-Fikey, *The Tomb of the Vizier Rēꜥwer* (Warminster, 1980), 46.

⁵⁰⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116 & 177; Strudwick, *Administration*, 303; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 203-4 & 209; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 122.

⁵¹⁰ el-Fikey, *Rēꜥwer*, 11; Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 203; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 115-6.

‘beloved of the god’ (*mrj-ntr*), which ‘probably indicates a special relationship with the king’ and was also held by Khui.⁵¹¹ Rawer is likely to have been the son of Shepsipuptah, who is also buried in the Teti cemetery and was married to a Seshseshet (which probably impacted on the choice of Rawer for vizier).⁵¹² In addition to this, Shepsipuptah is likely the name of Teti’s father, and thus this Shepsipuptah may not have only been Teti’s son-in-law but also even possibly his brother or another close relative.⁵¹³ Rawer’s name has been chiselled out every time it was inscribed in his chapel, however parts are still legible perhaps due to the sympathy of the workers.⁵¹⁴ Depictions of Rawer have also been damaged, particularly his face, hands and feet.⁵¹⁵ Two statues found in his tomb have also been purposefully damaged, with the head and heads of the first and whole upper portion of the second missing.⁵¹⁶ Oddly, although his name appears on each statue, it has only been erased once, and in the same position.⁵¹⁷ However, the only reasonable conclusion thus far is again the sympathies of the workers, possibly representing some hostility towards the king.⁵¹⁸ Some of the figures of Rawer’s offering bearers have also been damaged, perhaps also suggesting their involvement in the plot.⁵¹⁹

While there is no cartouche of a king in the tomb of Rawer, the location, size and architecture of the tomb can reasonably date the tomb to the latter part of the reign of Pepy I – consistent with the date of the Dahshur Decree dated to the twenty-first year.⁵²⁰ With the highest known year of Pepy I being his

⁵¹¹ This epithet was even added in place of previous ranks on his north false-door. el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, 11, 24-27 & 45; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116; Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 204; Sethe, *Urk.* I, 119:24

⁵¹² Meryteti, the son of Mereruka, was another nephew of Pepy I promoted to the vizierate by his uncle. Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery* VII, 11-29; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116 & 177; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 122.

⁵¹³ Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 122.

⁵¹⁴ el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, 12-3, 18, 24-6, 46, pls 5, 9, 19 & 21; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116; Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 203-5.

⁵¹⁵ el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, 12-5, 23, 46, pls 1-3, 5, 9 & 19-21; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116 & 177.

⁵¹⁶ el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, 35-37; Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 205.

⁵¹⁷ Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 205-6.

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.*, 205-6.

⁵¹⁹ el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, pls 3 & 20-1; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116.

⁵²⁰ The location indicates that he built his tomb after Khentika, which is dated to early Pepy I, the architecture hints at a date prior to Merenre and the size of his chapel suggests that he was the second last vizier of Pepy I to be buried in the capital. el-Fikey, *Rēwer*, 44-6;

thirty-second, this allows for at least eleven years in which a plot involving Rawer could have occurred.⁵²¹ Brovarski believes that Rawer held the position of ‘overseer of Upper Egypt’ early during the reign of Pepy I, however many officials in this period may have instead received the title along with the southern vizierate.⁵²² In some occurrences, the southern viziers were also ‘overseer of priests’, however, this title also appears in the titulary of the heirs, and thus appears to have been granted earlier.⁵²³ Viziers not holding either of those titles include Isi of Edfu, Bawi of Akhmim, Nebet of Abydos, Iuu and Djau of Abydos.⁵²⁴ It seems that Pepy I was increasingly dividing the high titles in Upper Egypt between a number of individuals, as well as provinces.⁵²⁵ It also suggests that Rawer was another southern vizier who operated from, and was therefore buried in, the capital. As he is probably addressed in the Dahshur decree, perhaps this is area for which he was responsible (the twenty-second nome of Upper Egypt). This area bordered on the capital, the first nome of Lower Egypt, so his appointment in the capital is not as surprising as some of the other officials.

The evidence suggests that Pepy I promoted many of his close relatives, such as his nephews to high positions. A number of these men may have been attached to a plot involving Rawer.⁵²⁶ Punishment has been inflicted on the inscriptions and figures of Neferseshemtah/Sheshi (son of Neferseshemtah/Sheshi/Wedjahateti) in his sections of his father’s tomb.⁵²⁷ Inscriptional evidence indicates that the mastaba is likely to have been built in the reign of Teti, with the son’s additions and decoration completed during the

Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 116 & 177; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 118; Kanawati, *Thebes and Beyond*, 122; Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 204-9.

⁵²¹ However, with the dating of the subsequent vizier, it seems likely that the plot took place closer to the twenty-first year than the thirty-second. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 4, 170, 185 & note 353; Kanawati, *Chron. d’Ég.* 56 (1981), 209.

⁵²² Brovarski, *ZÄS* 140 (2013), 93; El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 19-22.

⁵²³ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 19-21.

⁵²⁴ *ibid.*, 19-20.

⁵²⁵ A policy which reversed sometime during the reign of Pepy II; El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna*, 19-20.

⁵²⁶ Kanawati had previously suggested that the son of Mereruka, Pepyankh, may have been punished for this crime, however damage to his name and image now appears to be the result of a family issue between the sons of Mereruka, as Pepyankh was probably promoted to the provinces and buried there. Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 101 & 181.

⁵²⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 108-9; Capart, *rue de tombeaux II*, pls 75-101.

reign of Pepy I.⁵²⁸ His career was different to that of his father; with titles including 'overseer of all that heaven gives and earth produces' (*jmj-r ddt pt qm3t t3*) and 'one who is privy to the secrets of the king in his every place'.⁵²⁹ He also held important administrative offices such as 'overseer of the two houses of gold' and 'director of every divine office' (*hrp j3t nbt ntrt*).⁵³⁰ These titles represent a particularly close working relationship with Pepy I.

More possible nephews punished by Pepy I are two men named Ishfi, sons of Ankhmahor. While no wife is recorded in the tomb of Ankhmahor, close neighbours were married a Seshseshet, and there is a likelihood that he too was married to a daughter of Teti. The second pillared hall in Ankhmahor's mastaba, belonging to an 'eldest son' Ishfi/Tutu, was not completed with the walls and pillars completely blank, and the false door also unfinished.⁵³¹ He was also, unusually, one of the rare 'overseer of the two granaries' who did not become vizier in this period.⁵³² Ishfi/Tutu held many additional titles relating to the personal service of the king.⁵³³ Yet, it appears that a different son had his image systematically removed from Ankhmahor's chapel.⁵³⁴ The name Ishfi was common to all of Ankhmahor's sons, and more than one appears to be 'eldest', suggesting he was married more than once.⁵³⁵ The son whose figures and inscriptions were removed in this section is not likely to be identical with the eldest son with the unfinished chapel, but may be one and the same as the Ishfi who had his own mastaba in the cemetery, which also shows signs of punishment.⁵³⁶ This is especially likely as most of Ankhmahor's sons, as well as a brother, held positions in the department of palace guards, while the owner of the mastaba, Ishfi/Ishfu, was 'overseer of the department

⁵²⁸ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 108; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 63, 71 & 148; Strudwick, *Administration*, 111.

⁵²⁹ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 109-10.

⁵³⁰ *ibid.*, 110.

⁵³¹ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery II*, 13-5; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 51-2; Kanawati, *BACE 8* (1997), 76; Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 58-9.

⁵³² He also held other title connected the vizierate. Strudwick, *Administration*, 252; Kanawati, *BACE 8* (1997), 76.

⁵³³ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 52.

⁵³⁴ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 53; Kanawati, *BACE 8* (1997), 76.

⁵³⁵ Kanawati & Hassan, *Teti Cemetery II*, 12-3; El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 26; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 53.

⁵³⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 53; Kanawati, *BACE 8* (1997), 76.

of the palace guards' and 'superintendent of the palace guards'.⁵³⁷ However, there is always the possibility that the destruction instead may be due to family issues, as appears to be the case with the son's of Mereruka, yet there is no evidence to confirm this.⁵³⁸

The mastaba of Ishfi/Ishfu, nearby in the Teti cemetery, dates to early to mid reign of Pepy I.⁵³⁹ The false door and entrance lintel were dumped in the burial shaft, a concerted effort as the opening is on the roof.⁵⁴⁰ The name and figures of Ishfi were chiselled out of the false door, but the name Ishfu was (possibly accidentally) left intact on the lintel.⁵⁴¹ His tomb was then reused by Mesi late in the reign of Pepy I.⁵⁴² His inscriptions demonstrate that he held unusually high honorific titles and perhaps the rank of 'hereditary prince' (*jrj-p^ḥt*) was connected to the position of his mother, who could possibly have been a daughter of Teti.⁵⁴³ However, nephews of Pepy I were not the only officials punished for offences during his reign. While Meru/Pepyseneb appears to have been an important source of support for Pepy I during his accession, the decoration of the façade of his mastaba was not completed, and as such it appears that he fell into disrepute during Pepy I's reign.⁵⁴⁴ It is unlikely that he simply died and his tomb was not finished by his offspring, as there is also deliberate damage to some figures of Meru, including in the main table scene in the offering room, where his figure (particularly head) bear witness to many chisel marks.⁵⁴⁵

Also damaged are a number of minor figures probably employed by Pepy I, who were other sons and other men attached to officials of Teti.⁵⁴⁶

Unfortunately, it is particularly hard to date the erasure of minor figures in tombs, and as such the sons or offering bearers erased in the tombs of Wernu,

⁵³⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 53 & 82.

⁵³⁸ Kanawati, *BACE* 8 (1997), 76.

⁵³⁹ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 25-9; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84.

⁵⁴⁰ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 25 & 27; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84.

⁵⁴¹ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 25 & 28; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 84.

⁵⁴² El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 30-1.

⁵⁴³ El-Khouli & Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara II*, 25-6; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 82-3.

⁵⁴⁴ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 8; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 105.

⁵⁴⁵ Lloyd *et al.*, *Saqqâra Tombs II*, 9, 15, 19-20 & pl. 9 Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 105.

⁵⁴⁶ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 181.

Neferseshemre/Seshi, Kagemni and Mereruka may instead be implicated in this plot against Pepy I, rather than the assassination of Teti. The son of Iries/Iy, Tetiankh, may also have been implicated in this conspiracy, however there are suggestions that his erasure is instead connected to family issues.⁵⁴⁷ Even in Khentika's tomb, in the offering room, the first and fourth offering bearers appear to have had their images erased.⁵⁴⁸ However, the dating of Khentika's tomb, early in the reign of Pepy I, excludes a connection with that plot for these men.

It is entirely possible that the celebration of Pepy I's heb-sed was linked to the conspiracy involving Rawer. There are an enormous amount of inscriptions mentioning his heb-sed, with the date confusingly given as either the year after the eighteenth count and also the twenty-fifth year.⁵⁴⁹ The theory of a regular biennial cattle-count during the reign of Old Kingdom has already been disproven through the age of death of Nikauisesi and reign lengths of the kings under whom he served (Djedkare through to Teti),⁵⁵⁰ in addition to the evidence provided by the heb-sed inscriptions.⁵⁵¹ Therefore it is possible that the heb-sed took place the twenty-fifth year of Pepy I's reign, which was also the year after the eighteenth count – at a similar time to the erasure of Rawer's name on the Dahshur Decree (inscription dating to the twenty-first year).⁵⁵² Furthering the theory that a conspiracy involving Rawer was motivated by an attempt at the throne is the statue of Pepy I and a figure likely to be Merenre, who are depicted trampling the Nine Bows, a 'reaffirmation of royal power'.⁵⁵³ The broken copper statue, found at Hierakonpolis, also mentions the heb-sed and has been the major basis of a co-regency theory between the two kings

⁵⁴⁷ Kanawati *et al.*, *Saqqara I*, 47; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 78-80, 163 & 181-2.

⁵⁴⁸ James, *The Mastaba of Khentika*, pl. 20; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 90.

⁵⁴⁹ Spalinger, *SAK 21* (1994), 303-5 & note 72.

⁵⁵⁰ Swinton, *Dating of the Tombs of Officials*, 100-1; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 114-5. & 153; Kanawati & Abder-Raziq, *Teti Cemetery VI*.

⁵⁵¹ Spalinger, *SAK 21* (1994), 303-4.

⁵⁵² Spalinger also suggests that the inconsistency may be due to 'the regular biennial' dating with the higher date also absorbing the years of Weserkare's reign, while the biennial dating is not possible, the discrepancy could alternatively be due to an absorption of the reign of Weserkare, which would give an approximate length of reign from between seven to ten years. Spalinger, *SAK 21* (1994), 303-6.

⁵⁵³ Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 84.

beginning on this date.⁵⁵⁴ However, this seems unlikely as none of the numerous inscriptions mentioning the occasion also name Merenre as a king. Instead, it is perhaps a statement of his intended heir,⁵⁵⁵ felt necessary due to the recent plot. It is also likely that the conspiracy prompted Pepy I to rebuild his mother's tomb, emphasising his legitimacy, in which there are also a number of references to his heb-sed.⁵⁵⁶

The nature of and motivations behind the conspiracy against Pepy I are unclear, yet the late date and probable connection with the heb-sed (with the possible declaration of Merenre as heir) may indicate that the plot was an attempt to put 'a different successor on the throne.'⁵⁵⁷ By that stage in Pepy I's reign he would have had multiple wives and children, however, despite the plot against him, Pepy I ruled for at least thirty-two years before being succeeded by his son and heir, Merenre.⁵⁵⁸ Indeed, the last few years of Pepy I's reign, following the plot involving Rawer, appear to have continued without major problems.

⁵⁵⁴ É. Drioton, 'Notes diverses: Une corégence de Pépi Ier et de Mérenrê (?)', *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* 45 (1947), 55ff; Goedicke, *JAOs* 75:3 (Jul.-Sept., 1955), 182-3.

⁵⁵⁵ Kanawati, *Chron. d'Ég.* 56 (1981), 216; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 84.

⁵⁵⁶ Hawass, *Abusir 2000*, 414.

⁵⁵⁷ Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 177.

⁵⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 185.

Conclusions

The archaeological evidence from the Wenis and Teti cemeteries suggests that Manetho was correct in his assertions that Teti was assassinated. Through this evidence, it has also become apparent that not only were men from the department of palace guards involved (Manetho's bodyguards), but so too were the 'chief physician' Seankhuipah, the 'overseer of weapons' Mereri, the vizier Hesi and perhaps another man whose name has been lost. The *damnatio memoriae* witnessed in the tombs of these men is reflective of the punishments described in the New Kingdom Judicial Papyrus of Turin. Those implicated in that harim plot against Ramses III received varying levels of stupunishment according to their level of involvement. A number of the guilty were sentenced to death, others had their noses and ears cut off while those closely connected with them were reprimanded (and assumingly lost office). Some of the men buried in the Teti cemetery had their names and entire figures erased, others only bear witness to marks targeting the face, hands or ankles. Other tombs show signs that the work halted abruptly between the end of Teti's reign and the beginning of that of Pepy I, indicating a number of men lost office. Those who were most harshly punished, Mereri and Hesi, also had their tombs reallocated. The punishments evidenced in the Teti cemetery are in line with those described in the Judicial Papyrus, a plot relating to an assassination plot hatched by a queen trying to place her son on the throne.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, it is possible that a queen of Teti was involved in the assassination, as in the case of Ramses III. The ruined pyramid of a third queen of Teti may have existed between the pyramids of Teti and Khuit, in the location now occupied by the mastaba of Khentika. However, neither the existence of this third queen, nor her pyramid can hitherto be confirmed, and much further excavation work is required at the site before final conclusions can be drawn. If this queen did exist, a reference to her trial may exist in the biography of Weni, which also implicates a vizier. However, the location of this hypothetical queen's pyramid, closest to that of Teti, would indicate that she was the

⁵⁵⁹ de Buck, *JEA* 23:2 (Dec., 1937), 154-6; Kanawati, *Conspiracies*, 159.

principal wife of Teti, and thus her motivation for the plot could not be to ensure the succession of her son. Instead, a motivating factor could have been to place another relative on the throne, such as a brother or son-in-law.

It appears that there were a number of motivating factors behind the plot against Teti, including his own succession issues and the lack of a clear heir. Teti was not the son of his predecessor. While he was likely to have been a nephew of the king, his legitimacy was provided through his marriage to one or more daughters of Wenis. While Iput is certainly the daughter of Wenis, it also appears that Khuit may be an elder daughter of this king. However, if a third queen existed, it would follow that the position of her pyramid implies that she was the principal wife, and provided Teti with his legitimacy. Thus it appears that Teti married at least two daughters of Wenis, which is not unlikely considering it is confirmed that his son Pepy I married two sisters named Ankhesenpepy. Problems with Teti's succession are hinted at through his throne name, 'Sehetep-tawy', and the reallocation of the tombs of the last two viziers of Wenis. The tombs of the last viziers under Wenis appear to be occupied by two children of Teti, Nebkauhor/Idu and Idut/Seshseshet. The timing of the punishment and burial of the two children coincides with the beginning of Teti's reign, strongly suggesting that these viziers opposed the accession of Teti. While Teti clearly also had a number of powerful supporters during the early part of his reign, such as Mereruka (to whom he granted a near obscene amount of titles), it is likely that there were a number of officials serving who were not entirely supportive of the accession. Later in his reign, the reduced tomb size and quality and apparent delays in promotions caused severe unhappiness amongst a number of Teti's officials, apparently enough to result in an assassination. It is also very likely that the priesthoods, particularly that of Re, were major contenders on the political scene during this period, a subject which requires much investigation in the future.

The officials who plotted against Teti may also have seen the opportunity to remove his entire line. The opportunity may have arisen due to the premature deaths of Nebkauhor/Idu and Tetiankh-kem, who were probably heirs to Teti

at different points during his reign. Following the death of his last eldest son by his principal wife, Teti appears to have given Mereruka the title 'foster-child of the king', effectively making his son Meryteti heir to the throne. At the very end of Teti's reign Pepy I was born to Iput, who does not appear to have been the original principal wife (but may have become so after the death of the initial principal wife). In any case, Meryteti – a previous heir to the throne – was a major source of support for Pepy I, and thus clearly recognised him as a legitimate heir. However, the young age of Pepy I at the assassination of Teti clearly provided the opportunity for another king to usurp the throne. All the evidence suggests that Weserkare was not a son of Teti, however he may have been more distantly related to this king, one of his queens or possibly a descendant of the fifth dynasty kings (supported by the priesthood of Re). The identity and kinship of the king may be revealed to us upon the discovery of a lost pyramid. It is also possible, if not particularly likely, that he was one of the men most harshly punished for the assassination of Teti.

Pepy I was supported by a number of his father's officials in his accession to the throne. It is not known whether these men served during the short reign of Weserkare, or were excluded from the court. Due to the unusual circumstances regarding his accession, Pepy I felt the need to exert his legitimacy (particularly through his mother Iput). In addition to this, not only was he thorough in prosecuting those involved in the plot against his father, he also seemingly punished officials loyal to Weserkare. Pepy I implemented a number of policies in order to create and maintain loyalty amongst his officials. His high officials usually succeeded their father's in office, with even the men destined for the highest offices being first employed in lowly positions in the capital, proving their ability and building a relationship with the king before being placed in positions of power. Pepy I may, however, have implemented a new policy; it can be seen in the tomb of Qar that the sons of provincial governors were taken to the capital to be educated during this reign. Many of the high officials during the early Sixth Dynasty were also related to the king, through birth or marriage. This was a policy Pepy I

continued from his predecessors, and is especially evident through his marriage to the daughters of Khui and Nebet.

Pepy I sent his in-laws to Abydos, dividing the titles of southern vizier and 'overseer of Upper Egypt' between Nebet and Khui. The division of high titles witnessed throughout the titulary of the provincial officials mirrors a trend seen in the reign of Teti, when the power held by Mereruka was broken between multiple officials after his death. Both kings were attempting to limit the power of their top officials, likely prompted by some feelings of distrust which were clearly not misplaced. In addition to the division of titles, the seat of the southern vizier was transferred amongst the provinces a number of times during this period, suggesting that Pepy I was also limiting the power of the individual nomes, while also allowing for more direct control from the capital. Curiously, certain provincial officials were also buried in Saqqara during the reigns of Teti and Pepy I, indicating that they served from the capital. While some instances of the removal of a provincial governor to the capital may have been due to distrust, this does not seem to be so with Rawer. Rawer's title of 'beloved of the God', granted seemingly quite late in his career, suggests that he was particularly close to the king. Unfortunately for Pepy I, this particular instance of trust was misplaced, with his nephew and vizier, Rawer, apparently conspiring against him at some point after his twenty-first year. This unsuccessful plot may have prompted Pepy I to rebuild his mother's mastaba as a pyramid, promoting his legitimacy, and to also hold a heb-sed in which he confirmed his heir, Merenre.

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