

C H R O N O L O G Y
A N D A R C H A E O L O G Y
I N A N C I E N T E G Y P T
(T H E T H I R D M I L L E N N I U M B . C .)

Hana Vymazalová, Miroslav Bárta
editors



**CHRONOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
IN ANCIENT EGYPT
(THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.)**

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**Czech Institute of Egyptology, Faculty of Arts,
Charles University in Prague
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Contributors

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Evaluating the effectiveness of radiocarbon studies of the Old Kingdom 1

Recent radiocarbon studies of the Old Kingdom have produced dates that are significantly offset from historical estimates. As part of the Egyptian Chronology Project at the University of Oxford, the procedures and results from many of these studies are currently being examined. The data are being modelled using Bayesian statistics and the key methodologies, from sample collection to pre-treatment, are being evaluated. The insights gained are enabling the performance of radiocarbon dating to be optimised for Dynastic sites. This update includes simple archaeological and statistical approaches that have already proven successful. Eventually, the Oxford Egyptian Chronology Project aims to combine existing and new measurements to give a precise radiocarbon-based chronology for ancient Egypt.

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The chronology of Pre- and Early Dynastic Egypt remains one of the most flexible, yet complex issues in our understanding of early Egypt. A recent compilation of radiocarbon measurements showed that in excess of a third of all dates published relate to Pre- and Early Dynastic contexts. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of the radiocarbon dates prior to the First Dynasty have been obtained during the last 20 years, as compared with only half of the First and Second Dynasty dates. This is as reflective of the increase in research into the Predynastic as it is of our application of scientific dating methods. As part of the Egyptian Chronology Project at the University of Oxford, a new series of radiocarbon measurements is being made on Egyptian material, focussing primarily on the period from the First–Twentieth Dynasties, with a number of samples currently being selected for the First and Second Dynasties. Subject to relative dating, the lack of historical documentation allows these dates to influence the chronology of this formative period to a much greater extent than from the Third Dynasty onwards.

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A large (1,64 metre high) false door which is on display in one of the Old Kingdom rooms on the ground floor of Cairo Museum is the focus of this article. The monument had been found in an undisclosed location at Saqqara in 1888, but has been given little attention since that time. It features a woman named as Queen Tatjet – one of the least known of Egyptian queens – we are not even certain that we know the correct transcription of her name. Her approximate date is also unsure, and suggestions have been made that range from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period. This paper looks at the evidence connected with this woman and attempts to narrow the chronological horizon suggested for her.

Juan Carlos Moreno García:

Building an elite image: considerations about some private monuments of the Old Kingdom (stelae CGC 57133, 57168 and 57188) **180**

This study of three stelae of the Old Kingdom (two of them unpublished) addresses some important issues concerning the self-presentation of modest members of the elite in their own monuments, as well as the use made of the means at their disposal (writing, imitations of the best production of the palatial workshops) in order to display their status and social position. But these objects were not only status symbols: they also transmitted the values, culture and the social and cosmological interpretation of the ordered world as elaborated by the palatial circles, they were “consumed” by the elite of the kingdom and knowledge thus progressively spread to a broader public.

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*The decline of the Old Kingdom pyramid builders era has been attracting significant attention not only from among Egyptologists. Traditionally, it has been taken for granted that socio-economic factors deeply rooted in ancient Egyptian society were the major contributing forces for this phenomenon. Among them may be named the following ones: crisis of identity, participation, penetration, legitimacy and distribution (following R. Müller-Wollermann). Recent finds of *Poecilus* pharaoh beetles at the Abusir South cemeteries dated to the reign of Pepy II show convincingly that already during his reign large areas of what is known today as the Abusir and Saqqara necropoleis were largely desertified. Implications of this evidence in the light of recent explorations into the history and palaeoenvironmental characteristics of the Sixth Dynasty will be considered.*

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Pottery, the most numerous group of finds excavated on all archaeological sites in Egypt, is commonly used for the dating of distinctive contexts (sites, tombs, burials, houses, etc). Ceramics can be a valuable tool to create a chronology on three different levels: to establish a relative chronology of a site, to synchronize the chronology of a site and other sites functioning in the same period in Egypt, and finally to synchronize the chronology of Egypt and neighbouring

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regions in the Mediterranean. Each analysis requires a different method and uses different type(s) of pottery.

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A discussion and analysis of early nationalistic feeling in Pharaonic Egypt. Emphasis is placed upon certain common images – whether they be literary topoi and/or icons is sidestepped – relating to kingship and monarch, especially during times of war and conflict. The time frame covered is mainly during the middle to late First Intermediate Period. On the other hand, key data from the Twelfth Dynasty are also covered. In this discussion the concept of “Thebes the Victorious” is a major theme that is brought to bear upon the socio-political nature of dynastic capitals and the concentration of power by one ruling house.

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Foreword

The subject of the chronology of ancient Egyptian history remains of particular interest. The new excavations as well as the explorations of the so far known monuments and written sources have brought many interesting results which enlarge our knowledge about the history of ancient Egypt and the development of different aspects of the Egyptian culture.

The Czech Institute of Egyptology invited a group of scholars working on subjects relevant to the ancient Egyptian chronology to a conference in Prague in June 2007. The meeting offered the opportunity to exchange information and to present the latest results of the research. The various papers presented, and for a large part gathered in the present volume, provided different and highly stimulating approaches to chronological issues.

The nineteen contributions to the volume approach the subject of Egyptian chronology from different perspectives. Some of them concern the use of modern methods (^{14}C) and natural sciences in Egyptology; others analyze the development of various aspects of the Egyptian culture during the whole period of the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period, or try to specify the date of certain monuments and personalities. The question of calendars and festivals is also alluded to, and some new archaeological discoveries are presented. A study and interpretation of archaeological as well as textual sources and iconographical material is combined in the papers in order to attain a deeper knowledge and better understanding of the Egyptian chronology, archaeology and the ancient history.

The overview of individual contributions also shows that Egyptology dealing with the third and early second millennium B.C. still prefers to follow rather traditional paths of research. The reasons for this tendency may be manifold, one of them yet relates to the fact that sampling and subsequent analysis abroad (in many cases no other solution would have been possible) is strictly prohibited in Egypt, indeed a very rare exception in the whole Middle East.

During the editing of the text we did not attempt to unify the transliteration of ancient Egyptian, and several different variants may occur depending on the choice of the authors. The personal names and the names of places were, however, in most cases unified in order to simplify the orientation in the text for the reader. The bibliographical references follow the pattern of the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, and the list of journals and the bibliography are given in a list at the beginning of the volume.

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Our thanks go, above all, to Filip Coppens for his help during the editorial work and to Vivienne Gae Callender who kindly revised some of the articles in the volume.

We also wish to thank all members of our Institute for their help and encouragement.

Prague, May 2008

The Editors

Abbreviations and journals

ACME – Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell' Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano.

AcOr – Acta Orientalia, Kopenhagen – Leiden.

AEPHE 5^e Section: Sciences Religieuses – Annuaire, École Pratique des Hautes Études 5^e Section: Sciences Religieuses, Paris.

AJA – American Journal of Archaeology, New York – Baltimore – Norwood.

AJSL – American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Chicago.

Ä&L – Ägypten und Levante, Wien.

AmAnt – American Anthropologist. Organ of the American Anthropological Association, Washington.

Annales de la Société Entomologique de France (N.S.) – Annales de la Société Entomologique de France, Paris.

Antiquity – Antiquity. Quarterly Review of Archaeology, Cambridge.

AOF – Altorientalische Forschungen, Berlin.

ArchGeo – Archaeologia geographica, Hamburg.

Archaeometry – Archaeometry. Bulletin of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, Oxford.

Archéo-Nil – Archéo-Nil. Revue de la société pour l'étude des cultures prépharaoniques de la vallée du Nil, Paris.

ArOr – Archiv orientální, Praha.

ArtAs – Artibus Asiae. The Journal of Asian Art and Archaeology, Zürich.

ASAE – Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Le Caire.

BES – Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar, New York.

BIFAO – Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, Le Caire.

BMFA – Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

BSEG – Bulletin de la Société d'égyptologie de Genève, Genève.

BSFE – Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie, Paris.

Canadian Journal of Zoology – Canadian Journal of Zoology=Journal canadien de zoologie, Ottawa.

CCE – Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne, Le Caire.

CdE – Chronique d'Égypte, Brussel.

CRAIBL – Comptes Rendus de séances. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris.

CRIPeL – Cahier de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et égyptologie de Lille, Lille.

DE – Discussions in Egyptology, Oxford.

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EA – Egyptian Archaeology, London.

Enchoria – Enchoria. Zeitschrift für Demotistik und Koptologie, Wiesbaden.

Entomologist's Monthly Magazine – Entomologist's Monthly Magazine, Oxford.

Environmental Archaeology – Environmental Archaeology. The Journal of Human Palaeoecology, Oxford – London.

Fauna of Saudi Arabia – Fauna of Saudi Arabia, Basle.

GM – Göttinger Miszellen, Göttingen.

De Ibis – De Ibis. Tijdschrift van de Nederlandse egyptologische Vereniging Sjemsoethot, Amsterdam.

JARCE – Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt, New York.

JAS – Journal of Archaeological Science, London – New York.

JEA – Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London.

JEOL – Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch genootschap ex Oriente Lux, Leiden.

JNES – Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago.

Journal of Applied Entomology – Journal of Applied Entomology, Berlin.

Journal of Pest Science – Journal of Pest Science, Heidelberg.

JSA – Journal of Social Archaeology, London.

JSSEA – Journal for the Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, Toronto.

Kemi – Kémi. Revue de Philologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Coptes, Paris.

KMT – K.M.T. A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt, San Francisco.

Kush – Kush. Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service, Khartoum.

LingAeg – Lingua Aegyptia. Journal of Egyptian Language Studies, Göttingen.

MDAIK – Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts. Abteilung Kairo, Mainz – Wiesbaden – Berlin.

Méditerranées – Méditerranées, Paris.

Mémoires de la Société Entomologique d'Égypte – Mémoires de la Société Entomologique d'Égypte, Le Caire.

MMJ – Metropolitan Museum Journal. Journal of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Nature – Nature, London.

Nekhen News – Nekhen News. Published for the Friends of Nekhen, Chicago.

OMRO – Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

Or – Orientalia. Nova Series, Roma.

OLZ – Orientalistische Literaturzeitung. Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft von ganzen Orient, Berlin.

Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology – Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology. An International Journal for the Geo Sciences, Amsterdam.

PAPS – Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

PAM – Polish Archaeology in Mediterranean, Warsaw.

PPS – Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. Journal of the Prehistoric Society, London.

Pubblicazioni del Museo Entomologico "Pietro Rossi" – Pubblicazioni del Museo Entomologico "Pietro Rossi" Duino, Udine.

Radiocarbon – Radiocarbon. An International Journal of Cosmogenic Isotope Research, New Haven.

RAr – Revue archéologique, Paris

RdÉ – Revue d'égyptologie, Paris.

Rec. Trav. – Recueil des travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes, Paris.

RevArch – Revue archéologique, Paris.

RIDA – Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité, Office international des Périodiques.

SAK – Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur, Hamburg.

SbWien math.-nat.Kl. – Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Klasse, Wien.

Sicilia Archeologica – Sicilia Archeologica, Roma.

Sphinx – Sphinx: Revue critique embrassant le domaine entier de l'égyptologie, Uppsala – Stockholm.

SSEA – The Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, Toronto.

Studie a Zprávy Oblastního Muzea Praha-východ – Studie a Zprávy Oblastního Muzea Praha-východ v Brandýse nad Labem a Staré Boleslavi, Brandýs nad Labem.

Transactions of the Royal Entomological Society of London – Transactions of the Royal Entomological Society of London, London.

WA – World Archaeology, London.

WZKM – Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Wien.

ZÄS – Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde, Berlin.

Zeitschrift für Physik – Zeitschrift für Physik, Berlin.

Building an elite image: considerations about some private monuments of the Old Kingdom (stelae CGC 57133, 57168 and 57188)

Juan Carlos Moreno García (Lille)

The Egyptian elite was a highly hierarchical social group whose internal stratification can be easily perceived when analysing the quality of their monuments. Richly decorated tombs, fine stelae or high quality funerary equipment can be normally found in the tombs of the main officials of the kingdom or in those of some prominent courtiers. Sometimes the richness of the tombs contrasts with the banality of the titles of their owners, probably showing that their power or their social position depended more on their proximity to the king than on the official responsibilities they held. Inversely, the intentional destruction of part of the decoration of some tombs might be considered, at least in some cases, as a sign of political troubles otherwise difficult to detect if one is relying only on the epigraphic record and on its rather formal and restricted contents, as in the case of the mastabas in Teti's cemetery at Saqqara. The destruction of some tombs, or their reallocation to new officials prove, in a dramatic way, that the richness and the social status displayed by these monuments could be also precarious and followed the political ups and downs of the moment and the inevitable adjustments within the elite which followed them. Only rarely could modest officials afford the kind of prestigious objects usually reserved for the inner ruling elite of the state; usually, such less distinguished people had to put up with imitations whose workmanship was rather variable, stretching from fine objects to crude works.

Having in mind these ideas, I would like to present here some stelae which have either remained unpublished, or else are rarely evoked in egyptological literature. Their contents may nevertheless be useful to illustrate the question of the different degrees of access to the high palatial culture available for some modest officials of the Old Kingdom, as well as the ways in which the more humble officials exploited the means at their disposal in order to present themselves as members of the scribal elite.

The panel of the priest of Khufu *Rwd-jb* (CGC 57133)

This panel comes from mastaba D 213 at the Steindorff Cemetery at Giza and is preserved in a relatively poor condition (*figs.* 1–5) (Porter & Moss 1974, 117; from the same tomb comes a panel now in Leipzig). Some erasures make it difficult to read the panel's hieroglyphs, which are carved in a crude style, like some of the seated human figures which follow as determinatives the names of the members of the owner's family. If we also take into consideration

of (close) contact with the palatial entourage (Baud 1999a, 107–13). Recent research on the spatial location of the tombs built by the funerary priests of some specific kings of the Old Kingdom shows that they were usually placed near the pyramid of the pharaoh concerned throughout the duration of his cult. In the case of Khufu, the overwhelming majority of the tombs (44 of 56) are located in the Western Cemetery, seven in the cemetery Khufu East and four in Khafre East. Only one tomb is attested at Saqqara (Shirai 2005, 149–62). In fact the pattern exhibited by the tombs of Khufu's funerary priests is remarkable with regard to the number and concentration within one cemetery. Close examination of the dates of the tombs for Khufu's funerary priests reveals not only significant spatial patterns, but also temporal patterns. Chronological analysis of the data shows that their tombs were constructed continuously at Giza, especially in the Western Cemetery, from the Fourth to the Sixth Dynasties (Shirai 2005, 157), even when royal cemeteries were not longer being located at Giza, but at Abusir and Saqqara.

Given the rather common nature of *Rwd-jb*'s titles, the architecture of the tomb and the palaeographic analysis of the inscriptions may cast some light over the controversial chronology of his mastaba, ranging from the Fourth Dynasty (the date has been cautiously proposed by Piacentini 2002c, 138–9 [C.Gi.50.1]) to the Fifth–Sixth (Porter & Moss 1974, 117), or even the late Sixth Dynasty (Steindorff & Hölscher 1991, 92) according to different authors.

The mastaba of *Rwd-jb* (D 213) was built against one of the walls of mastaba D 200 which, in turn, was built against a wall of mastaba D 201. We have then a chronological succession, where D 201 is the older tomb of the group and D 213 the most recent one. Mastaba D 201 belonged to *Snnw*, an official dated from the Fifth–Sixth Dynasty according to Porter and Moss (1974, 115–6; Steindorff & Hölscher 1991, 93–5, pl. 17–8; Spiekermann & Kampp-Seyfried 2003, 45–50, fig. 24–8), probably on the basis of a statue found in one of its shafts and which may be assigned to the reign of Isesi (Krauspe 1997, 53–4 [102], pl. 42; Cherpion 1998, 114). As for mastaba D 200, it belonged to *Rdjf*, an inspector of the measurers of the granary who lived about the end of the Sixth Dynasty (Porter & Moss 1974, 115).¹ According to these architectural information, the tomb of *Rwd-jb* might be dated from the end of the Sixth Dynasty, a possibility which is not contradicted by the title *mjtr(t)* borne by his daughter *ḥḥwt*, as this title continued to be used by females during the Sixth Dynasty (Daoud 1996, 83–102, pl. 2, especially page 88; about this title, cf. Fischer 1959a, 262–3; 1989, 71 n. 175; Kanawati 1992, 206; Jones 2000, 424–5 [1571–2]; Pätznick 2001, 144–5; 2005, 137–49; Marochetti

¹ According to the photograph published by Satzinger (Satzinger 1994, 109), the title must be read *shd ḥḥw snwt* “inspector of the measurers of the granary” and not *shd ḥḥw ḥwwt* “inspector of the measurers of the *ḥwwt*”, as quoted in Jaroš-Deckert & Rogge 1993, 107–8.

2003, 246–8, 256 fig. 11 (a list of *mjtr* from a papyrus of the Fourth Dynasty found at Gebelein)).

The palaeography of the text also reveals some particularities which prove nevertheless to be rather difficult to use for chronological purposes, especially the rather stylised form of *d* in the writing of the name *Rwd-jb*, the insertion of the hieroglyph for *jm3h* between *hr* and *ntr* ^ϩ,² and the writing of ^ϩ with the hieroglyph *wḏ*. These palaeographical details in the offering formula do not contribute to suggest a more precise chronology as they are all attested throughout the Old Kingdom, as is the case with the formula concerning Anubis (Lapp 1986, 12 § 27(3); Daoud 1996, 87(a)), or in the expression *j3ww nfr* “having grown old perfectly” (Lapp 1986, 203 § 344(1)).

Finally, we can turn our attention to the personal names attested in the monument. *Rwd-jb* is a rather rare name (Ranke 1935, 221, 13) as is that of one of his sons, *Bwt* (Ranke 1935, 95, 1), a name also present in the Museum of Berlin inscription no. 14108, and dating perhaps from the Fourth Dynasty (Berlin 14108: Sethe 1933, 35:5–17; Goedicke 1970, 108–12, pl. XI[b]; Logan 2000, 56[8]; Baud 1999a, 605–6 [246]; Strudwick 2005, 201 [113]). The other names (*H3*, ^ϩ*nḥwt*, *Mrs-nḥ*, *Tntr*; cf., respectively, Ranke 1935, 254, 13; 68, 13; 158, 6) are fairly common. As for the name of one of the women, it could either be read as *Rdj-hwt* or as *R^ϩ-hwt*.

Having all these elements in mind, I consider that *Rwd-jb* lived towards the end of the Sixth Dynasty and that he probably belonged to the category of minor priests of the royal cults, nevertheless rich enough to be able to afford a mastaba (even if it was an undecorated one) and some inscribed objects, in order to emphasize a certain social status.³

The stele of the scribe *Jmm* (CGC 57168)

This limestone stele has received some attention recently (*figs.* 6–10) (Porter & Moss 1974, 652; Piacentini 1996, 153–4, pl. 2; 2002a, 557–9 [G.Sa.6]; Saleh, Carandente & Bresciani 1999, 96–8 [9]). It dates from the second part of the Sixth Dynasty according to the characteristics of the false door as studied by P. Piacentini, and some details of its iconography suggest a date between the reigns of Pepy I and Pepy II (Criteria n° 6, 21, 25, 31, and 41b in Cherpion 1989, 30, 49, 52, 57–9, 65, fig. 47; cf. also Baud 1998, 63, 66–7, 68). Its owner, *Jmm*, was mainly involved in scribal activities, probably at the central administration because of the use of the term *z3b* in one of his titles, the fact of his having been inhumed at Saqqara, and the display of the group ^ϩ *nzw*

² For the honorific transposition of *ntr* ^ϩ before *hr* in the formula *jm3hw hr ntr* ^ϩ, cf. Fischer 1976, 24.

³ The possession of this kind of objects became far more common among non-elite individuals at the end of the Old Kingdom: Moreno García 2004, 104–21.

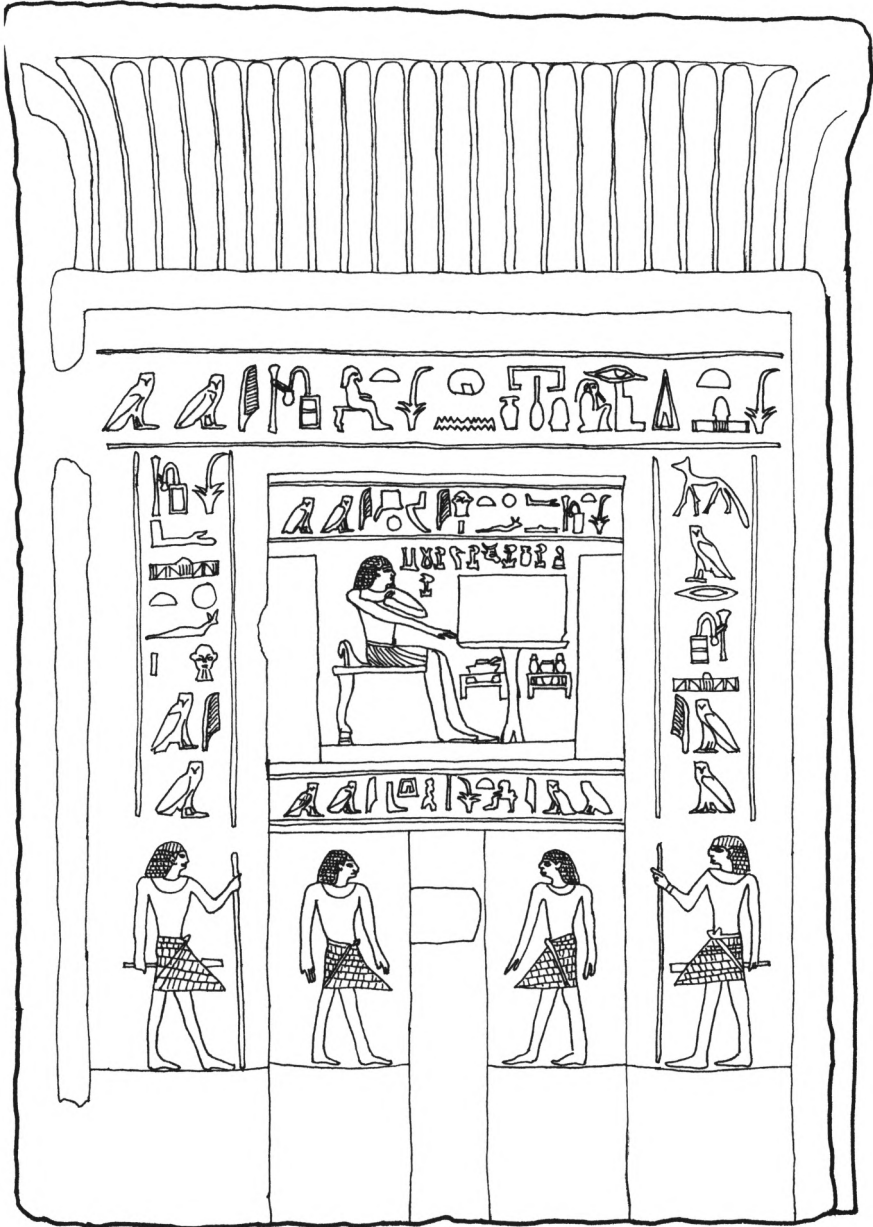


Fig. 2 Stele of scribe Imm.

“documents of the king” in another title. Unfortunately the exact location of his tomb is unknown – it lays somewhere westwards of Unas’ pyramid – as it might provide some supplementary information about an official who

managed to get a fine painted stele. It measures 103 × 70 cm and its inscriptions read as follows:

architrave: *hṭp-dj-nzwt Wsjr prt-hrw n špss nzwt zš Jmm* “an offering which the king gives and Osiris: invocation offerings for the noble of the king, the scribe, Imem”.

right jamb: *z3b jmj-r zš Jmm* “the overseer of the scribes of the jackal, Imem”.

left jamb: *zš ʿ nzwt hft hr Jmm* “the scribe of the documents of the king in the presence, Imem”.

panel: *zš ʿ nzwt hft hr jmjḥ Jmm* “the scribe of the documents of the king in the presence, the *imakh*, Imem”.

lintel: *špss nzwt Jmm, hrj-ḥb Jmm* “the noble of the king, the lector-priest, Imem”.

The use of green colour in the inscriptions deserves some attention. According to G. Pinch, green was a colour associated with the resurrection of Osiris (Pinch 2001, 183–4; about colour symbolism in ancient Egypt cf. also Duquesne 1996; Myśliwiec 2006, 225–38), and it can be observed that the *hṭp-dj-nzwt* formula includes also Osiris, a fact which points towards a date later than the end of the Fifth Dynasty, when Osiris entered in this formula (Lapp 1986, 11 § 26(2); Barta 1968, 15). G. Pinch has also discussed that the connotations of green are almost wholly positive, and that the term *w3ḏ* involves a whole complex of words for freshness, newness, vigour, flourishing, fortunate and papyrus. This could explain why *w3ḏ* is used to describe amulets in faience, glass and semi-precious stones in what, to us, seems to be a wide range of greens, blues, and turquoises (Baines 1985, 282–97). The power of new life contained in the word *w3ḏ* would be present in these amulets. One can also remember the hieroglyphs painted green in the Pyramid Texts from the Pepy I pyramid, thus enhancing the ideas of resurrection, flourishing and renewal. In fact, the custom of painting green all the hieroglyphs of a false-door could have been a development arising alongside the inscription of the Pyramid Texts in the mortuary monuments of the pharaohs (Smith 1946, 259), in a context of the growing influence of the Osirian ideology. The contrast is quite clear as regards painted hieroglyphs in earlier stelae, like the slab stelae of the Fourth Dynasty, where different colours were used in the hieroglyphs of a single inscription, and even the internal details of each sign were distinguished by means of a colour of its own (Der Manuelian 2003, 171–87).

It would not be a surprise that green was also used in private false-door inscriptions in order to convey the same notions. One can think about the chapel of *Ttw* I at Giza, from the late Sixth Dynasty, and its inscriptions in green and blue (Simpson 1980, frontispiece); or the blue incised inscriptions on the false door of *Jnw-Mnw* at Saqqara, whereas those of the offering list in

the burial chamber are a clean mid-blue (McFarlane 2006, 54, pl. 34[a]). Even if some traces of having painted green *all the hieroglyphs* in a false door or an inscription are already visible at the tomb of *Pth-šps* at Abusir (Verner & Zemina 1994, 181, 187), dated around the end of the reign of Niuserre or the beginning of Isesi's, or in the stele of *Nḥt-z3.s*, also from the reign of Niuserre or somewhat later (Borchardt 1964, 122 (CGC 1440)), it seems that this custom became firmly established in private monuments only from the end of the Fifth Dynasty and the beginning of the Sixth, with many examples,⁴ probably under the influence of the notion of the resurrection of Osiris. Finally, it cannot be excluded that in some instances what appears nowadays as red or yellow colours are in fact the consequence of the alteration of pigments originally green or brown (Colinart 1998, 95–102).

The stele of the *ḥntj-š Ttj* (CGC 57188)

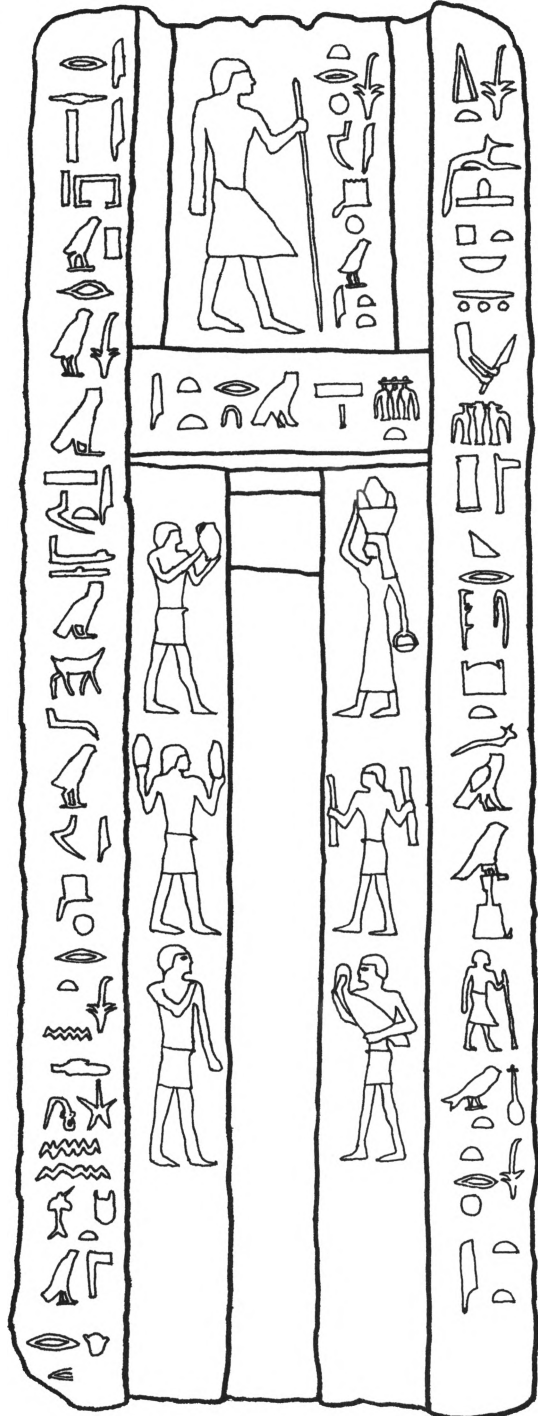
The limestone stele of *Ttj* is referred to in Porter and Moss as coming from Saqqara, but this point is not certain, especially when considering the titles and the sociological context of its owner (Porter & Moss 1974, 736). It measures 153 cm high, 57 cm wide, and 18 cm thick, and although its reliefs and hieroglyphs are in an acceptable condition, it can also be observed that the hieroglyphs lack internal details even if they are well carved and easily read (*figs.* 11–18). The surface is not polished, but some traces of colour are still visible, most notably in the human figures of the inner jambs, where the skin of some masculine offering bearers was painted red, as well as some hieroglyphs of the outer right jamb. Yellow/orange was applied on some vessels and baskets carried by the offering bearers, as well as on hieroglyphs in the outer right jamb or on the *m* hieroglyph in the lintel. Finally, traces of green are perceptible in some signs of the lintel and of the outer left jamb. Even if the dimensions of the stele are somewhat notable, its quality is rather crude and cannot bear comparison with the best productions of the Memphite workshops. In fact, *Ttj*'s stele fits, above all, the kind of monuments of middle rank officials so admirably published by A. Roth in her study of the tombs of the *ḥntjw-š* at Giza: it also belongs to a *ḥntj-š* and its inscriptions display some particularities which might throw some light about the career of its owner (Roth 1995).

The inscriptions read as follows:

Panel: *rḥ nzwt jm3ḥw Ttj* "the acquaintance of the king, the honoured one Teti (1)".

⁴ Cf. the false-door painted green in Myśliwiec 2004, pl. 50[b], whereas the hieroglyphs of the middle register of the façade were painted with various colours (Myśliwiec 2004, pl. 36, 38). Cf. also, for example, Borchardt 1964, 191–2 (CGC 1490); El-Khouli & Kanawati 1984, 40; Ziegler 1990, 222–7 (E 27133), 270–3 (AF 9460).

Fig. 3 Stele of the *hntj*-š *Tj*.



Lintel: *hntj-š jmj-r 10 Ttj* “the *khenty-she* (2) and overseer of ten (men)(3) Teti”.

Left jamb: *jr jz pw jrj(.j) sw m jšt(.j) mšꜥ m-hnw-ꜥwj jmšh(.j) hr nzwt dw3.n n(.j) hmwt ntr hr[.s]* “as for this tomb I made it truly with my (own) goods by virtue of my condition of *imakh* before the king, and the craftsmen worship the god for me for [it] (4)”.

Right jamb: *hup-dj-nzwt Jnpw nb t3 dsr hntj zh-ntr qrs.tj.fj m hrt-ntr j3ww nfr wrt rh nzwt Ttj* “an offering which the king gives and an offering which Anubis, lord of the sacred land, foremost of the divine booth, gives, that he be buried in the necropolis, having attained a very good old age, the acquaintance of the king Teti”.

Some elements of the stele deserve a more detailed commentary:

(1) The name of the owner, *Ttj*, is relatively common during the Old Kingdom, with many attestations known from the Third Dynasty till the end of the third millennium, and to the examples quoted in Ranke or in Porter and Moss one can add, for example, the architect (*jmj-r qd*) and acquaintance of the king (*rh nzwt Ttj* (Beck 1993, 16–9 [2], fig. 2 [Liebighaus-Museum no. 268]; the monument is dated from the Fourth Dynasty), or the father and son of *D3tj* at Giza, both called *Ttj* (Simpson 1980, 29, 31, fig. 41 (end of the Fifth Dynasty)).

(2) As for the titles of *Ttj* they are not particularly distinguished: he was a *hntj-š* and *jmj-r 10*, the first one being rarely displayed in isolation or without other more or less relevant titles also concerning the *hntjw-š* as, for instance, *jmj-r st hntjw-š pr-ꜥ3*, *shd hntjw-š pr-ꜥ3* and so on. This probably means that *Ttj* was a relatively modest official. The title *hntj-š* has received considerable attention recently, and from the study of the Abusir Papyri by Posener-Kriéger it is accepted that it was bestowed on officials chosen from among the close entourage of the king who were usually involved in other administrative activities, as their titles show. It is also probably that they formed a kind of guard de corps of the Pharaoh (Roth 1995, 39–47; Kanawati 2003, 14–24). In any case, the title of *hntj-š* is very frequently attested in the papyri of Abusir, including Raneferef’s archive, where its holders appear on duty at the main entrance to the temple, as porters, and taking their share of temple grain, cloth and meat offerings (Posener-Kriéger, Verner & Vymazalová 2006, 372).

(3) The title *jmj-r 10* points to the service of the king, especially when considered together with the title of *hntj-š*. P.-M. Chevereau has shown that many officials bearing this title in the Old Kingdom sources were involved in nautical activities and in the organisation of teams of recruits and workers; in fact, many of them were also *hrp ꜥprw nfrw* “director of the teams of recruits” or were in charge of ships, as titles like *jmj-r 10 wj3 ꜥ3*

“overseer of the ten of the great ship” show (Chevereau 1989, 28–30; about nautical titles formed with the element “ten”, cf. also Jones 1988, 58–9 [41–2]). A scene from the tomb of *Sndm-jb Jntj* confirms this relationship, as the personnel represented in a boat included a *jmj-r 10* “overseer of ten (men)”, a *shd wj3* “inspector of a ship”, a *jmj-r sb3* “overseer of navigation” and a *jmj-jrtj* “captain” (Brovarski 2001, 38, fig. 21–3). But after a close examination of the titles composed with the element “ten” it becomes apparent that its range of uses exceeded the nautical sphere, as it included officials involved in the organisation of teams of specialists in a broad sense (artisans, priests, personnel of expeditions, etc.) or the direction of officials working at the palace or in some specific institutions within the administrative domain, like the *hwt-5nh* (cf. *wr 10 hwt-5nh*), the *hwt-wrt* “the great *hwt*” (an institution closely related to the vizier; cf. *wr 10 hwt-wrt*), the palace *5h* (*wr 10 5h*), the palace *pr-53* (cf. *jmj-r 10 pr-53*) or the *hwt-53t* (cf. *jmj-r 10 hwt-53t*) (Jones 2000, 143–6, 387–9). The close relationship between titles formed with “ten” and the central institutions of the kingdom is confirmed by the unique title *w5 m 10 m jst* “sole one of the ten at the palace *jst*”, borne by *Hnsw-htp*, a subordinate of the vizier *Ppjj-nht*, together with some other titles concerning the entourage of the vizier, like *smsw h3jt* “elder of the palace *h3jt*” and *nht-hrw hwt-wrt* “crier of the great *hwt*” (Cairo JdE 91218 = Simpson 1995, 5–7, fig. 4, pl. 2–3b).

Taking these aspects into account, it seems likely that the title *jmj-r 10 of Ttj* refers to the royal entourage, especially as it lacks any mention to ships or workers. The condition of *Ttj* would be then relatively similar to that of *K3pj*, an official buried at the “Cemetery of Palace Attendants” at Giza who also held responsibilities at the royal court in his condition of both *hntj-s* and *jmj-r 10 pr-53* “overseer of the ten of the palace” (Mastaba G 2091: Roth 1995, 97–105, fig. 60–1, pl. 40b–62a. It is dated from the reigns of Niuserre – Isesi). The involvement of *K3pj* in the palace activities is stressed by many of his titles, like *jmj-r wpt pr-53* “overseer of the missions of the palace”, *jmj-ht pr-53* “controller of the palace”, *rh nzw n pr-53* “acquaintance of the king of the palace”, *jmj-r st hntjw-s pr-53* “overseer of the place of the *hntjw-s* of the palace”, *hrj-pr pr-53* “responsible one of the palace” or *shd pr-53* “inspector of the palace”. A passage from the story of *Sinuhe* may illustrate the courtly nature of the “tens” of the palace: “ten men came and ten men went to usher me into the palace. My forehead touched the ground between the sphinxes, and the royal children stood in the gateway to meet me. The courtiers who usher through the forecourt set me on the way to the audience-hall. I found his Majesty on the great throne in a kiosk of gold”.⁵

⁵ *Sinuhe* 248–54 = Quirke 2004, 67. The personnel in charge of some temples turned also around ten officials as, for example, Wegner 2000, 99–100; Borchardt 1899, 94; 1902–1903; Théodoridès 1971, 125–6 [Siut 284].

If we take into consideration the fact that *Tij* was also a *rh nzwt*, we can reasonably suppose that his titles express some kind of involvement at the palace, perhaps at a modest level, as Roth has put it in reference, precisely, to *Tij*: “the titles [of *K3pj*] suggest a concern with the staff responsible for the practical functioning of the palace (messengers and “tens”, the palace equivalents of divisions of construction workers) [...] The connection with overseers of tens is interesting in view of the fact that “tens” occur in work crews as the unit of organization below that of a phyle; in temples and probably in the palace *hntjw-s* were organized into phyles. Two men besides *K3pj* bear this combination of titles” (Roth 1995, 43). One of these men was precisely *Tij*, and the other *Qd-ns* at Giza (Porter & Moss 1974, 152).

(4) The close relationship of *Tij* with the royal entourage is stated in the autobiographical inscription of his stele: *jr jz pw jrj(.j) sw m jst(.j) m3^c m-hnw-^cwj jm3h(.j) hr nzwt dw3.n n(.j) hmwt ntr hr[.s]* “as for this tomb I made it truly with my (own) goods by virtue of my condition of *imakh* before the king, and the craftsmen worship the god for me for [it]”. This formula displays some particularities.⁶ First of all, the rare use of the preposition *m-hnw-^cwj* with the meaning “by virtue of” (fig. 15; Edel 1955–1964, 403 § 800; Fischer 1996a, 181. The usual signification of this preposition is “within”: Erman & Grapow 1926–31, 372, 6–8; Faulkner 1962, 202; Meeks 1982, 79.2325), when one should expect to find the far more common prepositions *m/r* in this context (cf. the examples quoted in Jansen-Winkel 1996, 31–2), even in some atypical texts as, for instance, that of the tomb of *Jrj Tij-snb* of Saqqara, who states that he built his tomb with his own arms,⁷ or that in a libation basin in the Museum of Hildesheim, where *hr* was used.⁸ The only other exception to the pattern used in the formulae concerning the building of a tomb is the composed preposition *m-šwj* “by virtue of” which appears in the tomb of *Htp-hr-3ht* of Saqqara (Sethe 1933, 51:2), in a bloc also

⁶ This funerary inscription from the tomb of *Tij* has not been considered in some recent studies (Jansen-Winkel 1996; Kloth 2002).

⁷ El-Khouli & Kanawati 1988, 9–10, pl. 3: *jr jz pn jrj.j m hrt-ntr jn nzwt rdj n.j st.f m jm3hw hr nzwt jr(r) hzzt nb.f jw rdj.n(.j) db3w n hrtj-ntr jr.n(.j) sw r htp.f hr.s jw jr.n(.j) k3t jm.f m ^cwj(.j) hn^c msw(.j) snw(.j)* “regarding this tomb which I made in the necropolis, it was the king who gave me its location as I was an *imakhu* before the king, for I always do what his lord favours. I paid the stonemason who made it for me so that he was satisfied with it. I did the work within it with my own hands together with my children and my siblings”. It is not mentioned in some recent studies (Jansen-Winkel 1996; Kloth 2002). Another autobiographical fragment of an anonymous official in Kanawati & Abder-Raziq 2001, pl. 9, 46.

⁸ Inv. No. 2403: *jr.n(.j) nw m 3wt jrt.n n(.j) nb(.j) jr jm3h(.j) hr.f n-zp jnd hmw hr.s* “it was thanks to the gifts which my lord had granted to me because of my condition of *jm3h* before him that I could get this (basin)” (Martin 1978, 120–2).

from Saqqara (Edel 1955–1964, 404 § 804), in the mastaba of *3bdw* of Giza (Abubakr 1953, 73 fig. 47, pl. 37), in the tomb of *Rmn-w(j)-k3* of Giza (Hassan 1936, fig. 206, pl. 61[2]), and in the tomb of *Ppjj-ḥh:Jpj-ḥh:Jpj* at Sharuna (Tomb G 7: Schenkel & Gomaà 2004, 107, pl. 46).

Taking all these elements into consideration it seems that *Tij* was an official of relatively modest rank who worked in the immediate entourage of the royal court and who exercised some kind of authority, perhaps only at an organisational level, over other members of the court, probably other *ḥntjw-s* because of their organization into phyles (Roth 1991, 79–81). As no other monuments bearing additional titles or information about *Tij* are known, little can be said about this official. But enough is preserved as to suggest that his condition was rather similar to the *ḥntjw-s* buried at the Cemetery of the Palace Attendants of Giza, and that he probably lived about the end of the Fifth Dynasty. On the one hand, the combination of the titles *jmj-r 10* and *ḥntj-s* fits this period, from the reign of Niuserre – Iseki to the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty; on the other hand, the inscriptions where a combined preposition appears in the formula evoking the building of a tomb because of the condition of *jm3ḥw* of its owner are dated from the reign of Niuserre to the Sixth Dynasty. Concerning the iconography, panels showing the deceased standing are very rare and confined to the end of the Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara (Strudwick 1985, 20), and sometimes, when the false door formed the sole decorated surface in the tomb, it included representations of offering bearers and dependants on the jambs, especially from the middle to later Fifth Dynasty, a feature present in *Tij*'s stele. Finally, as N. Strudwick has explained, the presence of a torus and a cornice in a false door was the norm during the Sixth Dynasty but, when they first appeared, in the early to middle Fifth Dynasty, false doors were very much an indication of the importance or favoured status of an individual (Strudwick 1985, 15). Thus these features were at first reserved only for the most important officials and absent from the false doors of lower ranking dignitaries. The fact that *Tij*'s stele lacks these elements points both to his modest condition and to a dating before the Sixth Dynasty.

Lower elite, social status and self-presentation

The monuments discussed here belong to what could be called “lower/ /middle elite” officials of the later Fifth and Sixth Dynasty, that is to say, officials who were not simple scribes or minor administrators, who were involved at different levels in the activities of the palatial circles but who did not bear the kind of titles usually reserved to the more prominent officials of the kingdom. All three men were at the service of the king as priests or as

members of the royal court. It is difficult to judge the extent of their power or the importance of the financial resources at their disposal as only part of their monuments is preserved and, unfortunately, they come from an unknown archaeological context. The exception is *Rwd-jb*, whose modest mastaba proves that, nevertheless, he had access to the kind of prestigious monument which usually marked the fact that he belonged to the palatial elite. Even if he lacked a decorated chapel or a false-door of a certain quality, the panel discussed here as well as another panel in the Leipzig Museum show that he could afford some inscribed objects which represented himself and his family and which recorded his titles in the service of the king. In fact, it is remarkable that his modest monuments and his ritual activities carried out for a deceased king who lived centuries before him and whose pyramid was built at Giza, far from the royal cemeteries of the kings of the Sixth Dynasty, prove that the funerary cult of king Khufu nevertheless kept enough means at its disposal, at the end of the Sixth Dynasty, as to provide funerary monuments even for humble priests like *Rwd-jb*, whose activities were apparently limited to the specialised ritual service of Khufu. The archaeological work at the pyramid of Teti or of Pepy I at Saqqara shows that modest officials continued to be buried or to leave some crude monuments such as stelae, offering basins or statues in the vicinity of the pyramids of these pharaohs. It would be perhaps quite simplistic to consider that these monuments display only the piety of the donors towards the memory of deceased kings. It is quite probable that the fact of acquiring these objects and to place them in the royal cemeteries was a way of expressing the membership of their owners within a certain elite, even if a very modest one, and a way to display to the outside world a relative prestigious social condition for its owner. The diffusion of writing towards lower levels of the Egyptian society about the end of the Old Kingdom probably served the purpose of marking some kind of social status at a time when royal power was fading, but still had the capacity to maintain a large bureaucracy and to grant honours and prestige to its courtiers (Hagen 2007).

The case of *Tj* exhibits some differences. It cannot be ruled out that he was actually buried at Giza, even if his monument is reported to come from Saqqara. His social condition was apparently slightly more prestigious than that of *Rwd-jb*, as he was actively involved in the organisation of the *hntjw-š* of the palace, he could obtain at least an inscribed stela and his tomb was built because of his condition of *jm3hw* before the pharaoh. Nevertheless he did not display other responsibilities in his funerary inscriptions, nor did he exercise other more important functions concerning the *hntjw-š*, as for example “overseer of the *hntjw-š* of the palace”. As for *Jmm*, his titles were not very elevated but the quality of his stele suggests that he had access to the fine productions of the royal workshops, probably because of his involvement in the activities of the central administration within palatial circles – as expressed in his titles.

So, the monuments discussed display three different levels of quality in the funerary equipment of modest officials of the Memphite region which closely fit the rank and functions of their owners. It would be a truism to assert that they had obtained these objects because of their condition of officials in the service of the king, but we must also remember that this was not always the case. Access to decorated tombs or inscribed objects was more limited during the Fourth Dynasty, whereas the possession of statues, offering-basins and stelae became rather more common from the end of the Old Kingdom and during the First Intermediate Period, even among people who were not officials but who were eager to exhibit a certain social status by means of the kind of prestigious items reserved until then for the members of the royal administration and which conveyed, precisely, the notions of richness, proximity to the king, and familiarity with the codes of elevated culture. The monuments of *Rwd-jb*, *Ttj* and *Jmm* show a tendency towards a broader diffusion of both writing and palatial productions (or their imitations) among broader sections of the Egyptian society. These objects also transmitted the values, culture and the social and cosmological interpretation of the ordered world elaborated by those within the palatial circles and “consumed” by the elite of the kingdom. Prestige and attachment to the values of the higher elite were probably important enough as to order a mastaba or an inscribed object. They are also precious signs of the gradual diffusion of the palatial values among a wider audience within the Egyptian society and of the gradual dissolution of other means of social legitimacy anchored, for example, in private family values (Moreno García 2006, 217–32).