BULLETIN OF THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS



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Volume 51, Numbers 2 and 3, 1972

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Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts
Published quarterly by Founders Society Detroit Institute
of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit Michigan 48202.
The Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts, including all
back volumes, is available from Johnson Reprint Corporation, 111 Fifth Ave., New York, New York 10003.
Subscription \$3.00 a year; single issue \$1.00
Sent free to Founders Society members
Editor: Susan F. Rossen

Designer: Ford and Earl Design Associates

Published through the generosity of the Edsel and Eleanor Ford Education and Communications Fund.

Hours of the Detroit Institute of Arts: Tuesday through Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Closed Monday and holidays

Cover. The Assumption of the Virgin, 1650, Guercino, Italian (1591-1666); oil on canvas, 118-3/4 x 87 in. Josephine and Ernest Kanzler Founders Fund and Robert H. Tannahill Fund (71.1).

OFFERINGS FOR AN OLD KINGDOM GRANARY OFFICIAL

By Henry G. Fischer

The texts on the west wall of Mery-nesut's chapel are laid out in four principal sections, as shown in Figure 2. They include (I) two horizontal lines that take the place of a long architrave, (II) two vertical lines (A) identifying the seated figure of the owner, and a shorter inscription (B) identifying his wife, who is seated beside him, (III) a list of offerings detailing the meal toward which the owner extends one hand, this being schematically represented in the form of an offering stand covered with half-loaves of bread, (IV) the "false door," a niched offering place where the actual offerings were presented. The content of these texts consists of offering formulae (I, IV A), a short statement regarding payment for the tomb (IV F, G), lists of offerings (III, IV E), and the titles and names of the owner and his family, as well as those of the funerary priests who were designated to maintain his offerings.

In addition to the wall in Detroit the tomb of Mery-nesut also vielded a limestone statue (Fig. 3) and a limestone slab (Fig. 4) which was perforated with 21 round holes to serve as a window! Both of these pieces are inscribed with the owner's name and titles. They are presently in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo?

Funerary Texts

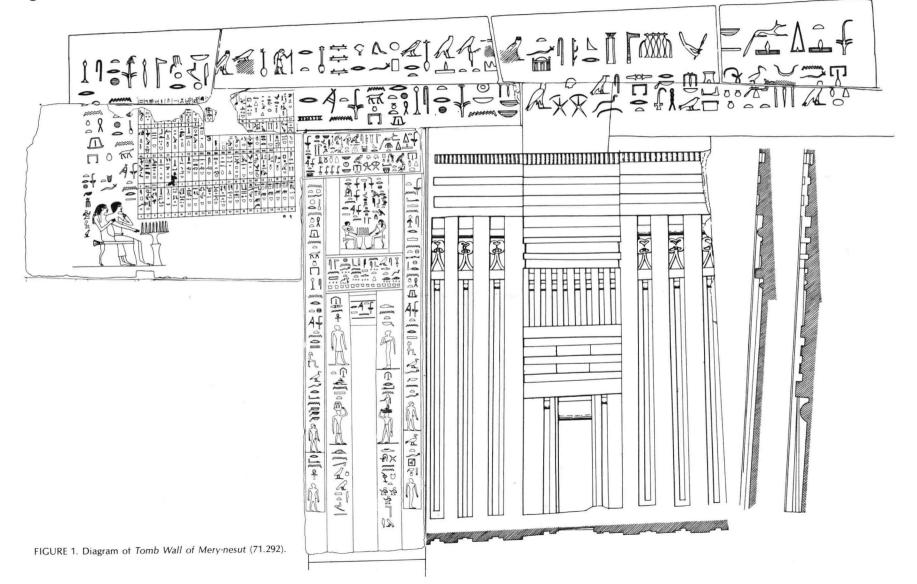
The funerary texts may be translated as follows: I (1) an offering which the king gives, an offering which Anubis (gives), the Lord of the Sacred Land, Who Presides over the Divine Booth, (namely) that he (the owner) be buried in the Western Desert in peace and very well, that he walk upon the good ways (of the Hereafter) having reached a very good old age, (2) and that the voice (of the funerary priests) may be emitted for him on the opening of the (seasonal) year, the first of the (calendrical) year, the Thoth-festival, the wag-festival, the great festival of burning, the procession of Min, the sadj- festival,4 the first of the month, and the half-month, and on every feast and every day, to One Concerned with the King's Property, the Inspector of Keepers of Property of the Granary of the (royal) Residence, Mery-nesut; IV A (1) an offering which the king gives, (an offering which) Anubis gives, Who Presides over the Divine Booth, (namely) burial in the Western Desert, having reached a very good old age, (2) that the voice be emitted for him on the Thoth festival, the wag-festival, the first of the month, the first of the half-month, and on every feast and every day-a thousand of bread, a thousand of beer, a thousand of alabaster jars (of ointment), a thousand of clothing (to) One who is Concerned with the King's Property, Mery-nesut.

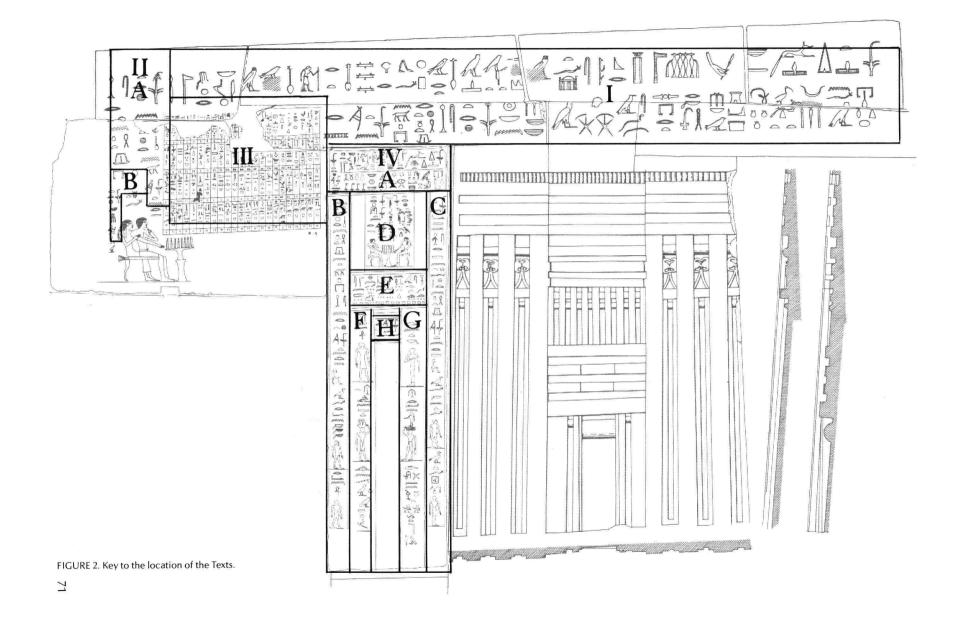
Payment of Workers

The statement referring to the payment of workers is more summary and less explicit than a good many other contemporary examples from Giza and elsewhere: 5 IV (F) I made this with my own rightful property, (G) and the craftsmentherein6 thanked me (literally, praised God for me).

Offering Lists

The long offering list (III: Fig. 5) consists of 92 compartmented entries presented in short columns, each with the required number of portions placed beneath it in a separate compartment? Most of the list shows the signs facing the recipient, as is usually the case, so that they advance towards him; they are accordingly read from left to right. One sign is reversed, however, in the next-to-last compartment of the third register (68), and this heralds a total reversal of orientation in the following and final register (70-92). It is difficult to say whether the change is simply a meaningless lapse into the customary rightward orientation of the hieroglyphs (reading leftward), whether it was caused by the presence of the offering scene on the adjacent false door, or whether the intention was to make the list terminate in front of the offering scene to which it properly belongs. The list includes (1) a libation of water,8 (2) incense, (3) festival scent and (4-9) other ointments, including (8) best cedar 69







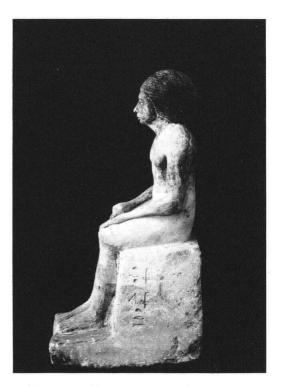


FIGURE 3. Mery-nesut; limestone. Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

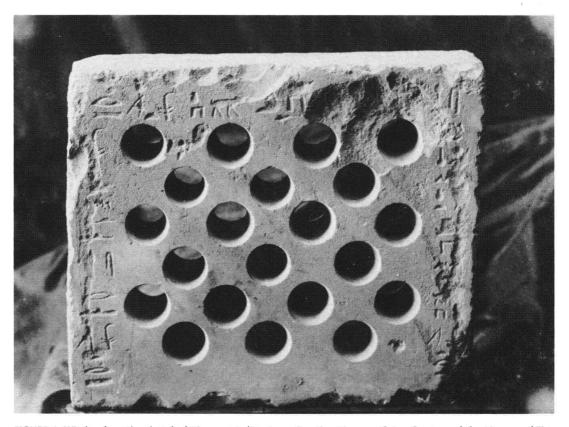


FIGURE 4. Window from the chapel of Mery-nesut; limestone. Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

and (9) best Libvan, (10-11) green and black eye paint, [(12) a pair of cloth strips, (13) burning of incense, (14) two drops of cool water], (15) an offering stand, (16) an offering which the king gives, (17) an offering in the broad hall, (18) breakfast: a loaf and jar, (19) barley bread, (20) baked bread, (21-22) two kinds of beer, (23) a serving of bread, (24) food: bread and beer, (25) a joint of meat, (26) water, (27) natron, (28-30) repeat of items 18-20, (31-42) 12 more kinds of bread, (43) onions, (44) a shoulder of beef? (45) thigh, (46) kidney,10 (47) another cut of meat, (48) rib-cut, (49) roast meat, (50) liver, (51) spleen, (52) flesh, (53) breast meat, (54-57) kinds of geese, (58) pigeon, (59-61) bread and cakes, (62) unidentified food, (63) ale, (64) milky ale,11 (65-66) kinds of beer, (67-69) kinds of drink, (70) fig-wine, (71-74) wine, (75) a jug of Lower Egyptian wine, 12 (76-77) two kinds of bread, (78) unidentified fruit, (79-83) grain, (84) Christ's thorn fruit, (85) cake of same (dried), (86) carob beans, (87) everything sweet, (88) all kinds of vegetables,13 (89) every kind of offering, (90) half-loaves, (91) the best of the offering table, (92) choice cuts (of meat).

The shorter list of offerings, beneath the offering scene on the false door (IV E),¹⁴ includes (1-2) green and black eye paint, (3) cake of Christ's thorn fruit, (4) unidentified fruit, (5-6) two kinds of bread, (7) incense.

Names and Titles

The first two titles of Mery-nesut, "one who is concerned with the king's property" (Fig. 6 [1]) and "priest of the king" (2), are claimed by a great many officials of the Old Kingdom, one title associating the official with the living king, the other with the king's funerary cult in the chapel of the pyramid temple. It will be noticed that the first of these also occurs in the wife's titulary, where it may, however, be subject to a different reading and interpretation, i.e., "one who is known to the king." 15

Of the three remaining titles in Mery-nesut's inscriptions, the most important, to judge from its position in relation to the other two, is (3) "inspector of the archivists of royal documents." Although the nature of the documents is not specified, the following titles (4-5) suggest that they were concerned with the granary, for royal documents of the granary are mentioned in other Old Kingdom inscriptions, 16 and "archivists" (literally, "those concerned with papyri")17 are elsewhere associated both with title no. 418 and with scenes showing the grain being measured and recorded (Fig. 7, at far right); 19 furthermore titles 4 and 5 are themselves connected with "the Residence," in other words with the central administration of the king.

As Hermann Junker has suggested, the title "strong-of-voice belonging to the granary" (4) evidently designates the official who supervised the measurement of grain and relayed the tally of measures to a nearby group of scribes, who set it down in writing and added up the totals?0 Junker fails to note, however, that at least one scene actually shows such an official making a gesture of counting (Fig. 8)21 Similar gestures, showing one or more fingers extended or the hand raised with all fingers open or fisted, accompany several other scenes of grain measurement dating to the Old Kingdom and later,22 but the tallier is rarely identified and in one case he is a "custodian" (literally, "concerned with property")?3 This case does not necessarily conflict with the other one, since Mery-nesut was himself "inspector of the custodians of the granary" (5) and it is likely enough that he had one of his subordinates cry out the measures while he merely supervised this activity.

Inasmuch as granary measurements were one of the principal bases of revenue and taxation, it is not surprising that the "strong-of-voice" is sometimes mentioned in a judicial contest?4 Possibly in this connection, and more certainly in connection with the storage of gold, an "inspector of the strong-of-voice" is known (Fig. 9)25 but it remains uncertain that this supervisory rank also applied to the granary?6

In keeping with these activities, the "strong-ofvoice" is represented in the company of scribes and archivists27 and in one case he is called "strong-of-voice of the archives" (literally, "house of documents")?8 These associations reinforce the probable relationship of title no. 3.

The second title of Mery-nesut's wife is more unusual than any of those mentioned thus far, since only one other female "overseer of dancers" is known?9 In the other case the woman is also designated as "overseer of all recreation of the king" and as "overseer of the harem of the king." In the present case the context is not specified; here again the dances may have been intended purely for enjoyment, but it should be noted that the temple and 73

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OFFERING LISTS: TRANSLITERATION AND NOTES

Short list: (1) w³gw¹ (2) mśd⟨m>t (3) nbś t (4) išd (5) hbnnt (6) hnfw t w³d

(7) śntr. Long list: (1) mw śt (2) śntr [ht?] (3) śti [hb] (4) hknw (5) śft (6) nhrm

(7) tw³wt (8) h³tt 'š (9) h³tt thnw (10) w³dw (11) mśd⟨m>t [(12) wnhwy (13) śntr ht

(14) kbh t³wy] (15) h³[t] (16) htp nśwt (17) htp ⟨imy⟩ wśht² (18) i'-r šnś, dwiw (19)

t wt (20) t rth (21) dśrt (22) hnkt h⟨n>mś (23) f³t šnś, ' (24) šbw šnś, dwiw (25) śwt

(26) mw (27) bd (28) i'-r šnś, dwiw (29) t wt (30) t rth (31) htw (32) nhrwy (33)

dpt (34) pzn (35) šnś (36) t imy t³ (37) hbnnwt (38) hnfw (39) kmhw km³ (40) id⟨³>⟩ t

h³.f³ (41) p³wt (42) t ³šr (43) hdw (44) tpy hpš (45) iw² (46) zhn (47) śwt (48)

śpr (49) ³šrt (50) mrzt (51) nnšm (52) h² (53) if h³t (54) śr² (55) tr (56) zt

(57) ś⟨r⟩ (58) mnwt (59) t zif (60) š²t (61) np³t (62) mzt (63) dśrt (64) i³tt dśrt

(65) hnkt hnmś (66) hnkt (67) śh⟨p⟩t (68) ph³ (69) śh⟨r⟩ dwiw (70) d³b (71-74) irp

(75) 'bš irp mh (76) hnfw (77) hbnnwt (78) išd (79) śht hdt (80) śht w³dt (81) 'gt

zwt (82) 'gt it (83) b³⟨b³⟩wt (84) nbś (65) t nbś (86) w²h (80) iht nb⟨t⟩ bnrt (88)

rnpt nbt (89) hnk⟨t⟩ nb⟨t⟩ nb⟨t⟩ (90) gśw (91) h³t w⟨d⟩hw (92) ś⟨t⟩pt.6

- 1. Here as elsewhere the archaic form $\sqrt[4]{}$ is used, as in inscriptions as late as Dyn. VI; e.g. Junker, Giza V, Figs. 6, 15, 25, 26.
- 2. Hmśi "sit" is omitted after this entry.
- 3. Note has 1 "behind him" instead of has "behind thee". This is otherwise known only from Cairo Cat. 1465; Hassan, Gîza VI, Ft. 2, p. 339.
- 4. Wrongly in place of <u>r</u>-goose, which would be expected here; $\underline{\$r}$ occurs later, in its correct position (no. 57).
- 5. The sign following w'h should be (Gardiner's Sign List N 13) rather than (Sign List D 24), which is correctly used in no. 48.
- 6. Below the long list, and towards the right, are two signs: \prod and \bigcap . The first might represent \bigcap or possibly \bigcap (in \bigcap [\bigcap] \bigcap "overseer of funerary priests"?). In any case it seems likely that the signs belong to an inscription, the rest of which was executed in paint, perhaps accompanied by a figure. This—to judge from the orientation of \bigcap —would have faced to the right.

OWNER: Fine Passim

TITLES: (1) → S I, II A, IV A, D

- (2) ⊋m / IVD, statue
- (3) FM = 112 IVC FM = 112 | Window
- (4) OE IS NE IVB

 WEST STATE WINDOW

 OE SI NE IVC

 TA *

WIFE: STAR IND

TITLES: (1) ≩ ⊕ IIB, IVD

(2) &= 1 (S)

SONS: (1) \$\(\Sigma\) \$\(\Sigma\) \$\(\Sigma\) B

(2) = m f IVB

(3) m ~ IVC

* possibly read:

DAUGHTER: D & TYC

FUNERARY PRIESTS: (\Re) (1) $\stackrel{\bullet}{\longrightarrow}$ \forall \square \vdash

(2) = m 1 IVG

FUNERARY PRIESTESS: (P) = IV F

NO TITLE: (f.): \Longrightarrow \smile IV G

NOTES ON THE TITLES AND NAMES

Owner: In inscription IIA the sign contently belongs to read simultaneously as a determinative of R and . This possibility in turn suggests that titles (4) and (5) both end with n snwt/n hnw, reading each of these phrases twice.

Title (3) is read shd iryw-md3t n w nswt. Wife: The name K3(.i)-m-mswt(.i) is not attested elsewhere but cf. Wife: The name K3(.i)-m-mswt(.i) is not attested elsewhere but cf. Supplies the resonant of the selim Hassan, Gfza II, Fig. 94 and Hermann Ranke, Die Agyptischen Personennamen I, 339 (23), and with the selim Hassan, Gfza II, Fig. 60.

In title (2) note that with a since clearly the fem. pl. of "dancers". The parallel title in Hassan, Gfza II, Fig. 228, has with has which looks like "dancers" or masc. "dancers". Son (3): For cf. Cf. (Hermann Junker, Gfza VII, 72), var. With challed the since content of the sign of the widently replaces with the sent of the sign of the widently replaces with the meaning be woman without title: Perhaps read dn.t-k(3.i); cf. it.t-k3(.i), Ranke, Personennamen I, 416 (12); ir.t-k3(.i), ibid., II, 266 (5), both of which are feminine. Might the meaning be "One whom my ka has kneaded"?

funerary cults also called for dancing, and a male "overseer of the dancers of the god" is known from Giza³⁰

As a rule, Egyptian names had a recognizable meaning, and in most cases the names of Mery-nesut's family and retainers can be translated. He himself is "Beloved of the King," while his wife's name is probably to be interpreted as "My ka is my children." The sons are

NOTES

- Cf. Hermann Junker, Gîza III: 190. I do not know of another example which has an inscription, and this feature suggests that the stone may originally have been intended to serve as an offering slab.
- 2. The statue is Journal d'Entrée no. 37713 (cf. W. S. Smith, A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom: 65); the window is Journal d'Entrée no. 37728. In both cases the photographs are from the field negatives of the Museum of Fine Arts and I am obliged to Dr. William Kelly Simpson for the use of them.
- 3. The words "in peace" would normally be expected after the following phrase "that he may walk upon the good ways," and the words "very well" (nfr wrt) may mistakenly anticipate the phrase "having reached a very good old age" (i³w nfr wrt) at the end of the same line. But nfr wrt does occur—

(1) "Re is possessor of kas," (2) "Re is a possessor of life," and (3) "His(?) father is the possessor of a ka." A daughter is called "Hathor is acclaimed." The funerary priests are (1) "Min is a possessor of life," and (2) "One who belongs to Re," and the priestess is "Jackal." It does not seem possible to explain the name of another woman, who has no title but is probably a second funerary priestess.

albeit rarely—in a somewhat similar context: "may he be buried in the necropolis very well" (L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches* 1, Cairo cat. 1485); "may be buried in the western desert very well" (*ibid.*, 1526); cf. also T. G. H. James, *British Museum: Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae* 1, 2nd ed., p1. 17 (BM 682), and Cairo T. 6/4/49/1 (Fischer, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 7 [1960]: 303).

- 4. This is sometimes called "the month-festival of sadj"; hence the terminal sign, which evidently represents the moon, as in the following writings:
 - (a) A X
- (b) A

Example (a) is from Selim Hassan, *Gîza* VII: 26, fig. 20; similar writings are discussed by Junker, *Gîza* VII: 129. Example (b) is from Hassan, *Gîza* IX: 23 and p1. 8.



FIGURE 7. Measuring and Recording Grain; detail of painted limestone relief from the Tomb of Ptah-Sekhem-Ankh. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (04.1760). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts.

- Cf. B. Grdseloff, Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte 42 (1943): 31 ff.; H. Junker, Cîza IX: 74-76; H. Fischer, Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 57 (1961): 60-64.
- 6. "Therein" probably refers to "this," i.e. the tomb; cf. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs:* 50, "I made this tomb with my own property... As for all the people who did things therein, when they had done they thanked me exceedingly for it, (for) they did this (in return) for bread, for beer, for clothing, for oil and barley and emmer, exceedingly much." A later statement of the same kind says "then shall that which they did there, in the necropolis, remain" (H. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millenium B.C.*: 159 [c]).
- 7. The most detailed compilation of such lists is to be found in Hassan, Glza VI, pt. 2.
- 8. This first entry seems to show a standing figure making a libation rather than the usual kneeling figure; the standing figure is not known before the end of the First Intermediate Period (cf. Fischer, Dendera in the Third Millenium B.C.: 197), but just possibly this case is like one shown in Hassan, Gîza VI, pt. 2, p1. 98 (103), where the figure crouches.
- 9. Literally, "head of foreleg," with the shank removed, as represented here and in many other lists. The addition of the word "head" is exceptional but occurs at Tehna (Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypt[®] [1902]: 122 ff. [pl. V]), and at least once again at Giza (Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts 32 [Boston, 1934], Fig. 2, p. 2). Cf. the use of tp as "Ende eines Knochens," Erman-Grapow, Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache 5:266 (1).

- 10. Following Dawson's suggestion in Alan Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica 2: 253*-254*
- R. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian: 325; for "ale" Faulkner refers to R. Caminos, Late-Egyptian Miscellanies: 425.
- 12. This combines two entries; see Hassan, *Gîza* VI, pt. 2: 401-406.
- 13. Numerous offering scenes of the Old Kingdom refer to śtpt rnpt nbt "select cuts and all kinds of vegetables," which are often presented, in that order, by a row of bearers, the first of whom bring cuts of meat and fowl. I doubt the validity of Junker's "offerings of the Year-festivals" in this context, despite the arguments he has marshalled in his Gîza III: 111-13 (and similarly Hassan, ibid.: 99-102). One might, however, translate "all growing things" as does Margaret Murray, Seven Memphite Tomb Chapels: 19 (90).
- 14. For offerings listed on this part of the false door see H. Fischer, Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheiden te Leiden 41 (1960), p. 3. As a rule the orientation is rightward, as in the present case; see also Junker, Cîza, V, fig. 41, p. 147; Silvio Curto, Gli scavi italiani a El-Ghiza, Fig. 22 and pl. 2.
- 15. Gunn in C. M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*: 157; H. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millenium B.C.*: 70.
- Berlin 1202 (Aegyptische Inschriften 1: 53): a scribe of royal documents of the granary; also Hassan, Gîza, VII: 26, fig. 20, an inspector of such scribes.

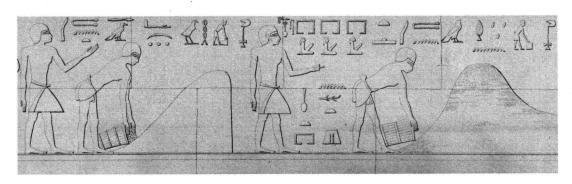


FIGURE 8. Official Counting Measurements of Grain; limestone relief from Saqqara. Detail from C. R. Lepsius, Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, Berlin, 1849-1859, Vol. IV, Chap. II: 103 (a).

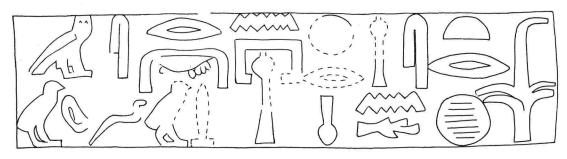


FIGURE 9. Inscription of Mesdjer at Giza.

- 17. This less restrictive translation seems preferable to "he who is connected with the letters," as proposed by Gunn in *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte* 25 (1925): 251.
- H. Wild, Le tombeau de Ti III pl. 150; Hassan, Gîza V: 266, fig. 122.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 04.1760; cf. A. Mariette, Mastabas, D. 41.
- 20. Gıza VI: 201-202.
- R. Lepsius Denkmaler 2, pl. 103 (a). A second example is certainly to be recognized in L. Borchardt, Grabdenkmal des Königs Ne-user-re: 123, fig. 103 (a).
- 22. For the Old Kingdom, cf. Hellmuth Müller, "Darstellungen von Gebärden," Mitteilungen des deutschen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo 7 (1937): 67; for later examples, see H. E. Winlock, Models of Daily Life . . . from the Tomb of Meket-Rē, pls. 20-21; J. de Morgan et al., Catalogue des Monuments 1:194; N. De G. Davies, Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rē, pl. 51.
- 23. J. E. Quibell, Excavations at Saggara (1907-1908), pl. 62.
- 24. H. Fischer in Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung 7 (1960): 309-10; esp. Orientalia 30 (1961): 174.
- 25. Ibid.; the more certain occurrence is attested on a lintel photographed by Reisner at Giza (G 1011; Museum of Fine Arts neg. B 7599) and previously recorded by J. T. Dennis, Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology 27 (1905): 32, no. 3, Fig. 9 is based on the photograph, kindly provided by Dr. Simpson; it reads: "One Concerned with the Property of the King, Inspector of the Strong of Voice of the Treasury, Keeper of the Stores of Gold, Mesdjeru." For the name, cf. Hermann Ranke, Die Aegyptischen Personennamen 1: 165 (29).

- 26. My example of an "inspector of the strong-of-voice" in Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung 7 (1960): 310, n. 20, is based on a misreading of Mery-nesut's offering slab. Another architrave (unpublished, Michailides Collection, Cairo) mentions, as donor of the monument, an inspector of the strong-of-voice belonging to the Great Mansion; he is also "eldest of the house," another title associated with the storage and dispensing of grain.
- 27. Note 18 above; in the second instance he carries a document
- 28. H. Kayser, Die Mastaba des Uhemka: 37, 63, 77.
- 29. Hassan, Gîza II, fig. 228 foll.: 206.
- 30. For this and related titles, cf. Emma Brunner-Traut, Der Tanz im alten Aegypten: 31-32.
- 31. An adequate English equivalent for "ka" is scarcely to be found; it refers to the sustaining spirit of the individual, regarded as a separate entity which was joined after death. The reading of the last name is based on the parallels quoted in the "notes on the titles and names." For the use of this term in other personal names, see H. Ranke (note 25 above) 2: 208-16; Ursula Schweitzer, Das Wesen des Ka: 30-39.
- 32. The peculiar writing of this name will be discussed in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 59 (1973).
- 33. One possibility is mentioned in the "notes on the titles and names." Ranke (note 25 above) lists this occurrence (431, 26), but offers no interpretation.

Addendum: In "Offering lists" note 1, it should be noted that the archaic form of the hieroglyph also recurs in the Middle Kingdom: W. M. F. Petrie, Lahun II, Pl. 47 (19).