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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

A feminine example of *wḏ ḥm·k*, 'thy majesty commands' in the Fourth Dynasty

ALTHOUGH I had the privilege of looking over the newly published *Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* while it was still in preparation,¹ one portion of that publication is new to me, and I think it deserves a few more words of comment. The most important item is a block of relief (fig. 1)² from the small chapel of the original mastaba, which Reisner plausibly ascribed to Queen Hetepheres II.³ On p. 3 of the publication the uppermost signs are grouped together so as to read [s]mrw m . . . , while the remaining signs, in front of the figure, are read *ḥmt·t mḥ Hr*. *Ḥmt·t* is certainly correct and it equally certainly means 'thy majesty', referring to the queen toward whom the figure is advancing.

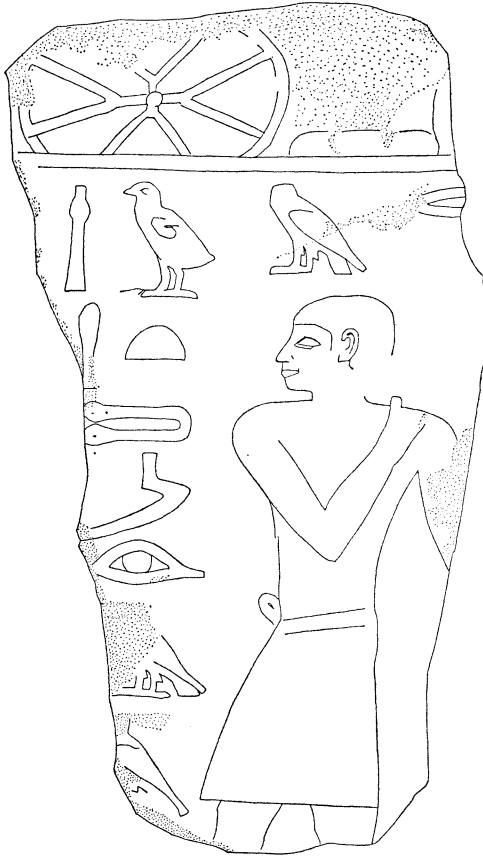


FIG. 1

As far as I know, this is the first and only Old-Kingdom occurrence of the feminine form of *ḥm·k*; indeed, it seems to be the only occurrence of *ḥmt* that is known prior to Hatshepsut's use of this term in the Eighteenth Dynasty, nearly 1,000 years later.⁴

The signs preceding *ḥmt·t* are evidently to be connected with it as part of the same vertical column. The first sign does not look at all like *mr* (𓄿),⁵ but may well be 𓄿, which sometimes shows the ball of cord at the top of the stick, rather than at the centre, as is more usually the case.⁶ Examples very similar to this one have, in at least two instances, been mistakenly interpreted as 𓄿 in recent studies.⁷ The last sign of the column, although only partly preserved, is clearly 𓄿 rather than 𓄿.

¹ Dows Dunham and William K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, Boston, 1974. A minor consequence of that reading is their adoption of the new interpretation of one of the queen's titles, as proposed in *JEA* 60, 94–9, although a reference to the article has been inadvertently omitted.

² Drawn from the photograph in pl. 13c.


³ Another segment of relief (pl. 13a) is also of special interest because it shows a female dwarf (not a male, as stated on p. 3) as in a similar scene in the tomb of Queen *Nbt* (Zaki Saad, *ASAE* 40 [1941], 683 and pl. 79); cf. also Petrie, *Athribis*, pl. 1, and Kaplony, *Inscripfen der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Supplement*, p. 33 and pl. 5 (Abb. 1067).

⁴ Cf. *Wb.* III, 92 and Gardiner, *Egn. Gr.* 75.

⁵ The substitution of 𓄿 for 𓄿 does occur in a faulty writing of the title *smr* (*Urk.* I, 209 [4]), but this anomaly is purely coincidental.

⁶ The ball of cord is near the top in BM 1223 (T. G. H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts*, I², pl. 8 [2]) and is even higher, like the present example, in Davies, *Deir el Gebrāwi*, I, pl. 16; Junker, *Giza*, III, pl. 2 (two examples, one




[Footnotes 6 and 7 continued on p. 247]


Thus the inscription in question is probably to be read as *wḏ ḥmt-ṯ mꜣꜣ . . .*, 'thy majesty commands the viewing of . . .', referring to the presentation of offerings. The figure who makes this statement is evidently leading an animal, and the signs above him are to be interpreted as an incomplete title: *imy-r*. . . . A direct address of this kind, directed to the recipient of offerings and referring to the 'viewing' of the presentation, is known from a similar context in two Fifth-Dynasty tombs at Giza, one copied from the other: , 'this is to be seen, O beloved.'¹ In the present case the missing object of *mꜣꜣ* may similarly be 'this', but the lacuna would admit an alternative of slightly greater length.



The use of the term *wḏ* is generally confined to the king before the Sixth Dynasty and even at that late a date it is applied to non-royal persons only secondarily;² thus at Deir el-Gebrawi a scribe has the epithet *iri wḏ nb-f*, 'who executes the command of his lord,' who is presumably the local nomarch, and two notables of Dendera claim the epithet *rs-tp r wḏt srw*, 'vigilant concerning that which the officials command'.³ As a rule the non-royal equivalent is *wḏ-mdw*,⁴ although this too is associated with the king in the fairly common title *imy-r wḏwt-mdw nt nswt*. The entire phrase *wḏ ḥmt-ṯ* is therefore highly exceptional: this is not only the earliest recorded instance of a queen who is called 'thy majesty', but is also the first instance of a queen who 'commands'.

HENRY G. FISCHER


A further occurrence of ideographic in an Old-Kingdom name

IN my discussion of *Kꜣ-z-nb-f*, 'the *kꜣ* of a man is his lord' (*JE* 60, 247-9), I have failed to note an important parallel. This is  (Junker, *Giza*, II, fig. 20), which Junker (p. 166) restores , 'Inj-ıştf, on the basis of the name  (Ranke, *PN* I, 35 [23]). The

in the title *ḥry [s]štꜣ n wḏwt [mdw]* etc., and the other in the name *Rwḏ*); Fisher, *Giza*, pls. 46 (2), 48 (4); so too Fakhry, *Sept Tombeaux*, fig. 1, p. 4 (see next note). This development eventually led to the more distinctive form  (Gardiner's V 25), and it should be noted that this form begins to appear at the end of Dyns. XII and in Dyn. XIII: e.g. Habachi, *JE* 39 (1953), 51, fig. 1 (tmp. Sesostri III); Louvre C 5 (first year of Ammenemes III); Louvre C 11 (Khendjer).

¹ The last example of  cited in the previous note occurs in the name *ꜣnh-wḏ-s*, which is misread as *ꜣnh-ḥḏw-s*. Similarly a name that looks as though it is to be read *Hḏbt* is more probably *Wḏb-ḏt-i*; see Fischer, *Dendera*, pl. 25 and p. 209 (j), and cf. the examples of the -sign *ibid.*, 54, fig. 12.

² Junker, *Giza*, III, p. 73, fig. 8b, pl. 3 and p. 213; the other example is shown *ibid.*, p. 72, Fig. 8a (from *LD* II, pl. 54).

³ Davies, *Deir el Gebrāwi*, I, pl. 16; cf. Junker, *Giza*, VIII, fig. 35 and p. 83 (steward of *Idw* I). Ordinarily epithets such as *iri wḏt nb-f* refer to the king (e.g. *Urk.* I, 69 [2], 129 [7], etc.). Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente*, p. 60, comments on the contrast between the royal use of *wḏ* and the non-royal use of *ḏḏ* in the Dahshur decree of Pepy I (*Urk.* I, 210 [5]), but notes that one of the Coptos decrees of Pepy II speaks of any official *zšty-fy wḏw*, 'who will write decrees' (*Urk.* I, 282 [4]); here *zš wḏ* may be another circumlocution for the use of *wḏ* alone. The use of the phrase  in the mouth of a rural singer, Wild, *Ti* III, pl. 152, does not necessarily attest the non-royal use of *wḏ*; it more probably represents the name of a song, in answer to the question of the flautist facing him: *ışzt pw*, 'What's it to be?' The name would consist of the opening words, referring to the king or a god, just as the word *kꜣw* 'the bulls' likewise seems to identify a song in the next register (pl. 153). Cf. Eрман, *Reden, Rufe und Lieder*, 22; his interpretation of *wḏ n(i)* as 'befiehl mir' is in any case unsuitable because it is the singer who commands the flautist, by means of the hand signals he is making (as described by Hickmann, *ZÄZ* 83 [1958], 96-127), and not the other way round.

⁴ Petrie, *Denderah*, pls. 6 (right, second from bottom), 11A (right, sixth from top). Janssen, *Traditioneele Autobiografie*, I, 58 (II Ad) gives a few non-royal examples of *wḏ* from the Eleventh Dynasty and later.

⁵ *Wḏt-mdw* (and never *wḏ*) is frequent in non-royal legal documents: see Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften aus dem Alten Reich* (Vienna, 1970), pls. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15. Cf. also the epithet *wḏ-mdw n srw*, 'who gives commands to the officials,' Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, 135 (no. 71).