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# AN ESSAY IN DOCUMENT TRANSMISSION: *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh* AND THE EARLIEST *hrjw rnpt*\*

Peter Der Manuelian, University of Chicago

## I

AMONG the unique and unparalleled specimens of Old Kingdom relief sculpture is the important but misunderstood “duty table” on the east wall of the second, or newer, Tehne tomb of *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh* (= tomb no. 1), Keeper of the King’s Property and Steward of the Great Domain (*hwt ꜥꜣt*) during the early Fifth Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> In between two representations of *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh* seated with his wife, *Hꜣt-hknw*, are two duty rosters, one above the other, which designate monthly mortuary cult service for both Hathor, Lady of Tehne, and a certain Keeper of the King’s Property *Hnw-kꜣ* (fig. 1). In no other tomb is such an elaborate “calendar” to be found. The table evenly divides five *tꜣ(?)*-units of land each month among the deceased’s wife and children and contains a large-scale representation of each individual inside his own appropriate “box.” Furthermore, although the two rosters bear the same list of names, they arrange them in opposite order (i.e., the wife is first in the table above and last in the table below, while the order of the month designations remains the same). Thus no one person had to serve two cults in the same month.

Two important features of *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*’s table have, in my opinion, been misinterpreted. The first is the caption ; the argument has enjoyed wide acceptance that this is not the earliest attestation of *hrjw rnpt*, the so-called five epagomenal days. The second is the extent to which the table on *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*’s tomb wall accurately represents a stone version of an original papyrus document. Recent opinion has it that the table is a composite scene containing excerpts from numerous decrees and other documents. An attempt is made below to demonstrate that *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*’s table does indeed contain the earliest known reference to the epagomenal days and could well represent a copy of a single, original legal document in its entirety. Both problems revolve around the *hrjw rnpt* caption, and I will therefore deal with it before the turning to the copy question. But a closer look at the table and its various scholarly interpretations is the first task at hand.

\* I am indebted to Professor Klaus Baer, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, for numerous suggestions and improvements on preliminary drafts on this paper.

Abbreviations follow the standard forms found in W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (Wiesbaden, 1975–).

<sup>1</sup> *PM* IV, p. 131 (=tomb no. 13 of Fraser);

G. Fraser, “The Early Tombs at Tehneh,” *ASAE* 3 (1902): 122–30; G. Maspero, “Sur le sens de certains tableaux qui décorent la tombe de Noukan-khou,” *ASAE* 3 (1902): 131–38. For most recent treatments of aspects of both of *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*’s tombs, see E. Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 67 (Opladen, 1981), pp. 38–65 (with many additions and corrections); and G. Roquet, “Chronologie relative des changements phonétiques affectant [z] et [r] et dialectalismes provinciaux à l’ancien empire,” in *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron* I, BdE 81 (Cairo, 1979), pp. 437–62.

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0022-2968/86/4501-00001\$1.00.

## II

Figure 1 shows most of the table in question as reproduced in the original discussion of the tomb by G. Fraser.<sup>2</sup> Four main texts accompany the table. For the sake of simplicity, the texts are lettered A–D, the lettering scheme devised by W. Helck (see fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Translations of the texts follow:

- A. These are the *ka*-priests whom (I) have designated as/for the children of (my) estate in order to perform priestly service for Hathor. Two *stꜣt* of fields have been conveyed by the Majesty of *Mn-kꜣw-R<sup>c</sup>* to these priests in order to perform priestly service therefrom.
- B. It is, further, these men who should make invocation-offerings for: the Keeper of the King's Property *Hnw-kꜣ*, his father, his mother, his children, and his entire family.
- C. It is the Majesty of *Wsr-kꜣ.f* who commanded that (I) perform priestly service for Hathor, Lady of *Rꜣ-jnt* (Tehne). As for all property which will enter the temple, I am indeed the one who performs priestly service over all property of the reversion (restoring  $\overline{\text{w}}$ ) into the temple. It is, further, these children (of mine) who should perform priestly service for Hathor, Lady of *Rꜣ-jnt*, just as (I) used to do myself, when I have traveled to the beautiful West as a possessor of veneration. The [fields?] are under the charge (*hr ꜥwj*) of these children (of mine).
- D. It is, further, these children (of mine) who should make invocation-offerings for the Keeper of the King's property *Hnw-kꜣ*, his father, his mother, his children, and his entire family during the *wꜣg*-festival, the festival of Thoth<sup>4</sup> and (every?) festival every day.

The horizontal label at the top of the table lists the “Keeper of the King's Property and Steward of the Great Domain *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*; his wife, the Keeper of the King's Property *Hꜣt-hknw*, and her children.” The next horizontal row bears the separately listed names of *Hꜣt-hknw* and her children along with some additional *ka*-priests.<sup>5</sup> The “determinatives” or large-scale representations of the individuals fill up the next row of boxes, while underneath them appear first the individual months of the year, one per person, then the three seasons indicated immediately below them. The final horizontal row in Hathor's endowment is taken up with the individual five *tꜣ(?)*-allotments<sup>6</sup> of fields for each person involved.

Below the two lines occupied by text C begins the table for the nobleman *Hnw-kꜣ*. Once again come the individual months and below them the three season names. Still further below these we find the list of children again, but this time without the large

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, “Early Tombs,” pl. 4.

<sup>3</sup> W. Helck, *Altägyptische Aktenkunde des 3. und 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, MÄS 31 (Berlin, 1974), p. 32, fig. 24.

<sup>4</sup> On the significance and interrelationship of these two festivals, see H. Altenmüller in *LÄ*, vol. 2, col.

174 (“Feste”).

<sup>5</sup> On the critical question of whether the figure third from the end (with text E) is a member of the family, see sec. III and nn. 36–37 below.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. K. Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area in the Old Kingdom,” *JNES* 15 (1956): 115–16.

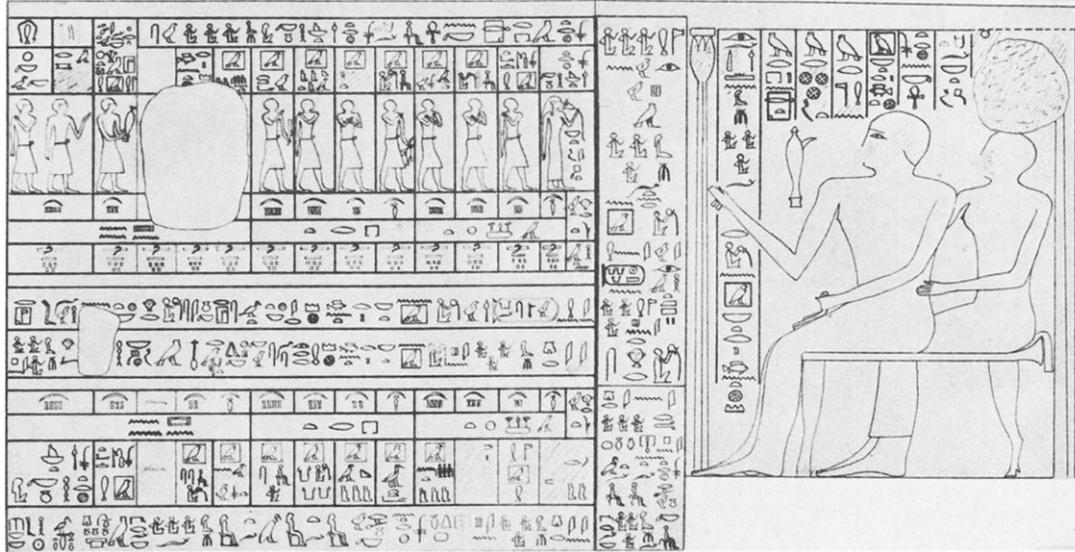


FIG. 1.—Detail of duty table of *Nj-k3-nh*. Tehneh tomb 1 (= Fraser no. 13), east wall (after Fraser, "The Early Tombs of Tehneh," *ASAE* 3 [1902]: pl. 4). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Text E												Text A
Text C												
Text D												Text B

FIG. 2.—Texts contained in the duty table of *Nj-k 3-nh* (after Helck, *Altägyptische Aktenkunde des 3. und 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, MÄS 31 [Berlin, 1974], p. 32, fig. 24).

“determinative” figures and in reverse order. Thus the timetable remains constant to both cults, but the personnel involved shifts positions. The fact that the eleventh slot is completely blank<sup>7</sup> in both cults will be dealt with below.

The area critical to our purposes is shown in figure 3. A brief review of selected publications demonstrates the disputed meaning of *hrjw rnpt*. Fraser labeled it “new year’s day” in his translation.<sup>8</sup> Both G. Maspero and J. H. Breasted preferred to read the “five epagomenal days,”<sup>9</sup> and this interpretation—that *Hdt-hknw*’s mortuary cult obligations for Hathor included both I 3<sup>h</sup>t and the epagomenal days—prevailed for some decades in the scholarly literature.<sup>10</sup>

In 1960, however, E. Winter proposed an alternative interpretation for *hrjw rnpt*,<sup>11</sup> prompted by what he saw as four serious problems connected to the original epagomenal days explanation:

1. If someone were truly assigned five such additional days of mortuary service, why was the corresponding field allotment not also increased?

<sup>7</sup> Even the field-allotment box in the Hathor cult above should be corrected to an empty state, as per Sethe’s second edition of *Urk.* I, 26,5; Fraser incorrectly filled it in with  $\frac{\text{H}}{\text{H}}$ , “Early Tombs,” pl. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Fraser, “Early Tombs,” p. 126, entries 4–5.

<sup>9</sup> Maspero, “Certains Tableaux,” pp. 134–35; Breasted, *ARE* I, p. 102 (§218).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. Meyer, *Aegyptische Chronologie* (Berlin, 1904), p. 210, and *Nachträge*, p. 6, n. 1; K. Sethe, *Die Zeitrechnung der alten Aegypter im Verhältnis zu der der andern Völker* (Göttingen, 1919), vol. 1,

p. 303; H. Winlock, “The Origins of the Ancient Egyptian Calendar,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society (PAPS)* 83 (1940): 459, n. 38; S. Schott, *Altägyptische Festdaten* (Wiesbaden, 1950), p. 5, n. 2; R. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, SAOC 26 (Chicago, 1950), p. 52, § 263; Helck and Otto, *Kleines Wörterbuch der Aegyptologie*<sup>2</sup> (Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 92–93, esp. n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> E. Winter, “Zur frühesten Nennung der Epagomenentage und deren Stellung am Anfang des Jahres,” *WZKM* 56 (1960): 262–66.

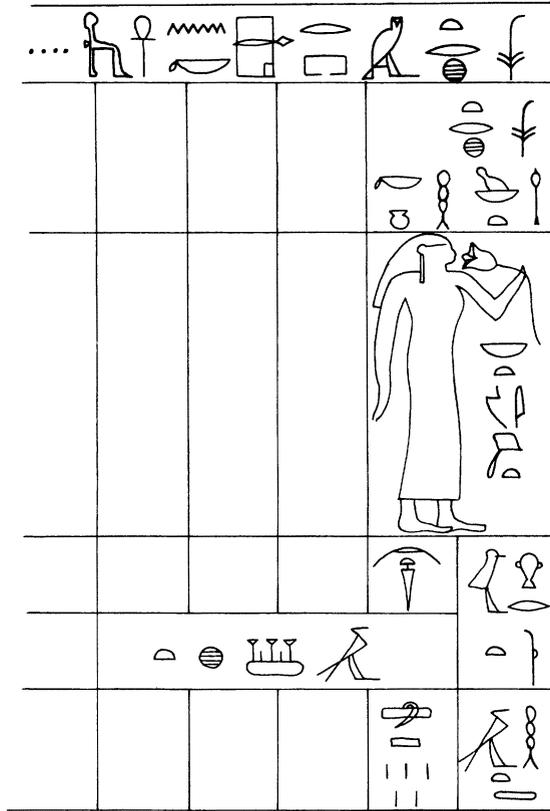


FIG. 3.—Detail sketch of duty table of *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh* showing the position of *hrjw rnpt*

2. Normally the epagomenal days are attached to the end of the year; thus *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh*'s *hrjw rnpt*, occurring at the beginning of the year is an unparalleled and dubious example.<sup>12</sup>
3. Although the writing of the epagomenal days does vary, for example,  $\text{⊙} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈}$  (Neuserre)<sup>13</sup> and  $\text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⊙}$  (Pyr. §1961C, Pepi II), one always expects the "five days"  $\text{⊙} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈}$  to be written, or else the meaning of the phrase itself *hrjw rnpt* "which is on the year" would make little sense; but the  $\text{⊙} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈}$  are missing from *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh*'s two tables.
4. *hrjw rnpt* occurs in the Hathor table directly above the  $\text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈}$  ("fields") rubric, i.e., in the descriptive caption heading column rather than in the substantive part of the table itself.

Winter's alternative explanation for  $\text{⋈} \text{⋈} \text{⋈}$  stems from his fourth observation listed above. He prefers to take *hrjw rnpt* literally as that "was auf dem Jahr ist," i.e., "what

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 263, esp. nn. 5–6.

<sup>13</sup> H. Kees in F. W. von Bissing, *Das Re-Heiligtum*

*des Königs Ne-Woser-Re* (Leipzig, 1928), vol. 3, p. 51 and pl. 28, no. 432.

the year contains” (preposition *hr* plus expression of time).<sup>14</sup> Thus the term would indeed comprise a descriptive rubric heading for the various divisions of the year, just as the rubric *ḫt*, “fields,” heads the divisions of land units assigned to each member listed in the table. The position of *hrjw rnpt* directly over *ḫt* seems to support a parallel explanation of both terms as headings rather than divisions assigned to any individual.

E. Edel accepted Winter’s explanation and cited it in the Nachträge to his *Altägyptische Grammatik*.<sup>15</sup> P. Posener-Kriéger followed suit in her translation and commentary to the Abu Sir papyri.<sup>16</sup> T. Mrsich made no reference to Winter in his monograph on Egyptian “house-documents,” preferring to reconstruct a thirteen-month year, since there are thirteen columns or boxes (one of which was left blank) in the table.<sup>17</sup> H. Goedicke not only agreed with Winter but cited *jmj rnpt* as a parallel expression for the “Zeitabschnitt der Dienstleistung.”<sup>18</sup> In his study on Egyptian documents, Helck both follows Winter and expands his interpretation of *Nj-kḫ-ḫt*’s table accordingly to argue for copyist errors in the transmission from papyrus to tomb wall (see sec. III below).<sup>19</sup>

Edel recently provided numerous additions and corrections to Fraser’s original publication of the tomb but makes no mention of *hrjw rnpt*.<sup>20</sup> Thus scholarly opinion rests at this point in substantial agreement with Winter, that *Nj-kḫ-ḫt*’s *hrjw rnpt* is not our earliest reference to the five epagomenal days but a simple caption heading, like *ḫt*, “fields,” designating the monthly divisions of the Egyptian calendar (“what is on/in the year”). The entry on “Epagomenen” in the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* follows suit, citing Winter and dating the first occurrence of the epagomenal days to the offering list of Neuserre.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, copyist errors, according to Helck, have crept into the version of the table appearing on *Nj-kḫ-ḫt*’s tomb wall, which represents not a true legal document converted to stone, but a series of paraphrases and excerpts from various earlier documents.

Both of these topics—the first occurrence of the epagomenal days and how accurately the tomb wall table reflects an original document—revolve around and hinge upon the box labeled *hrjw rnpt* and its arrangement (see fig. 3). The validity of the current scholarly consensus must now be examined by returning to Winter’s original arguments for rejecting the appearance of the epagomenal days in *Nj-kḫ-ḫt*’s table.

Winter’s first point (that if *hrjw rnpt* meant epagomenal days one would expect a corresponding increase in field allotment to the individual involved) is of course a logical one, but one wonders if such logic is applicable to the case at hand. Do we really know exactly how  $\frac{1}{100}$  of fields breaks down into daily portions of produce and whether such an allotment could be issued at a slower or faster pace? It would seem that the daily portion or size of cultic offerings would depend on the wealth and

<sup>14</sup> Winter, “Epagomenentage,” pp. 264–65, esp. n. 12.

<sup>15</sup> E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, *Analecta Orientalia* 34/39 (Rome, 1955/64), p. lxix, Nachtrag to §415.

<sup>16</sup> P. Posener-Kriéger, *Les Archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï*, vol. 1, BdE 65/1 (Cairo, 1976), p. 337.

<sup>17</sup> T. Mrsich, *Untersuchungen zur Hausurkunde*

*des Alten Reiches*, MÄS 13 (Berlin, 1968), pp. 102–9.

<sup>18</sup> H. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften aus dem Alten Reich*, WZKM Beiheft 5 (Vienna, 1970), p. 139, n. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Helck, *Aktenkunde*, pp. 33–34.

<sup>20</sup> Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, pp. 48–50.

<sup>21</sup> G. Poethke in *LÄ*, vol. 1, cols. 1231–32, esp. n. 1 (“Epagomenen”).

standards of the cult involved rather than on a specific number of days (within specific limits of course). In short, we can judge neither the quality of the fields nor the ancient ideas of fair distribution. Thus who is to say that at Tehne  $\frac{\text{𓆎}}{\text{𓆏}}$  of fields could render produce for thirty but not thirty-five days? This argument alone does not discount the rendering of *hrjw rnpt* as epagomenal days in *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*'s table.

Secondly, Winter points out the unique appearance of *hrjw rnpt* at the beginning of the year. One is faced with the choice of either explaining the situation or deducing an alternative reading of  $\frac{\text{𓆎}}{\text{𓆏}}$ . Winter chose the latter course. I prefer, however, searching for an explanation instead of perhaps forcing a new meaning for the term.

Two points are worth noting here. The first is that *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*'s table would represent our earliest attestation of the epagomenal days (early Fifth Dynasty). One might well wonder, along with earlier scholars (see n. 10 above), whether the five days were originally counted at the beginning of the year and only later in the Old Kingdom moved to the end.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps far more important, however, is the fact that we are dealing with a duty table, which by definition follows certain Egyptian standards of organization and symmetry.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the problem is a graphic one, related to the arrangement of this particular duty roster. One hesitates to assign any special status to *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*'s wife, *Hꜣt-ḥknw*,<sup>24</sup> for while she does appear first with the *hrjw rnpt* in the Hathor table above, she appears last without them in the *Hnw-kꜣ* table below. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh*'s representation and all other duty rosters: he combines two tables in one. In avoiding any double assignments to his family (i.e., any person having to serve both Hathor and *Hnw-kꜣ* during the same month), *Nj-kꜣ-ꜥnh* needed two tables which mirrored each other or ran in opposite directions. He could either keep the order of the list of individuals constant and reverse the monthly order or keep the monthly order constant and reverse the order of the list of individuals. He chose the latter system, thus maintaining a constant timetable and reversing the order of individuals to "fill the boxes" as needed. Is the occurrence of *hrjw rnpt* (as the epagomenal days) thus "locked" into position at the beginning of the year in both tables, since the monthly divisions had to remain fixed?

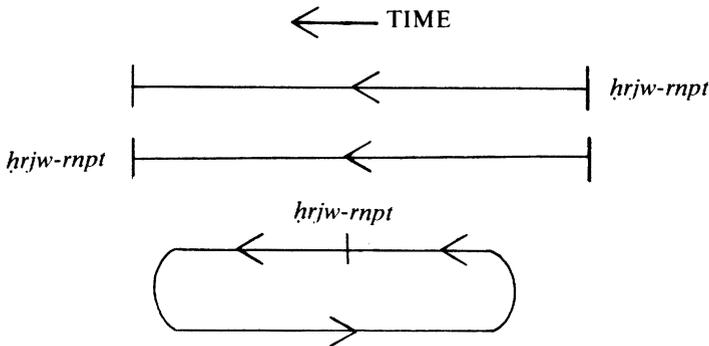


FIG. 4.—Three identical diagrams of the progression of the year, including the five epagomenal days

<sup>22</sup> Namely under Isesi; see also P. Posener-Kriéger and J. L. de Cenival, *The Abu Sir Papyri*, Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, 5th ser. (London,

1968), pl. 5 (and p. 2).

<sup>23</sup> Winter, "Epagomenentage," p. 265.

<sup>24</sup> As did S. Schott, *Festdaten*, p. 5, n. 2.

No matter what the explanation for the epagomenal days' appearance at the beginning of the year, one should not forget that no calendrical changes occur, regardless of at which end of the table *hrjw rnpt* is found. The linear nature of *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*'s table perhaps obscures the fact that there is no calendrical difference between the three ways of representing the year shown in figure 4.

Winter's third argument against reading "epagomenal days" concerns the omission of the expression "five days" (⊙) supposedly needed for a literal translation of those things (= days) "which are on (i.e., in addition to) the year."<sup>25</sup> First of all, the absence of the sun sign (Sign List N 5) should hardly surprise us, for *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh* omits it from evidently *all* the words which customarily show the sign. In both tables we find the season names written  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆐}$  and  $\text{𓆑} \text{𓆒}$  each time without a ⊙. In addition, we can now cite a similar writing given in the date jotting in *The Abu Sir Papyri*, plate 14:  $\text{⊙} \text{𓆓} \text{𓆔} \text{𓆕}$  "year of the [1]4th numbering, epagomenal day three."<sup>26</sup> Since, as Posener-Kriéger points out,<sup>27</sup> the epagomenal days are used here as would  $\text{𓆖} \text{ht}$ , *pri*, or *šmw* in any normal date formula, the sun sign and three strokes refer to "day three." In other words, the sun sign does not form part of the writing of *hrjw rnpt* but acts rather as the noun "day" modified by the number three.<sup>28</sup> Comparing the writings of *hrjw rnpt* in both *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh* and the Abu Sir jotting (see fig. 5), we find only an additional  $\text{𓆑}$  and the reversal of the word order, two variations quite well attested (*Wb.* II, 430). We therefore have a satisfactory parallel writing in support of reading *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*'s *hrjw rnpt* as "epagomenal days."

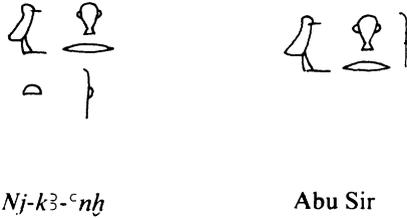


FIG. 5.—Comparison of the writings of *hrjw rnpt*

Finally, we come to Winter's fourth point regarding the positioning of *hrjw rnpt* above the generic label  $\text{𓆖} \text{ht}$  ("fields"); by association, *hrjw rnpt* should therefore represent a descriptive caption heading as well. This argument collapses when one takes the second table below, intended for the cult of *Hnw-k3*, into consideration: no generic "fields" caption occurs here since the fields have already been allotted in the Hathor table above. Nor would there be any need to repeat *hrjw rnpt* in the lower table if it were merely a generic column/row heading. But as "epagomenal days" its repetition is necessary, just as is the repetition of all the month designations.

Winter's alternative reading of *hrjw rnpt* here as a generic heading "what is (contained) in the year," or "what the year has," presents certain problems as well.

<sup>25</sup> Winter, "Epagomenentage," p. 264, point 3.

<sup>26</sup> As Posener-Kriéger notes, *Archives*, pp. 336–37, the two restored horizontal strokes shown on pl. 14A of *The Abu Sir Papyri* should be eliminated due to lack of any traces of their presence as well as limitations of space.

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*, *Archives*, p. 337.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. other writings in *The Abu Sir Papyri* where the sun sign is clearly to be read *sw* rather than as a determinative: pls. 45A, 84; or is not present at all: pl. 54C.

While the preposition *hr* plus an expression of time can indeed refer to a specific period, examples of such a usage are immaterial to our context here.<sup>29</sup> The time allotted for the conclusion of litigation (*hr 3bd 2*, *Urk.* IV, 1110, 14; *hr hrw 3*, *ibid.*, 1110, 16) or the manufacture of cosmetics (*hr h<sup>c</sup>w r 3bd 3*, P. Ebers 66, 3–4) are hardly comparable to a duty roster with monthly divisions of temple and mortuary cult service. Furthermore, the sort of generic heading such as Winter preferred might actually be present in *The Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 84, where a column is, however, headed not by *hrjw rnpt*, but by { $\sim$   $\odot$  *rnpt*, *3bd*, *hrw*, “year, month, day.” No example of *hrjw rnpt* in a clear context designating “what the year contains” can be cited; such an interpretation is a purely modern one, unsupported by the ancient evidence. Once again, we return to the simplest reading of *hrjw rnpt* in *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s table as indeed the five epagomenal days. Moreover, this is their earliest known occurrence in the ancient sources.

### III

We now turn to the question of to what extent *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s duty table and inscriptions represent an original papyrus legal document. Egyptian papyrus documents, both royal and private, were often converted to stone for a number of purposes: as a sort of “publication,” to render them more permanent or even to honor the owner of the monument on which they were carved.<sup>30</sup> Most often, the carved version reflects the arrangement of the papyrus original.<sup>31</sup>

In section II above, we saw that most authors have followed Winter’s interpretation of *hrjw rnpt*. Helck, in his admirable *Altägyptische Aktenkunde*, has taken Winter’s point one step further in claiming that several alterations, both intentional rearrangements and paraphrases and copyist errors, are present in *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s table. Hence it would not entirely reflect an original papyrus document. I argue below that the whole table could well represent the appearance of *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s original legal decree. We will first examine the alleged copyist errors in the table and then move on to the argument for intentional rearrangements and paraphrases.

In the case of the Hathor cult table, Helck argues that the ancient artist has mistakenly placed the figure of *Hdt-hknw* one box too far to the right. This initial right-hand box should have remained empty to correspond to the generic headings of year and field divisions which introduce the table (see the drawing of this area, fig. 3). Moreover, according to Helck, each of the nine children who follow *Hdt-hknw* is also one box too far to the right. This then would account for the eleventh box being left blank (in all the corresponding sections of both tables above and below) by the artist before adding the last three individuals who were presumably not members of *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s family. As nonfamily members, they were excluded from the uppermost

<sup>29</sup> Winter, “Epagomentage,” pp. 264–65, esp. n. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Helck, *Aktenkunde*, pp. 10–52, 142–45; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*; *idem*, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich*, ÄA 14 (Wiesbaden, 1967); and esp. *idem*, “Diplomatical Studies in the Old Kingdom,” *JARCE* 3 (1964): 31–41.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, the complex column arrangements of early Fifth-Dynasty royal documents, such as the decree of Neferirkare in Boston (MFA 03.1896);

Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente*, p. 23, fig. 22; despite Helck, *Aktenkunde*, pp. 17–18. For a new drawing and improved translation of this decree, see how R. J. Leprohon, *Stelae I*, CAA Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Mainz, 1985), pp. 49–53. An exception to the rule is the private document of Wepemnofret, which cannot completely reflect a papyrus document, since the hieroglyphs face left, an orientation never found in hieratic; see Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. 4; and Helck, *Aktenkunde*, p. 22.

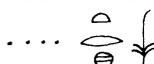
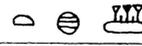
		
		
	FIGURE	
		
		
		

FIG. 6.—Helck's reconstruction of *Nj-k3-nh*'s duty table without alleged copyist errors

horizontal text identifying the scene below (see fig. 1).<sup>32</sup> This error is said to have crept into the table as it was being copied from the papyrus original (or *Vorlage*), and Helck reconstructs the original version of the document as shown here in figure 6.<sup>33</sup>

There are several problems with the above interpretation. The first, and of course most important, is that if we follow the points presented above in section II of this paper, *hrjw rnpt* does not represent a generic label like *3ht* but rather the five epagomenal days. As such, they cannot be left merely floating in space at the front of the table but must be assigned to an individual. After all, the cults of Hathor (above) and *Hnw-k3* (below) needed attendance during these five days just as they did at any other time of the year.<sup>34</sup> The *hrjw rnpt* make perfect sense in their present location in

<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that Fraser's drawing of the wall mistakenly added  to the "fields box" in the otherwise blank column between the second and third months of *3mw*, see n. 6 above.

<sup>33</sup> Helck, *Altenkunde*, fig. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Posener-Krieger and de Cenival, *The Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 5-7, for examples of assignments during the epagomenal days no different from those of the rest of the year.

the two tables, assigned to *Hḏt-hknw* above and to two individuals below. No rearrangement or emendation is necessary.

Let us consider for a moment the proposed reconstruction of the original papyrus document arrangement shown in figure 6. This reconstruction moves *hrjw rnpt* and *ḥt* further to the right, leaving *Hḏt-hknw* with the sole time allotment of *ḥbd tpy* or I *ḥt*. However, this rearrangement leaves both the box inscribed with *Hḏt-hknw*'s name, and, more importantly, the uppermost horizontal text naming *Nj-kḥ-nḥ* and his family, not at the beginning of the table but second after a gaping empty vertical column. Even if scholars disagree on the various aspects of Egyptian document formats, few would dispute the ancient emphasis on arrangement, i.e., on balanced composition and the omission of unsightly gaps.<sup>35</sup> A casual perusal of the legal documents, both private and royal, reveals this emphasis, and none of them leaves an unscribed gap in its upper right hand corner, where the all-important *wḏ-njswt*, addressee inscriptions, or *serekhs* are usually found.<sup>36</sup> Even Winter, who argued against *hrjw rnpt* meaning the epagomenal days, accounted for the confusing arrangement resulting from his interpretation of the table as the Egyptian draftsman's attempt to avoid at all costs the unsightliness of a reconstruction such as that shown in figure 6 above.<sup>37</sup> *Nj-kḥ-nḥ*'s table is no exception in its penchant for organization, and we therefore have no reason to suspect the uppermost text (beginning *jrj ḥt njswt, jmj-r ḥwt ḥt Nj-kḥ-nḥ* . . .) to have been arranged any differently from the version preserved on the tomb wall today.

Nor can we subscribe to the proposed explanation for the blank box towards the end of the table, namely, that since all the children are placed one box too far to the right, a box had to be left empty to separate them from the three additional persons whose names are not "covered" (both figuratively and literally) by the uppermost inscription labeling the family of *Nj-kḥ-nḥ*. Under this explanation, no box in the original papyrus version would have been left blank; the entire family fits snugly under its labeling inscription, and the three extra-family members added to round out the year would follow close behind. The only problem with this scheme lies in the fact that the overhead labeling text was not meant to physically delineate all the family members, tempting and typical though it would be to read it that way. For as Edel has convincingly shown in his recent discussion of the tombs of *Nj-kḥ-nḥ*, the individual assigned the third month of *šmw* for the cult of Hathor is indeed a son of *Nj-kḥ-nḥ*, even though his name and accompanying text (Helck's text E) do not fall under but after the family identification text.<sup>38</sup> In fact, this individual, the priest *Hm-hwt-hr*, is one and the same person as the royal document scribe *Hm-hwt-hr* who is assigned the second month of *ḥt* directly behind his mother, *Hḏt-hknw*. Edel goes on to comment on the appearance of this eldest son *Hm-hwt-hr* with the title "Priest (of Hathor)" or

<sup>35</sup> Helck, *Aktenkunde*, pp. 18, 34.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the two compilations by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften* and *Königliche Dokumente*.

<sup>37</sup> Winter, "Epagomentage," p. 265.

<sup>38</sup> Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, pp. 45–46. I mention in passing some examples of perhaps unusual arrangements: P. Boulaq 18,31, where the *dmd* "total" of accounts listed occurs on the same

line with the rubric heading of the accounts to follow below; see Gardiner, *EG*,<sup>3</sup> p. 201, n. 4; Coptos D, where a line termed "Zusatz" by Goedicke occurs at the top of the document in the horizontal line normally reserved for the addressee above; Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente*, fig. 11, fragment A. One wonders if an analysis of tabular material in general would reveal what we would call aberrant arrangements to be quite common.

“Royal document scribe,” depending on whether he is shown near his mother or father, respectively, from whose separate lines he inherited both positions.<sup>39</sup> In his capacity of *hm-ntr* (for the month of III *šmw*), *Hm-ḥwt-ḥr* received the additional proviso (text E): “His portion is (*z.p.f*)<sup>1</sup>?<sup>40</sup> meat and one-tenth of everything which enters the temple as special offerings.” The argument for leaving a box blank in order to separate family members from nonfamily members thus collapses, for the men on both sides of the blank box are family members, and the horizontal identifying text above does not physically cover all of *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s children.

In brief summary, then, no reason remains to suggest any copyist errors are present in *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s table or that the original document/*Vorlage* looked any different from the tomb wall version. The epagomenal days (*hrjw rnpt*) are right where they belong, assigned to an individual rather than floating free in space; no uncharacteristic blank space in the upper right hand corner was ever present to distort the arrangement; and all family members are found in the boxes they were originally intended to occupy. We may conclude therefore from the evidence analyzed thus far that *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s duty table was an accurately carved version of an original papyrus representation, free from errors of transmission.

Why then, after all, was the box between II–III *šmw* left blank if all the figures are in their correct columns? Any number of explanations may be put forward, but undue speculation serves little purpose. Perhaps the simplest solution is to posit the death of a son at some point before the completion of *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s tomb.

#### IV

Having seen that there is no reason to argue for copyist errors in *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s duty table arrangement, we turn now to the question of whether the entire composition, i.e., both the representations and the accompanying texts taken together could represent a single, complete, and original papyrus document. Helck (and, in less detail, Goedicke)<sup>41</sup> argued against such a possibility. He claimed that the texts accompanying the representations (texts A–D, see sec. I above) do not derive from a single document but are actually paraphrased excerpts from several earlier documents.<sup>42</sup> According to him, one can find within *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s composition portions of a royal decree of Mycerinus (text A), a royal decree by Userkaf (text C), and two private legal documents of *Nj-k3-ḥ* himself (texts B, D), designating his family for service to the cults of Hathor and *Hnw-k3*. Helck saw a parallelism between certain clauses of texts B and C, which in the original papyrus may once have stood together, separated by a dividing line (fig. 7).<sup>43</sup> Finally, Helck maintains that the duty rosters themselves, i.e., the representations and actual divisions of monthly service and fields, do reflect original documents.

Once again we will argue for what we consider to be a far simpler interpretation, namely that all the elements of *Nj-k3-ḥ*’s table represent a single, complete papyrus document converted with its original arrangement retained, into a carved stone

<sup>39</sup> Thus *Hm-ḥwt-ḥr* must serve the cult of Hathor during two different months and the cult of *Hnw-k3* for an additional two; cf. Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, pp. 45–46.

<sup>40</sup> I owe this possible restoration to Professor K.

Baer.

<sup>41</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, p. 198.

<sup>42</sup> Helck, *Aktenkunde*, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

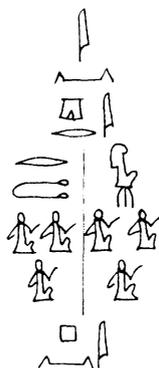


FIG. 7.—Helck's reconstruction of allegedly parallel clauses of Texts B and C

version.<sup>44</sup> In order to determine the validity of this argument, it is necessary to take a closer look at just what elements constitute a typical legal document intended for the disposal of property.

Private legal documents of the Old and Middle Kingdoms (e.g., *wḏt mdw*, *jmjt-pr*, etc.) unfortunately display no such standardized format as can be found with their royal counterparts.<sup>45</sup> However, one particular element is usually included if the property in question is to be disposed of legally: some kind of statement defining its origin and/or the owner's legal claim or title to it.<sup>46</sup> After meeting this prerequisite, one was free to dispose of his property as he wished.

Can we find such statements in *Nj-kꜣ-ḥ*'s table? The answer, in my opinion, is yes. The second sentence of text A tells us that "two *sꜣꜣt* of fields have been conveyed by the Majesty of *Mn-kꜣw-Rꜥ* to these priests in order to perform priestly service therefrom." *Nj-kꜣ-ḥ* thus clarifies the origin of the land in question, namely, as a donation from King Mycerinus. Following this clarification, *Nj-kꜣ-ḥ* states his claim to the property before proceeding to dispose of the two *sꜣꜣt* (text C): "It is the Majesty of *Wsr-kꜣ.f* who commanded that I perform priestly service for Hathor, Lady of *Rꜣ-jnt* (Tehne)." The legal overtones of these two clauses were recognized as early as Breasted's time:

Nekonekh, having the right to bequeath the two land-endowments to whom he will, now makes a will, stating the origin of both endowments in Menkure's time, and his own title to them by appointment from Userkaf, and decreeing that they shall now be distributed among his children, acting corporately as his successor in both offices.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> We note in passing that such conversions from original source to stone, plaster, or painted "copy" probably took place via the use of intermediary *Vorlagen*; cf. my article "Prolegomena zur Untersuchung saitischer 'Kopien'," *SAK* 10 (1983): 231, n. 1; and Goedicke, "Diplomatical Studies," p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> On the latter, see Helck, *Aktenkunde*, pp. 10–52.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. E. Seidl, *Einführung in die ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches*<sup>2</sup>, Ägyptologische Forschungen 10 (Glückstadt, 1951), p. 22, esp. n. 1; Baer, "Units of Area," p. 116; Helck, "Wirtschaftliche Bemerkungen zum privaten Grabbesitz im Alten Reich," *MDAIK* 14 (1956): 68.

<sup>47</sup> Breasted, *ARE* I, §214 (pp. 99–100).

The remainder of *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-<sup>c</sup>nh*'s texts serves to designate the individuals for service to Hathor and *Hnw-k<sup>3</sup>* (texts B, D, and E). Legally speaking, then, there is nothing missing from his table which might render it an incomplete or invalid document; all the necessary elements are present and all prerequisites have been met to make the document legally binding.<sup>48</sup> Up to this point, then, the argument for understanding the texts as merely paraphrases from other documents cannot rest on the absence of any particular features crucial to a legal document.

Several Old Kingdom legal texts provide instructive parallels to the clauses in question in *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-<sup>c</sup>nh*'s table. In the incomplete text discovered near the Chephren causeway at Giza, an anonymous official makes several references to property he has received specifically from the king:<sup>49</sup>

As for any *ka*-priest of (my) estate [who shall] damage [. . .] of the invocation-offerings which the King gave to me as a mark of veneration (*rjm<sup>3</sup>h*) . . . (ll. 10–11 = *Urk.* I 12, 16–17).

As for this field which the King gave to me as a mark of veneration . . . (l. 19 = *Urk.* I 14, 6–7).

[As for the settlements?] of (my) estate which the King gave to me as a mark of veneration . . . (l. 23 = *Urk.* I 14, 16–17).

It is unclear how many lines are missing from the beginning of the text, and one wonders if some preliminary statement regarding the *pri-hrw*, *3ht* or [*njwwt*] was once present.

The Fifth-Dynasty document of *Tntj*, likewise from Giza, answers this question for us in the affirmative. The text is completely preserved, and *Tntj*'s very first statement clarifies the origin of his *pri-hrw*:<sup>50</sup>

As for the invocation-offerings which the king gave to me, consisting of a tomb, barley, and clothing . . . (ll. 1–6 = *Urk.* I, 163, 11).<sup>51</sup>

*Tntj* further clarifies the issue by declaring himself able to dispose of two *st<sup>3</sup>t* of fields once belonging to his mother, *Bhj*, since he has fulfilled his obligation to her by burying her in the necropolis:<sup>52</sup>

Also, as for one of the [two] *st<sup>3</sup>t* of fields of the invocation-offerings of (my) mother, the Keeper of the King's Property *Bhj*, it shall belong to (my) wife, the Keeper of the King's Property *Tp-m-nfrit* (ll. 12–22 = *Urk.* I 163, 14–16).

It is I who requested them from the King as a mark of veneration (ll. 28–30 = *Urk.* I 164, 1).

<sup>48</sup> Even those who might expect the explicit mention of an *jmjt-pr* or *wdt-mdw* need look no further than the vertical text just to the right of Text A (fig. 1): "As he (*Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-<sup>c</sup>nh*) made a *wdt-mdw* to his children in order to perform priestly service for Hathor, Lady of *R<sup>3</sup>-jnt*."

<sup>49</sup> Goedicke identifies this official as *K<sup>3</sup>-m-nfrit*; see *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pp. 46–47 (with bibliography on p. 44), pl. 5 (not pl. 4 as labeled on p. 44).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–30, pl. 13 (not pl. 10 as labeled on p. 122).

<sup>51</sup> Goedicke translates ". . . das mir geliefert wurde aus dem Königshaus (bestehend aus) Getreide und Kleidung," *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, p. 122 and n. 1. Regardless of how one interprets this example of honorific transposition, it is of secondary importance to our purposes here.

<sup>52</sup> On the necessity of burying someone properly before legally claiming his inheritance, see E. Seidl, "Vom Erbrecht der alten Ägypter," *ZDMG* 107 (1957): 273–74, and Helck, "Zum privaten Grabbesitz," pp. 66–67.

The late Sixth-Dynasty inscription of *Snnj* from Qasr el-Sayaad mentions the conveyance of a tomb shaft (*h3t*) to the tomb owner's wife, *3.s-n-k3j*. *Snnj* is able to do this because he states:<sup>53</sup>

I am the owner of the tomb on account of possessing an [authorization] (*n hrj 3*) (l. 8 = l. 7 of Edel = *Urk.* I 116, 14).

In a legal inscription carved in the serdab niche of his Fifth-Dynasty tomb at Giza (G 2197), *Pn-mrw* designates *ka*-priests to perform invocation-offerings which, he states, he received from the vizier *S3m-nfr*.<sup>54</sup>

... as they bring to (me) (circumstantial *sdm.f*) the reversion-offering (*w3b-rd*) of (my) sovereign, the Vizier *S3m-nfr* (l. 4).

The examples quoted above show the wide range of legal documents found in the Old Kingdom. Yet despite variations in terminology, property, and purpose of the various legal texts, the vendor or testator takes care in each case to specify clearly the origin of the property in question, and (hence) his legal right to dispose of it as he will. These texts are comparable to texts A and C from *Nj-k3-3nh*'s table, in which both origin (grant from Mycerinus) and legal claim (by command of Userkaf) are clearly expressed. We have, therefore, all the components of a complete legal document similar to the others listed above, if perhaps more detailed with "illustrations." I will return to this point below.

Helck seems to focus on the mention of two separate kings, Mycerinus and Userkaf, as proof that *Nj-k3-3nh*'s table is some sort of amalgamated text.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, excerpting from earlier documents in general is well attested, and another parallel text, this time from the Middle Kingdom, may prove useful on this point. In P. Kahun I,1, *Jhj-snb*, called *W3h*, conveys all his property to his wife in year two (of Amenemhat IV), II 3ht 18.<sup>56</sup> Before he can do this, however, he states the origin of and his title to the property in question. In this case, *W3h* quotes from the earlier document of his brother, *3nh-rn*, dated to year forty-four (of Amenemhat III), II 3mw 13, from whom he obtained the property in the first place. This direct quote is actually separated on the papyrus from the body of *W3h*'s document proper, and begins:

Copy of the house-document (*mjtj n jmit-pr*) which the trustworthy seal-bearer of the Controller of construction projects, *3nh-rn*, made in year 42, second month of 3mw, day 13.

The important point here is the presence of the word *mjtj*, "copy," clearly indicating that the following clause recording *3nh-rn*'s conveyance to his brother *W3h* is an excerpt or quote from an earlier document. (The body of *W3h*'s own text further

<sup>53</sup> For the best copy of this text see now Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, p. 17, fig. 4, l. 7; other versions may be found in Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pp. 186-89, pl. 18 (not pl. 13b as labeled on p. 186); and *Urk.* I, 115-17.

<sup>54</sup> W. K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, Giza Mastabas 4 (Boston, 1980), p. 24 and pls. 46b-47; and Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pp. 68-74, pl. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Helck, *Aktenkunde*, p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> F. Ll. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob* (London, 1898), pl. 12 and text pp. 31-32. For additional discussions, see A. Théodoridès, "La Vente à crédit du Pap. Kahoun 1, 2 et ses conséquences," *RIDA* 8 (1961): 41-76 (reviewed by Seidl in *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Juris* 27 [1961]: 470); idem, "La Propriété et ses démembrements en droit pharaonique," *RIDA* 24 (1977): 21-64.

below on the papyrus naturally omits the word *mjtj*, naming merely the date and the “house-document which the *w<sup>c</sup>b*-priest, Commander of the Phyle of *Spdw*, Lord of the East, *W3h*, made” (=l. 6). No such word designating a copy or excerpt is present in any of the *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh* texts; in other words, nowhere are we told that any of his statements do not derive from *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh* himself.

An additional parallel further clarifies this point. In the Sixth-Dynasty P. Berlin 9010, we have an *actual original* legal document recording a squabble over claims to the inheritance of a certain *Wsr*.<sup>57</sup> The “challenger” *Sbk-htp* argues that *Wsr* left a document designating him (*Sbk-htp*) instead of *Wsr*’s son, *T3w*, as his heir. While the beginning of the text is missing, *T3w* counters the claim in lines 3–4: “This *T3w* said that nowhere has his father made it (i.e., such a document).” Of crucial significance to us is the fact that *Sbk-htp*, like our *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*, apparently had no need to quote the alleged document verbatim; merely referring to it sufficed. No mention of copies (*mjtj*) is made anywhere in the papyrus.<sup>58</sup> *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s table is thus paralleled by an original papyrus legal text; both inscriptions are single documents free of any composite paraphrasing or quotes whatsoever. This is, of course, in direct contrast to the Middle Kingdom Kahun text cited above, which does quote earlier documents and specifies as much by using the word *mjtj*. Hardly enough examples survive to justify firm conclusions, but one is tempted to postulate a shift in legal procedure from the Old to the Middle Kingdoms, such that in the Old Kingdom, one needed only to *refer* to a document, whereas actual quotation was necessary by the Middle Kingdom.

Now it is obvious in *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s case that separate decrees were issued during the reigns of Mycerinus and Userkaf, respectively. It is equally obvious that *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*, in composing his duty tables, was acting according to the commands of the various sovereigns under whom he lived, since every legal action is of course based on the legal actions which precede and bear upon it. But following the other Old Kingdom texts cited above, we see *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s mention of Mycerinus and Userkaf merely as his statement of the origin of and entitlement to the property concerned. None of the parallel clauses cited above is in any way separable from the rest of their accompanying texts; neither does any word such as *mjtj*, “copy,” set them off as paraphrased or excerpted statements. The same is true for *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s texts. Hence the simplest interpretation of his table is as a single, unabridged document, influenced, no doubt, by legal action taken in the past but drawn up, nevertheless, by *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh* himself. We find the identifying *wdt-mdw* just to the right of the table, statement of the origin of the property (text A), *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>nh*’s claim to it (text C), and his appointments to priestly service (texts A–D along with the “illustrated” tables themselves). Any attempt to piece together a composite picture of separate documents from different times is both confusing and unnecessary. Nor is there any reason to rearrange the wording of the texts, which make perfect sense as they stand.<sup>59</sup>

One might diagram the two contrasting interpretations of the chronology involved in the drafting of *Nj-k3-<sup>c</sup>n*’s document. Figure 8A shows Helck’s understanding of it

<sup>57</sup> K. Sethe, “Ein Prozessurteil aus dem Alten Reich,” *ZÄS* 61 (1926): 67–79; *Hieratische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1911), pl. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Note also *Tntj*’s text quoted above, in which

*Tntj* needed only state that he “requested (*dbh*) them from the King”; no direct quote of *Tntj*’s original document was necessary.

<sup>59</sup> Despite Helck’s proposed rearrangement of texts B and C; see *Aktenkunde*, p. 33.

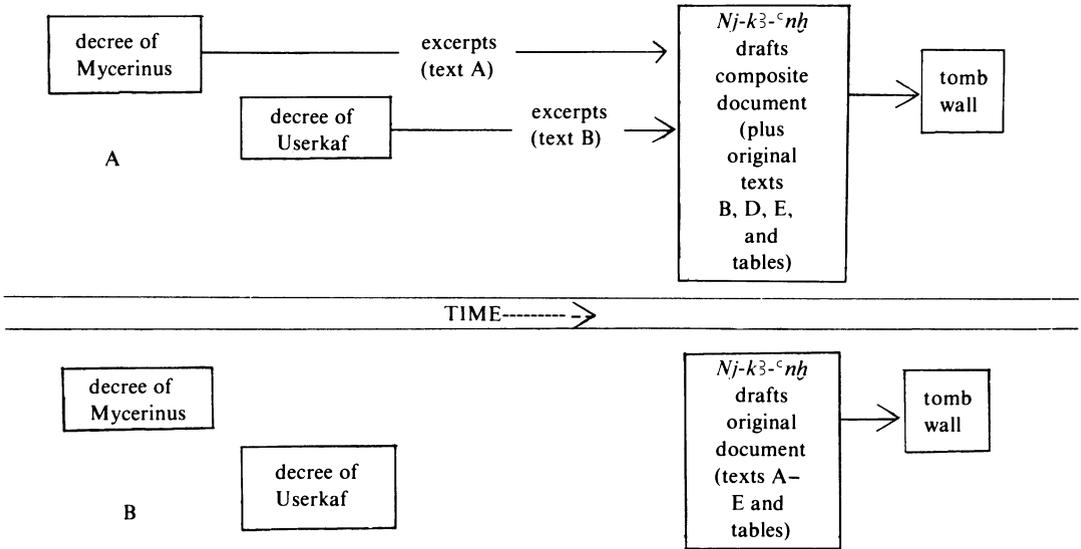


FIG. 8.—A and B: opposing diagrams of the evolution of *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh*'s legal document

as a compilation of excerpts from earlier texts as well as *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh*'s own statements, while figure 8B depicts the whole table as a single, contemporaneous document. In each case, one should imagine the probability of an intermediate *Vorlage*-stage (omitted here for the sake of clarity) to aid in the transmission of the document to the actual tomb wall.<sup>60</sup>

Two minor points relative to the above discussion remain to be discussed. One might argue that the texts in *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh*'s table are too disorganized or haphazardly arranged to represent a true, single legal document originally written on papyrus. However, the early Fifth-Dynasty date of the tomb should be kept in mind on this point. It is precisely at this period that hieroglyphic inscriptions show their most—to the modern translator—confusing arrangements. A quick survey of the earlier Old Kingdom royal documents, such as the decree of Neferirkare, and private documents, such as the *Hauskaufurkunde*, reveals a challenging complexity of arrangement. We mention here by way of example the use of general clauses applicable to many passages simultaneously and the selective use of dividing register lines of varying lengths.<sup>61</sup> With the passage of time, arrangements become increasingly simple and straightforward.<sup>62</sup> It should hardly surprise us, therefore, to find *Nj-k<sup>3</sup>-nh* using an arrangement typical of his age, i.e., the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasties. There is thus no argument that the table is too “sloppy” or disorganized to represent an actual papyrus document.

<sup>60</sup> On *Vorlagen*, see W. Schenkel, “Zur Frage der Vorlagen spätzeitlicher ‘Kopien’,” in J. Assmann, E. Feucht, and R. Grieshammer, eds., *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur* (Wiesbaden, 1977), esp. pp. 440–41; see my “Prolegomena,” pp. 230–31, esp. n. 1; Goedicke, “Diplomatical Studies,” p. 37, who

doubts that original documents ever left the royal chancery; and Helck, *Aktenkunde*, p. 12.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente*, p. 23; idem., *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. 16.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Helck, *Aktenkunde*, p. 17.

Finally, we come to the subject of the representations themselves. The detail of *Nj-k3-ḥ*'s table, including a large-scale figure of each individual, complete with month and field assignments, might lead one to consider it more decoration than legal document. However, there is nothing less "official" or legal about the table merely because it contains miniature "scenes" in it. Helck himself argues for the interpretation of tomb scenes as legal documents in themselves,<sup>63</sup> and Mrsich states:

Eine Verknüpfung der juristischen Formulierung mit der Themengestaltung der darstellenden Kunst ergab sich bei dem zentralen Begriff der *šhm*-Herrschaftsmacht, der Rangordnung der "Prozession" der "Kalenderliste," der Beifügung benannter oder unbenannter Personendarstellungen in Relief oder Plastik neben dem Rechtstext. Ganz allgemein ist die Themenwahl in den Grabdarstellungen des Alten Reiches mit der Bemühung um die Formulierung gewisser juristischer Ausgangsbegriffe vergleichbar. . . .<sup>64</sup>

Goedicke suggested seeing Old Kingdom inscriptions from the Sinai and Wadi Hammamat as commissioned royal documents, complete with accompanying scenes:

It is tempting to assume that the design to be copied was part of the royal commission of the party. While no actual texts can corroborate this assumption, it is strengthened by the fact that the excerpts of a decree of Pepi I are connected with a figurative scene.<sup>65</sup>

Goedicke has also noted the famous Brooklyn Museum Saite Oracle Papyrus, an official document accompanied by lavish illustrations of all the high officials involved in the ceremony.<sup>66</sup> Representations may also be found in the Abu Sir papyri, where sacred emblems are actually depicted, in addition to being assigned in writing to specific phyles.<sup>67</sup> Here again an actual original papyrus document serves as an important parallel.

One thus wonders if Goedicke's Sinai and W. Hammamat scenes, *Nj-k3-ḥ*'s representations, the Abu Sir papyri emblems and the Saite Oracle Papyrus are all examples of the same phenomenon, namely, the occasional embellishment of official documents with representations of the individuals or objects involved. If such is the case, *Nj-k3-ḥ*'s table would serve as our earliest example, just as it gives us our earliest attestation of *ḥrjw rnpt*, the five epagomenal days.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>64</sup> Mrsich, *Untersuchungen zur Hausurkunde*, p. 179 (§278).

<sup>65</sup> Goedicke, "Diplomatical Studies," p. 41.

<sup>66</sup> R. Parker, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes*

*in the Brooklyn Museum*, Brown Egyptological Studies 4 (Providence, 1962), pl. 1; and Goedicke, "Diplomatical Studies," p. 41.

<sup>67</sup> Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *The Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 18.