

# Offering table's scene with the empty chair in the recently discovered burial chamber of Ptahshepses at Saqqara

## Abstract

This article will discuss the scene of the offering table with an empty chair in a new discovered Old Kingdom tomb of Ptahshepses at Saqqara, describing the scene, and translating the accompanied texts. The commentary will consider the names and titles of the deceased. The scene will be compared with its counterparts in the contemporary period. The dating of this scene is introduced.

**Keywords:** old kingdom, Saqqara, offering table's scene, burial chamber, Ptahshepses, themi

Volume 5 Issue 1 - 2020

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**Received:** December 20, 2019 | **Published:** January 09, 2020

## Introduction

Ptahshepses' tomb is located in Gisir El-Mudir site, west of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. It was discovered in 2010 by SCA, under the supervision of the first author with his colleague Ali El-Batal. Ptahshepses held more than fifty titles and epithets, such as; Inspector of the royal domain and the palace, Lector priest, Overseer of the august thrones of the palace and the linen house, Master of the secrets of the king in all his cult-places, Master of all the secret Commands of the King, Confidant of the King in his all secrets and Confidant of his lord who is in front of the two Banks,<sup>1</sup> and more.


The tomb complex is comprised of three levels with the following structures arranged on an East-West axis:

1. First Level: A mastaba-like superstructure built of mud-bricks atop the rock hewn cult chapel, and extending westwards and southwards from the latter's façade. It included four shafts packed with the filling of the mastaba.
2. Second Level: A rectangular open court proceeded by a staircase hewn in the rock, and having a narrow entrance at the end of its northern wall on the same axis as the staircase. There is an entrance in the northern part of the west wall of the court. It is connected to a rectangular vaulted court also hewn in the rock, and having its floor at the level of that of the first one. There is an entrance in the middle of the west wall of the court connected to a rectangular cult chapel hewn in the rock, extending North-South, and having a narrow entrance in the middle of its eastern wall. Its floor is lower than the two courts' floor, and is cased with limestone from Turah and decorated with daily life scenes.
3. Third Level: The main funerary shaft is a deep rock-hewn shaft connected at the bottom to a burial chamber with a small sloping doorway situated on its eastern side. The burial chamber is sited immediately behind the chapel. The burial chamber has a rectangular plan, oriented North-South. It measures ca. 5.20

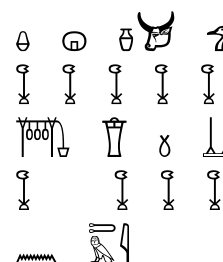
m North-South, 5.70 m East-West (including the niche of the sarcophagus) and 2.60 m high. The walls of the burial chamber are cased with fine limestone slabs covered with a thin layer of plaster and decorated with colored scenes and inscriptions executed in sunken relief. The burial chamber was cleaned in 2012, two years later on after its discovery; because the excavation had ceased due to the revolution of 25th of January 2011.

## The scene

The northern, southern and eastern walls of the burial chamber are decorated with offering lists, offerings and funerary furniture. The eastern part of the northern wall is decorated with an empty chair, an offering table and different offerings (fig.1, pls. 1-3). Atop the chair is a horizontal line of hieroglyphic inscriptions directed from right to left:

  
*im3h hr imnt shd pr-nzwt tmi*

Revered one with goddess *Imntt* and inspector of the royal domain, Themti. Below the chair are five horizontal lines of hieroglyphic signs facing left, between its frontal legs and the offering table stand, which reads:



<sup>1</sup>S Soleiman, 'The Hair-Shaving and Nail-cutting Scenes in Ptahshepses' Tomb at Saqqara', JARCE 50 (2014), p. 31.

h3 t h3 p3t h3 hnkt h3 k3 h3 3pdw

h3 3rp h3 mrht h3 s3r h3 mnht n tmi

A thousand of bread, a thousand of cakes, a thousand of beer, a thousand of oxen, a thousand of fowl, a thousand of wine, a thousand of perfume, a thousand of alabaster and a thousand of clothes for Them.

The whole scene is topped by a horizontal line of hieroglyphic inscriptions directed from right to left in the following:



h3p d3 nzwt 3npw prt-hrw n.f r3 nb smr w3ty

shd pr-nzwt 3m3h pth-3pss rn.f nfr tmi

An offering that the king and Anubis give that may the offerings go out for him daily, the sole friend, inspector of the royal domain, the honored Ptahshepses, his good name Them.


## Commentary

### Tomb owner's names


The tomb owner has two names mentioned in scene of the offering table with the empty chair

#### First name



This name is written only once in this way on the eastern part of the northern wall (in the scene which is the subject of this article), many times on the other walls of the burial chamber and twice on the sarcophagus. It is read *pth-3pss* or *3pss-pt*.<sup>2</sup> Before the discovery of the burial chamber and its sarcophagus, we found this name written several times in the chapel in a different form , so we read it *3ps-pw-Pth*, Shepsuptah.<sup>3</sup>

Three interpretations are possible as follows

1. The tomb owner had both the previous names: Ptahshepses, Shepsuptah.
2. The sign , which came at the end of the first name, is a phonetic complement. So the tomb owner's name is Ptahshepses, which was written in the two previous forms. It could be the case that the artists who were engaged in the burial chamber were different from those who performed the work in the chapel.
3. Shepsuptah is the correct name of the tomb owner as inscribed

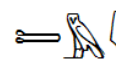
<sup>2</sup>H Ranke, Die Ägyptischen Personennamen, I, Glückstadt, 1935, p. 326 [19]; K Scheele-Schweitzer, Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches, Altägyptische Onomastik unter lexikographischen und sozio-kulturellen Aspekten, Philippika, 2014, p. 676–679 [3309].

<sup>3</sup>Ranke. Personennamen I. 326 [6]; Scheele-Schweitzer, Personennamen, p.673 [3290].

on the lintel and on the walls of the chapel, while Ptahshepses, mentioned on the walls of the burial chamber and on the sarcophagus, was probably written by a confused artist since the latter name was more common than the other at that time.

Most ancient Egyptian names are connected with the names of gods or kings. Ptahshepses' name includes Ptah, one of the most important ancient Egyptian gods and a member of Memphis triad. Ptah appeared in the names of individuals for the first time during the Fourth Dynasty onwards and became common in the Fifth.<sup>4</sup> Some of the ancient Egyptians used to call their offspring names related to the family or the town god. Ptahshepses was living in Memphis, so his family gave him a name incorporated with Ptah, the main deity of the triad of Memphis. 'Ptahshepses' is a compound name. It can be *pth-3pss*, a noun plus an adjective, meaning 'the noble Ptah', or *3pss-pt*, a nominal sentence with an anticipated adjectival predicate,<sup>5</sup> and the name of the god is anticipated for respect and honor. This name means Ptah is noble.

#### Second name



This name is written in this form in the offering table with the empty chair scene three times and in the same way in all parts of the tomb. It is read *Tmi*.<sup>6</sup> It is a simple name called Them. The tomb owner is called by two or three names; Ptahshepses, Shepsuptah and Them. It was mentioned in the chapel that Shepsuptah is the *rn* '3' 'the great name' on the west wall of the chapel, north of the false door. Them is actually referred to as the *rn nfr*. The first name of the person, Ptahshepses, is a theophoric name, describes the characteristic of the god. The second name, Shepsuptah, means 'he is noble, namely Ptah'. The third name, Them, is a prophetic name and is composed of a single word. The ancient Egyptians of the early Old Kingdom usually had two and sometimes three names.<sup>7</sup>

#### Tomb owner's titles

Four titles of the tomb owner are mentioned in the offering table with the empty chair scene:

1. *smr w3ty*, the sole companion.<sup>8</sup> This title was very important and exclusive till the later Fifth Dynasty onwards; it was a ranking title and became more common with all the categories of the officials.<sup>9</sup>
2. *3m3h(w)*, the revered.<sup>10</sup>
3. *3m3h(w) hr Tmntt*, Jones translated it with 'revered with the West'.<sup>11</sup> Actually, *Tmntt* represents a goddess known

<sup>4</sup>J Van Dijk, 'Ptah', in: D Redford, editor, The Oxford Encyclopedia of ancient Egypt, vol. 3, Oxford, 2001, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>A Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, Oxford, 1994, p. 108.

<sup>6</sup>Ranke. Personennamen I. 391[1]; Scheele-Schweitzer, Personennamen, 733 [3702].

<sup>7</sup>D Doxey, Names, in: D Redford, editor, The Oxford Encyclopedia of ancient Egypt, vol. 2, Oxford, 2001, p. 490; K Myśliwiec, K kuraszkiewicz, D Czerwik, et al., Saqqara I, The Tomb of Merefnebef, Warszawa, 2004, p. 71–73.

<sup>8</sup>D Jones, An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom, BAR 866/2 2000, p. 892 [3268].

<sup>9</sup>N Strudwick, The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom, London, 1985, p. 224–225.

<sup>10</sup>Jones. Index. 11[42].

<sup>11</sup>Jones. Index. 13[53].

from the Old Kingdom onwards.<sup>12</sup> So the author prefers to translate the epithet with 'revered one with goddess *Imntt* or goddess of the West'.

4. *shd pr-nzwt*, Inspector of the royal domain/ house.<sup>13</sup>

Ptahshepses held fifty-one titles and epithets, attested in his tomb. Only four of them are mentioned on the eastern part of the north wall, maybe because of the tight space allowed for the texts. Two of his titles (nos. 1 and 4) seem to confirm that he had direct relations with King Unas and kept him close to the person of the king.

Each of his first three titles is mentioned once, while the fourth appears twice on the sarcophagus, 32 times in the walls of the chapel and 11 times on the walls of the burial chamber. So this latter is the main, most important and favorite one for the tomb owner. He was particularly proud of this title and wanted to emphasize it as much as he was able. It is a comparatively rare title. Few other persons in the Old Kingdom held this title, such as Khenty-ka/ Ikhekhi and one of his attendants,<sup>14</sup> Shedyptah,<sup>15</sup> Nyankhneferem, <sup>16</sup> in addition to Ptahshepses and his two sons. Its oldest attestation is therefore in the recently discovered tomb of Ptahshepses, but the other previous examples are dated to Pepy I or Pepy II.

### Offering table with the empty chair of Ptahshepses

Ptahshepses' burial chamber, as with other Old Kingdom burial chambers, is cut into the bedrock.<sup>17</sup> Some of these chambers are decorated and others un-decorated.<sup>18</sup> Ptahshepses' belongs to the first type. Their walls are rough bed rock,<sup>19</sup> bed rock cased with plaster,<sup>20</sup> or bed rock cased with high quality limestone.<sup>21</sup> Ptahshepses' is of the last type. This scene of the offering table with the empty chair of Ptahshepses is inscribed on a high quality of limestone wall. Lining the walls with limestone blocks and inscribing them was customary from the end of Unas' reign onwards.<sup>22</sup> This scene is one of many scenes of the decoration of Ptahshepses' burial chamber. All scenes represent items of food and drink in addition to some valuable possessions of the tomb owner, as with other burials from the same time.<sup>23</sup> The purpose of the decoration of this sub-structure, as Kanawati's suggests, is their belief that these furniture, food, offering tables, and other offerings will only be used in the unlikely event of the future destruction of the chapel. So the feeling of insecurity was the reason of the shift of

emphasis in decoration from the chapel to the burial chamber.<sup>24</sup>

We agree with Kanawati's opinion, because there are many Old Kingdom texts from the Sixth Dynasty including the deceased's warning about the destruction of the tomb super-structure and reusing any block or brick of it. He menaced the person- who did this bad action- with different punishments.<sup>25</sup> The deceased was afraid that these warning texts might not be enough to stop some people, so he took precautions and inscribed his burial chamber to be a substitute for the chapel. Kanawati suggests that there is a clear ideological division, which appeared from the reign of king Menkauhor or king Issi, the last to build his pyramid at Saqqara and not at Abusir, as did a number of his Fifth Dynasty predecessors. He was also the first to stop the building of a Sun-temple. As well, in his reign Osiris appeared in the offering formula in the tomb inscriptions from the first time, perhaps to counterbalance the growing power of Re and its priesthood.<sup>26</sup> We agree with Kanawati's opinion and we think that the last three kings of the Fifth Dynasty tried with the previous different ways to stop the power of Re's priests. They looked after another god, Osiris, who represented the other face of the currency. Re and Osiris are two faces of one currency. The super-structure of the tomb is a symbol of the day, light, and life. It is the world of Re. The sub-structure played the role of the night, darkness, and death. It is the world of Osiris. The ancient Egyptian wanted to depict daily life scenes and offerings in this sub-structure to look like the super-structure, to prove that the world of Osiris was the same as world of Re, so the Kingdom of Osiris is not always death, but it is also a life kingdom.

The beginning of the decoration of the burial chambers, as some Egyptologists suggested, started in several Second Dynasty tombs excavated at Ezbet el-Walda (Helwan).<sup>27</sup> Then there is no more decoration till the reign of king Isesi of the Fifth Dynasty onwards as Kanawati suggested,<sup>28</sup> or till the reign of king Unas as Dawood suggested.<sup>29</sup> We actually confirm Kanawati's suggestion because the recent excavation at Saqqara yielded a decorated burial chamber of king Isesi's vizier, Reshepses LS 16 (S 902), dated to the middle of the reign of Djedkare.<sup>30</sup> So in the time of king Isesi some high officials started to decorate the walls of the burial chambers and left the ceiling without decoration. Ptahshepses is one of these and is dated to Unas'-Teti's reigns. The deceased sitting before the offering table is a common subject from the Early Dynastic Period<sup>31</sup> onwards.<sup>32</sup> This scene is usually depicted on the panel<sup>33</sup> or the lintel<sup>34</sup> of the false

<sup>12</sup>Ch Leitz, *Das Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* Band I, Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta, Bd. 110, Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, Peeters, Leuven, 2002, p. 362.

<sup>13</sup>Jones. Index. p. 926 [3406].

<sup>14</sup>T James and M Apted, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi*, London, 1953, p. 9; H Fischer, *Varia Nova*, New York, 1996, p. 1-2, fig. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Strudwick, *Administration*, p. 142; C Firth and B Gunn, *Excavations at Saqqara, Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, I, Cairo, 1926, p. 196.

<sup>16</sup>K Mysliwiec and K kuraszkiewicz, *Saqqara IV, The Funerary Complex of Nyankhneferem*, Varsovie, 2010, p. 128.

<sup>17</sup>K Dawood, *Animate Decoration and Burial Chambers of Private Tombs during the Old Kingdom: New evidence from the Tomb of Kairer at Saqqara*, in: L Pantalacci, C Berger-el-Naggar, editors, *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, Travaux archéologiques sur la fin de la VIe dynastie et la première Période Intermédiaire, Lyon, 2005, p. 109.

<sup>18</sup>N Kanawati, *Decoration of Burial Chambers, Sarcophagi and Coffins in the Old Kingdom*, CASAE 34/II (2005), p. 57.

<sup>19</sup>N Kanawati, *Decorated Burial Chambers of the Old Kingdom*, Cairo, 2010, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup>S Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937-1938*, vol. I, *The Mastaba of Nebkau-Her*, Cairo, 1975, p. 57-58.

<sup>21</sup>James and Apted, *Khentika*, p. 3, pls. xxxv, xxxvi.

<sup>22</sup>Kanawati, CASAE 34, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup>Dawood, *Animate decoration*, p. 107; Kanawati, CASAE 34, p. 59.

<sup>24</sup>Kanawati, *Burial Chambers*, 24.

<sup>25</sup>For these warning texts see: S. Soleiman, *The Self Talks and Appeal to the Living in the Old Kingdom Private Tombs at Memphis Necropolis*, Cultural – Analyzing Study, PhD Thesis, Archaeology and Culture Department, Faculty of Arts, Helwan University, Cairo, 2014, p. 606-10, 634-46.

<sup>26</sup>Kanawati, *Burial Chambers*, 43-44.

<sup>27</sup>ZY Saad, *Royal Excavations at Saqqara and Helwan (1941-1945)*, ASAE 54 (1957), p. 172-175; W Wood, *The Archaic Stone Tombs at Helwan*, JEA 73 (1987), p. 59-70; T Wilkinson, *A Reexamination of the Early Dynastic Necropolis at Helwan*, MDAIK 52 (1996), p. 337-354.

<sup>28</sup>Kanawati, CASAE 34, 57; Kanawati, *Burial Chambers*, 44-45.

<sup>29</sup>Dawood, *Animate decoration*, p. 110.

<sup>30</sup>PM III<sup>2</sup>, p. 494-496; K Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom*, Chicago, 1960, p. 101, 292; Strudwick, *Administration*, p. 94-95; Y Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom*, Oxford, 1987, p. 336; N Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées d'Ancien Empire-Le problème de la datation*, Brussels, 1989, p. 229.

<sup>31</sup>S Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1933-1934. Vol I*, Cairo, 1944, p. 70-72.

<sup>32</sup>Harpur, *Decoration*, plans 3, 7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 34, 40, 46, 47, 48, 53, 54, 50, 57, 59, 61, 65, 68, 72, 74, 78, 81, 82, 84, 85, 94, 95, 97, 118, figs. 6, 22, 52.

<sup>33</sup>S. W. Koepke, *False door*, in: D Redford, editor, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of ancient Egypt*, vol. 1, Oxford, 2001, p. 498.

<sup>34</sup>N Kanawati and M Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, vol. III: The



door, the slab stelae,<sup>35</sup> walls of the tomb super-structure, especially the offering room,<sup>36</sup> the stone curved offering tables,<sup>37</sup> and rarely on the lintel and thickness of main and secondary chapel entrances.<sup>38</sup> Kanawati mentioned that the offering table scenes are not among the themes included in the decoration of the burial chamber.<sup>39</sup> Although there are four scenes for the bread offering table with the chair in the burial chambers of Old Kingdom, two with empty chair, Ptahshepses (the subject of this article) and Ankhmahor<sup>40</sup> at Saqqara (pl. 4), and two with the tomb owner sitting on the chair before the offering table, Kaikherptah G 5560 at Giza<sup>41</sup> and Henenit at Sheikh Said.<sup>42</sup>

The author will focus here on Ptahshepses' scene, comparing it with that of Ankhmahor, because they are the only two examples of this kind in the Old Kingdom. The purpose of this scene is preparing the funerary meal for the deceased, which will be waiting him to wake up, sit and eat.

The tomb owner is absent because of the omission of the animate figures, humans and animals from the scenes of the burial chamber decoration in the middle phase,<sup>43</sup> because it was believed they might take an independent and hostile life<sup>44</sup> and harm the deceased.<sup>45</sup> Since the titles and the names of the tomb owner were inscribed above the chair, he was supposed to be present at the table, but his representation itself, still considered dangerous, was absent.<sup>46</sup>

### Similarities between Ptahshepses' and Ankhmahor's scenes

The two scenes are in tombs at the Saqqara necropolis: one in Gisir El-Mudir and the other in the Teti Cemetery (pl. 4). Both are depicted on the North wall of the burial Chamber and have the same elements; the empty chair, offering table, basin, ewer, *hs* jars, short offering list, offerings, and the tomb owner's titles and name. Ptahshepses, like Ankhmahor, has the same chair with four lion legs on a pedestal, to preserve it from moisture, with a piece of linen on top to be a convertible seat. The offering table of Ptahshepses looks like that of Ankhmahor; it is rounded with a long thin stand. Both have three *hs* jars, basin and a ewer under the table.

Both scenes have the same organization and distribution of the scene's main elements:

- A. The offering table is depicted to the east.

- B. The Chair is depicted to the west.

- C. The titles and the names at the top of the space are above chair.

### Differences between Ptahshepses' and Ankhmahor's scenes:

There are some differences between the Ptahshepses' and Ankhmahor's scenes. The tomb owner's titles and the name are written in a horizontal line of hieroglyphs above the chair of Ptahshepses, while in the case of Ankhmahor, they have been written in seven vertical lines and a horizontal line above the chair. The 1000 offering list is depicted under the table of Ptahshepses and consists of nine items, while the same list is represented above the table of Ankhmahor and is composed of fifteen items. It normally consists of approximately three to nine entries.<sup>47</sup> Ptahshepses' offering table contains eighteen half loaves of bread, while that of Ankhmahor has thirteen. The different offerings are surrounding the chair and table of Ptahshepses, but in contrast they are only depicted on the right side of Ankhmahor's table.

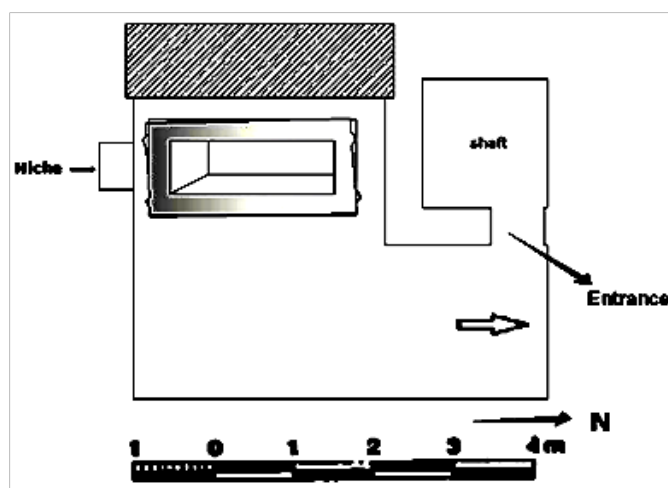


Figure 1 Plan of the burial chamber of Ptahshepses, the inner arrow refers to the position of the scene.

The *hpt* offerings (loaf of bread, cake and beer jar) and *hmk* offerings (piece of meat, headless bird, bird's head and three jars) are represented next to Ankhmahor's offering table, whereas those are not present at Ptahshepses' table. The three *hs* jars, ewer and basin of Ptahshepses are placed on one side under the table, while those of Ankhmahor are depicted on both sides of his table. Finally, a scepter is represented on the chair of Ptahshepses' scene. It is entitled with a horizontal line of hieroglyphs including the offering formula. These are not present in the scene of Ankhmahor.

### Dating

This scene of the burial chamber of Ptahshepses, as with the rest of the scenes, is dated to the reign of Teti for the following reasons:

- A. Ptahshepses' burial chamber is lined with good quality limestone blocks and extensively decorated, as are the tombs of Kagemni, Mereruka, Ankhmahor and Khentika. These later tombs are dated to Teti's reign.<sup>48</sup> In the reign of Unas, the burial chamber of

<sup>47</sup>Y Harpur, P Scremin. The Chapel of Kagemni- Scene Details. Oxford; 2006. 465(Details 441–44).

<sup>48</sup>Kanawati, CASAE 34, p. 59.

Tombs of Neferseshemre and Seankhuptah, Warminster, 1998, pl. 58.

<sup>35</sup>GA Reisner, A History of the Giza Necropolis, I, Cambridge, 1942, p. 385–430, 460 – 465, figs. 280, 306, pls. 17–20, 39, 46, 57.

<sup>36</sup>Harpur. Decoration. plans 3–118.

<sup>37</sup>A Moussa and H Altenmüller, Das Grab des Nianchnum und Chnumhotep, Mainz/Rhein, 1977, Taf. 80, 81.

<sup>38</sup>Harpur, Decoration, p. 44, 53, fig. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Kanawati, Burial Chambers, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup>PM III<sup>2</sup>, 512–515; Firth and Gunn, Teti Pyramid, vol. I, 98, vol. II, pl. 6; A. Badawy, The Tomb of Nyhetep-Ptah at Giza and the Tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara Berkeley, 1978, p. 45, pl. 80; N Kanawati and A Hassan, The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. II, The Tomb of Ankhmahor, Sydney, 1997, pl. 68, pl. 68.

<sup>41</sup>PM III<sup>2</sup>, p. 166–167; H Junker, Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, VIII, Vienne, 1947, Abb. 56.

<sup>42</sup>PM IV<sup>1</sup>, p. 191; N de G Davies, The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Saïd, London, 1901, pl. xxvi.

<sup>43</sup>Kanawati, CASAE 34, 59; Kanawati, Burial Chambers, p. 60.

<sup>44</sup>Badawy, Ankhmahor, p. 45.

<sup>45</sup>Dawood, Animate decoration, p. 111.

<sup>46</sup>AO Bolshakov, Hinting as a Method of Old Kingdom Tomb Decoration, I, The Offering Stone and the False Door of the Dwarf Snb, GM 139 (1994), p. 17.

Hetep, for example, is lined with limestone and left undecorated.<sup>49</sup> So the author suggests that the casing of the burial chamber of Ptahshepses was done during Unas' or Teti's reigns and its decoration completed during the reign of Teti. Those decorated burial chambers that are dated to Unas' reign (Niankhba and Ihy) are decorated in painting on plaster.<sup>50</sup>



Figure 2 Ptahshepses' burial chamber, north wall.



Figure 3 Ptahshepses' burial chamber, part of the north wall, showing the inscriptions above the offering table.

B. The tradition of decorating burial chambers in the Old Kingdom began during the reign of king Izezi and onwards. Ptahshepses' tomb is the only tomb discovered to date in this site, west of Unas Pyramid, which includes a decorated burial chamber. There are six more decorated burial chambers in the Unas cemetery, but located to the east of his pyramid. The beginning of decorating burial chambers in this cemetery is dated from Unas onwards as follows; Nyankhba (Unas), Ihy (Unas-Teti), Kairer (Pepy I), Mehu (Pepy I-Merenre I), Khoui (late Dynasty 6), and Unashaishtef (late Dynasty 6 -Herakleopolitan period).<sup>51</sup> So Ptahshepses' tomb can be dated with some certainty according to the reign of Unas or later.

<sup>49</sup>S Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937-1938*, vol. III, *Mastabas of Princess Hemet-Re and Others*, Cairo, 1975, p. 57.

<sup>50</sup>Kanawati, *CASAE* 34, p. 58.

<sup>51</sup>Dawood. *Animate decoration*. p. 117-119.



Figure 4 The offering table's scene in the burial chamber of Ptahshepses.

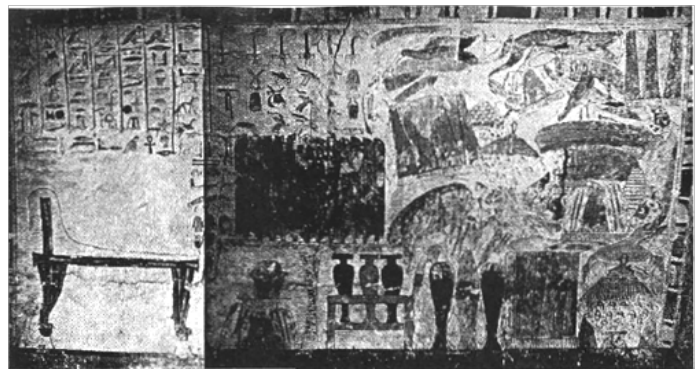



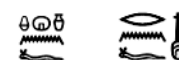


Figure 5 Ankhmahor's burial chamber, north wall (After Firth and Gunn, *Excavations at Saqqara, Teti Pyramid Cemeteries, II*, Cairo, 1926, pl. 6 [A]).

C. Ptahshepses' burial chamber, like some other burial chambers from the reign of Unas to the end of the Old Kingdom,<sup>52</sup> includes depictions of food, drink and funerary furniture but no living creatures (perhaps due to fear of some harm they could do to the deceased).<sup>53</sup> This is another indication that Ptahshepses' tomb was decorated during the reign of Unas or later.

D. The human figures used as determinatives in names, titles, or offering lists were avoided in the decoration of Ptahshepses' burial chamber;  or  in the chapel,  in the burial chamber

E. The dangerous reptiles (the snake and the viper) were not shown mutilated during this phase.<sup>54</sup> Ptahshepses' artists followed the same tradition in his burial chamber, for example :



These previous features are found throughout the middle phase of the development of decoration of burial chambers, which extends


<sup>52</sup>N Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*, vol. I, *Kaiemankh (G 4561) and Seshemnefer I (G 4940)* Warminster, England, 2001, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup>AO Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, *ÄAT* 37 (1997), p. 118.

<sup>54</sup>Kanawati, *Burial Chambers*, p. 53-54.



from the end of Unas' reign to that of Pepy I.<sup>55</sup> So Ptahshepses' tomb can be dated to this phase.

F. From the beginning of Teti's reign a new development arises in the inscriptions of the burial chambers and sarcophagi; the avoidance of the seated god determinative of Osiris and the recumbent jackal determinative of Anubis. This feature is found throughout Teti's reign, as in the tombs of the viziers Neferseshemre, Ankhmahor, Mereruka, Khentika, and in those of lesser officials such as Semdent and Khentika's son, Khentika, although the latter probably belongs to the reign of Pepy I.<sup>56</sup> This feature is also found in four texts of Ptahshepses' burial chamber:  This lends further support to the dating of the decoration of Ptahshepses' tomb to the reign of Teti.

G. The north wall of Ptahshepses' burial chamber is decorated with an offering table and an empty chair. His own figure is not shown. The same scene is found in the tomb of Ankhmahor in Teti cemetery.<sup>57</sup> Both are depicted on the north wall of the burial chamber and have most of the same elements. The tomb of Ptahshepses must therefore be close in date to that of Ankhmahor which has been dated to the reign of Teti<sup>58</sup> or late Teti and early of Pepy I.<sup>59</sup> It is dated to the middle Phase of burial chambers decoration, which extended from the end of Unas to Pepy I.<sup>60</sup> Bolshakov suggested that the depersonalized table scene of Ankhmahor is the third stage of elaboration of the Old Kingdom burial chamber and is dated to the reign of Teti.<sup>61</sup>

H. The scene in Ptahshepses' burial chamber of an offering table and empty chair has a banded frieze around the top, a style common to Dynasty 6, as Kanawati has identified.<sup>62</sup>

I. The burial chamber includes the third name of the tomb owner. The individuals were sometimes holding multi names. There are usually three, and rarely four or six. This tradition is most

frequently dated to the Sixth Dynasty, from the reign of Teti to the end of the Sixth Dynasty. It is rarely known in the late Old Kingdom. The burial chamber of Ptahshepses is dated to the Sixth Dynasty.

J. The epithet *im3h(w) hr Imntt*, which is found in the tomb of Ptahshepses, is dated to the Sixth Dynasty in the tombs of Kaemankh G 4561 at Giza, which is dated to Teti's<sup>63</sup> or Pepy II's<sup>64</sup> reigns and Hesi at Saqqara, which is dated to late Teti's reign and early Pepy I's reign.<sup>65</sup>

K. The tombs of Merefnebef (Teti-Pepy I),<sup>66</sup> Nyankhneferterem (Pepy I),<sup>67</sup> and some tombs discovered in Tabet el-Guish, south of Saqqara (Pepy I) were constructed on three levels. Ptahshepses' tomb is of this type and it could be that the top level was built later, during the time of Teti.

## Acknowledgments

None.

## Funding

None.

## Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

<sup>55</sup>Kanawati, Burial Chambers, p. 53–54.

<sup>56</sup>Kanawati, CASAE 34, p. 60.

<sup>57</sup>PM III<sup>2</sup>, p. 512–115; Firth and Gunn, Teti, I, p. 98, vol. II, pl. 6; Badawy, Nyhetep-Ptah, p. 45, pl. 80; Kanawati and Hassan, Ankhmahor, pl. 68.

<sup>58</sup>Strudwick, Administration, p. 75 [30]; Cherpion, Mastabas, 153, 232.

<sup>59</sup>Harpur, Decoration, p. 273 [374]; Kanawati and Hassan, Ankhmahor, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup>Kanawati, Burial Chambers, pp. 51–53.

<sup>61</sup>Bolshakov, Man, p. 119–120.

<sup>62</sup>Kanawati, Giza, I, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup>[https://archaeologydata.service.ac.uk/archives/view/oe\\_ahrc\\_2006/queryTombs.cfm?section=listTombs&tombId=0&siteId=0&cemeteryId=0&type=siteld&browseType=scrolled&cfid=26fea6d0-f85f-47b7-b883-ee29cbd55f7c&cftoken=0](https://archaeologydata.service.ac.uk/archives/view/oe_ahrc_2006/queryTombs.cfm?section=listTombs&tombId=0&siteId=0&cemeteryId=0&type=siteld&browseType=scrolled&cfid=26fea6d0-f85f-47b7-b883-ee29cbd55f7c&cftoken=0)

<sup>64</sup>A Woods, Contribution to a Controversy: A Date for the Tomb of *k3(=i)-m-nh* at Giza, JEA 95 (2009) p. 172.

<sup>65</sup>N Kanawati, M Abder-Raziq, The Teti Pyramid Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. V, The Tomb of Hesi, Warminster, 1999, p. 15–16, 38, pls. 33, 59; K Kloth, Die (auto-) biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung, Beihefte SAK 8 (2002), p. 25 (51); [https://archaeologydata.service.ac.uk/archives/view/oe\\_ahrc\\_2006/queryTombs.cfm?Section=listTombs&tombId=0&siteId=0&cemeteryId=0&type=siteld&browseType=scrolled&CFID=26fea6d0-f85f-47b7-b883-ee29cbd55f7c&CFTOKEN=0](https://archaeologydata.service.ac.uk/archives/view/oe_ahrc_2006/queryTombs.cfm?Section=listTombs&tombId=0&siteId=0&cemeteryId=0&type=siteld&browseType=scrolled&CFID=26fea6d0-f85f-47b7-b883-ee29cbd55f7c&CFTOKEN=0)

<sup>66</sup>Mycliwec et al., Merefnebef, p. 53, 246–250.

<sup>67</sup>Myśliwiec and Kuraszkiewicz, Nyankhneferterem, p. 83, 131, 280–281.