

The Inscribed Lintel of Ptahshepses at Saqqara

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Abstract

This article publishes an entrance lintel in a recently discovered Old Kingdom tomb at Saqqara, providing its description, translations of its texts and detailed interpretations of the scenes illustrating the texts. The commentary considers the names, titles, and figures of the tomb owner and his two sons, the offering formula and the tomb owner's autobiography and Appeal to the Living.

Keywords

Autobiography, lintel, offering formula, Ptahshepses, sarcophagus, Themi

صالح سليمان عطية عبدالله
عتب المدخل المنقوش الخاص ببتاح-شيسس في سقارة

يقوم هذا المقال بنشر عتب مدخل عُثر عليه ضمن مقبرة مكتشفة حديثاً في سقارة ترجع للدولة القديمة. تقدم المقالة وصفاً للأثر وترجمة للنصوص المنقوشة عليه وشرحاً مفصلاً للمناظر المصاحبة للنص. يتضمن التعليق الأسماء والألقاب والمناظر الخاصة بصاحب المقبرة وولديه، بالإضافة إلى صيغة مقدمة القرابين والسيرة الذاتية للمتوفى ومخاطبته للأحياء.

Introduction

The tomb of Ptahshepses is located in the south-west corner of our excavations in the Gisir el-Mudir site at Saqqara,¹ west of the Step Pyramid (Figs 1–3). It was discovered in 2010 by the Supreme Council of Antiquities, under my supervision with my colleague Ali el-Batal. The surface layer (c.1.2 m thick) was compact and composed of tafla mixed with chips of limestone and pottery shards. Underneath, there was soft fine sand covering a courtyard in front of the tomb.

The façade of this tomb with its white limestone lintel was preserved in a layer of sand (see Fig. 5). The lintel is in perfect condition, with clear inscriptions. It had been preserved by the projecting rock on top of it and the vaulted brick ceiling of the frontal court. The lintel consists of three long, unequal pieces of fine limestone, positioned in a cut in the wall. The entire lintel measures 5.2 m in length, 0.44 m high and 0.1 m thick.

The tomb owner's names on the lintel

The first name

This name is written in this way on the lintel three times and several more times on the four walls of the chapel. We read it as *šps-pw-Pth*,² Further work in the shaft of the tomb after

the discovery of the chapel revealed an inscribed burial chamber, where the name is spelled . This led to a revision of the initial reading as *Pth-šps* or *šps-Pth*.³

The second name

The second name appears in this form on the lintel five times and in the same way on all parts of the tomb. We read this as *tmi*.⁴

Comment

Old Kingdom naming conventions used two names, or sometimes three, for an individual.⁵ In the case of this tomb, 'Ptahshepses' is the *rn* '3. This is mentioned specifically in the texts of the west wall of the chapel. Themi

³Ranke, *PN*, I, 326.19.

⁴Ranke, *PN*, I, 391.1.

⁵D. M. Doxey, 'Names', in D. B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt (OEAE)*, II, (Oxford, 2000), 490; K. Mysliwicz, K. Kuraszkiewicz, D. Czerwik, T. Rzeuska, M. Kaczmarek, and Z. Godziejewski, *Saqqara, I: The Tomb of Merefnebef* (Warsaw, 2004), 71–3, pl. xi.

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¹We discovered about 20 tombs at this site. some of them were published and others are still under publication such as the tomb of Ptahshepses, which is planned to be published in two parts.

²H. Ranke, *PN*, I (Glückstadt, 1935), 326.6.

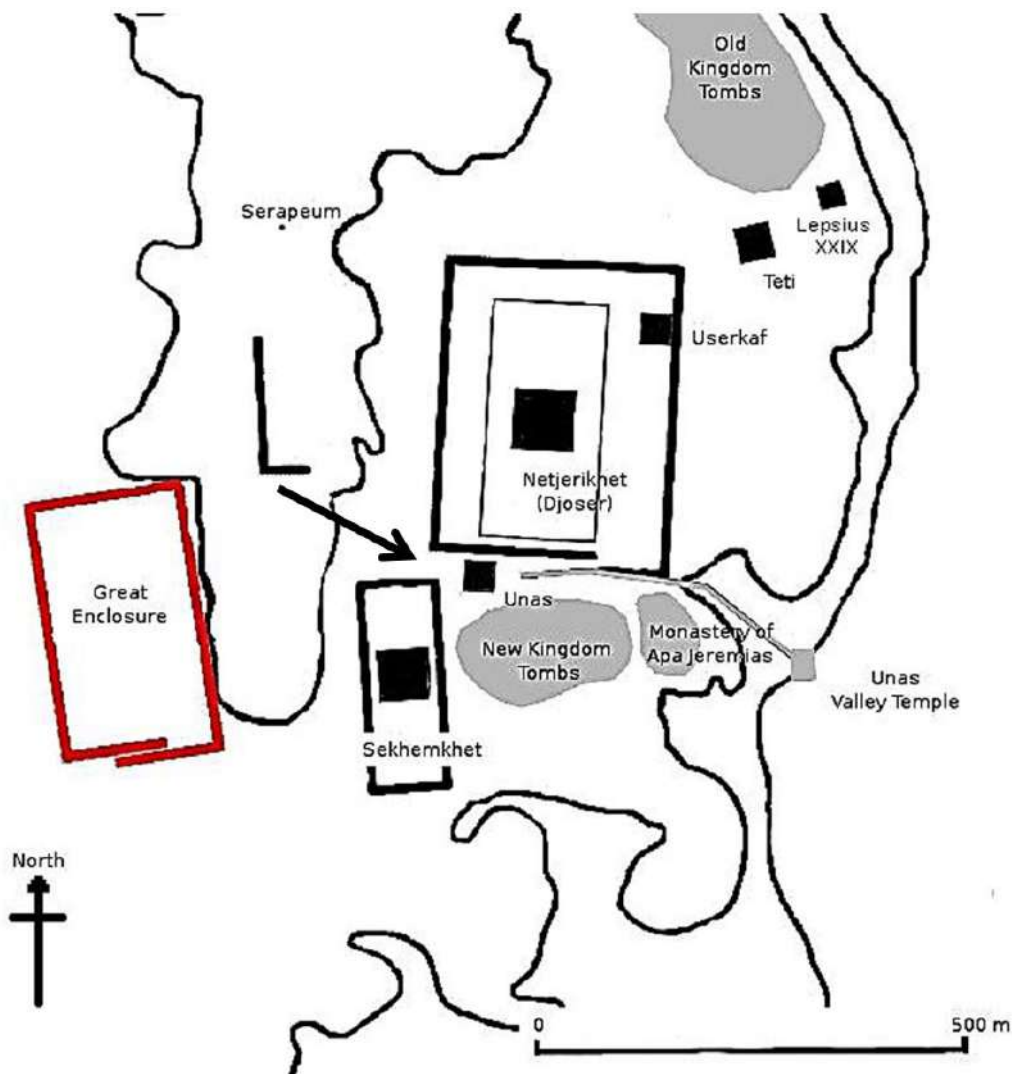


Fig. 1. Plan of Saqqara, showing the great enclosure (Gisr el-Mudir) west of the Step Pyramid; the arrow points to the excavations site. (After http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gisr_el-Mudir).

is referred to explicitly as the *rn nfr*. It is necessary to check all the forms of the tomb owner's name before concluding which sign(s) makes up the main name and which are the phonetic complement. Here, we determined □ as the phonetic complement.

Most of the ancient Egyptian names are related to gods' or kings' names. Ptahshepses is connected to Ptah, who appears in the names of individuals from the Fourth Dynasty onwards and is common in the Fifth Dynasty.⁶ Some of the ancient Egyptians preferred to give their sons a name connected to their family and town god. Ptahshepses lived in Memphis and his family gave him a name referring to Ptah, a member of the Memphis triad.

The tomb owner has one simple name, Themis, and one compound name, Ptahshepses, which can be read as *Pth-šps*, a noun plus an adjective, which together mean 'the noble Ptah', or *šps-Pth*, a nominal sentence with an adjectival predicate followed by the nominal subject,⁷ but where

the name of the god is spoken first as a sign of respect and honour, meaning 'the god Ptah is noble'.

The tomb owner's titles and epithets

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>im3h(i) hr ity wnis</i> | I am honoured by the sovereign Unas. ⁸ |
| 2. <i>im3hw hr wnis</i> | The [one] honoured by Unas. ⁹ |
| 3. <i>imy-ib nb.f hnty idbwy.f</i> | Confidant of his lord presiding over his two banks. ¹⁰ |
| 4. <i>imy-ib n nzwt m sšb.f nb</i> | Confidant of the king in all his secrets. |
| 5. <i>imy-r swt špswt nt pr-š3</i> | Overseer of the august places of the Great House. ¹¹ |
| 6. <i>ir htpt</i> | One who caused peace. |

⁸This epithet and no. 4 are not attested in D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (BAR 866/2; Oxford, 2000), 11–43 (nos 40–227).

⁹Jones, *Index*, 19 n. 87.

¹⁰Jones, *Index*, 45–6 n. 238.

¹¹Jones, *Index*, 221–2 n. 826.

⁶J. van Dijk, 'Ptah', in Redford, *OEAE*, III, 74.

⁷A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1994), 108.

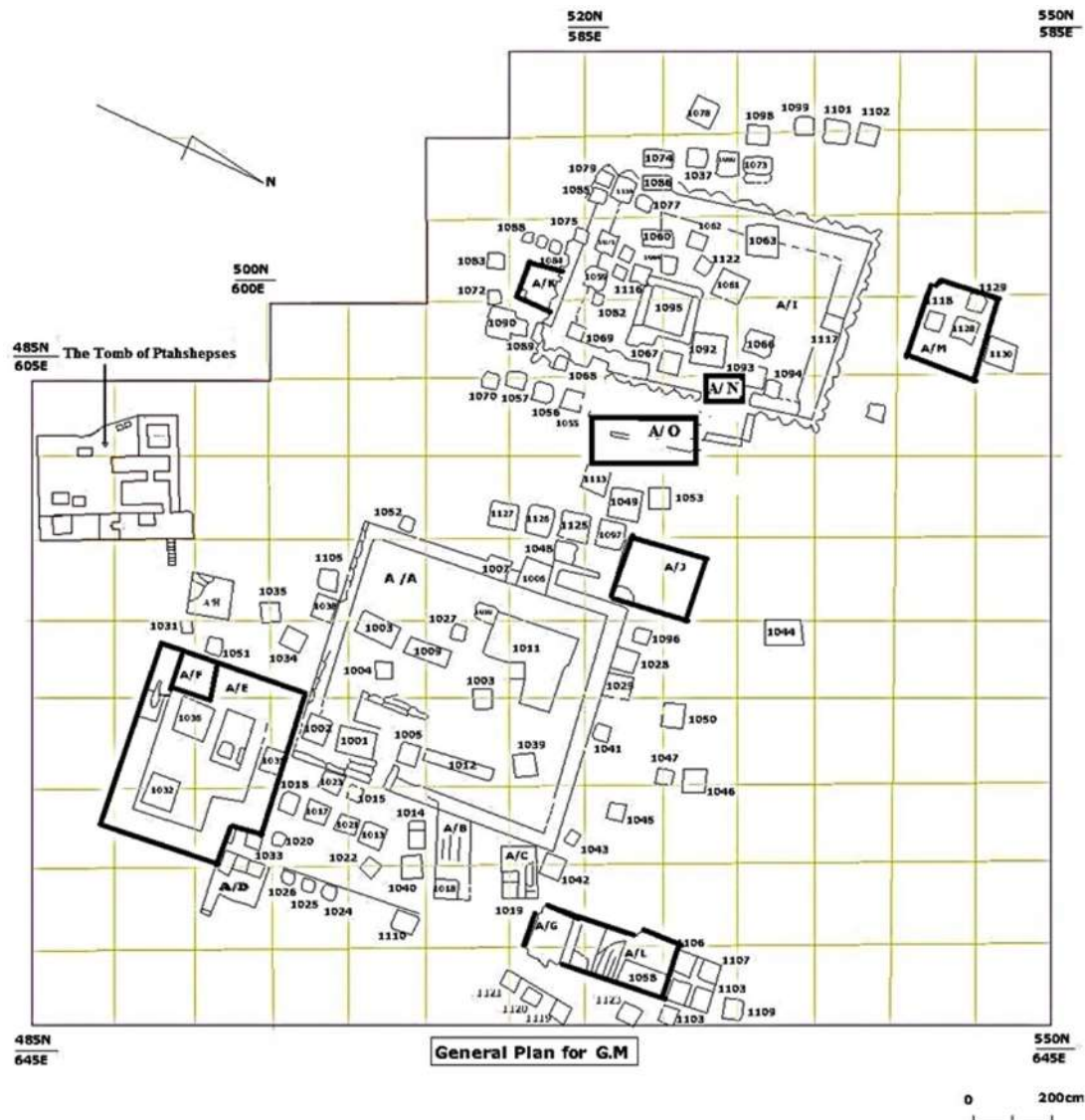


Fig. 2. Plan of Gisr el-Mudir, showing the location of the tomb of Ptahshepses (from el-Batal et al., *Gisr el-Mudir*, pl. 2).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 7. <i>ḥry-sšt3 n wdt-mdw</i>
<i>nbt ššt nt nzwt</i> | Privy to the secret of all
secret decrees of the king. ¹² |
| 8. <i>ḥry-sšt3 n nzwt m s(w)t.f nb</i> | Privy to the secret of the
king in all his cult-places. ¹³ |
| 9. <i>zbi im3ḥ ḥr ntr ʿ3</i> | Who lived in a state of rever-
ence before the great god. |
| 10. <i>smr wʿty</i> | The sole companion. ¹⁴ |
| 11. <i>šḥd pr-nzwt</i> | Inspector of the royal
domain/house. ¹⁵ |

Comment

About 51 titles and epithets are attested for Ptahshepses in the super- and sub-structures of the tomb. Only 11 of them

are mentioned on the lintel, maybe because he had not yet obtained most of the other titles at the time of the inscription, or because the limited space on the lintel prohibited their inclusion in addition to the offering formula, his autobiography and Appeal to the Living.

Each of the 11 titles appears once on the lintel with the exception of *šḥd pr-nzwt*, which is listed five times for the tomb owner. His two sons also bear this title, suggesting that it was the most important and favoured one by the family. For the Old Kingdom, a number of individuals are attested bearing this title, such as Khentika/Ikhekhi and one of his attendants,¹⁶ Shedyptah,¹⁷ Nyankhneferterem,¹⁸ in

¹²Jones, *Index*, 618 n. 2268.

¹³Jones, *Index*, 630 n. 2311.

¹⁴Jones, *Index*, 892 n. 3268.

¹⁵Jones, *Index*, 926 n. 3406.

¹⁶T. James and M. Apted, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953), 9; H. Fischer, *Varia Nova* (New York 1996), 1–2, fig. 1.

¹⁷N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1985), 142; C. Firth and B. Gunn, *Excavations at Saqqara: Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, I (Cairo, 1926), 196.

¹⁸K. Mysliwiec and K. Kuraszkievicz, *Saqqara, IV: The Funerary Complex of Nyankhneferterem* (Warsaw, 2010), 128.

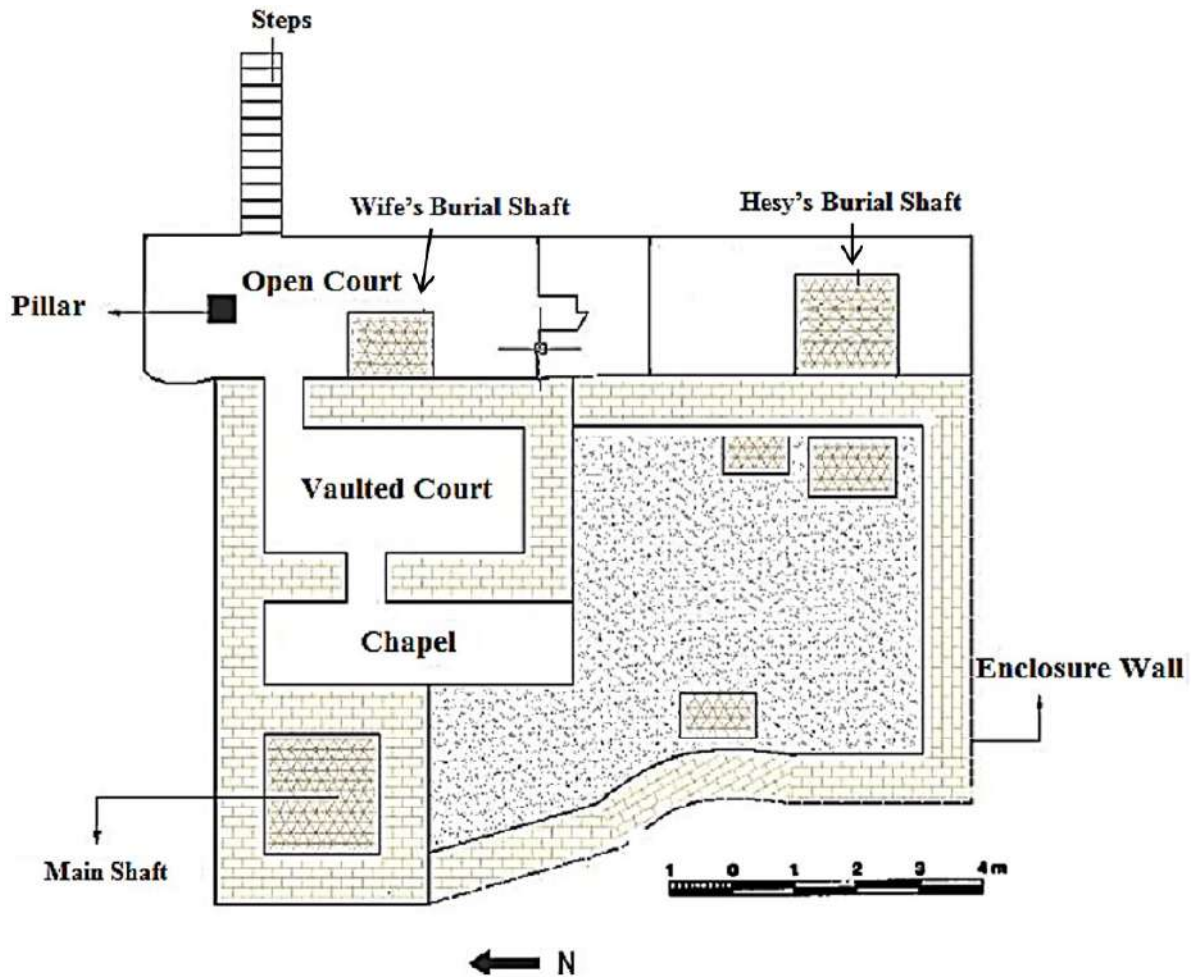


Fig. 3. Plan of the tomb of Ptahshepses (courtesy of Ismail Mohamed Teleb).



Fig. 4. Overview of the excavation site showing location of the tomb of Ptahshepses, looking east (photograph by the author).

addition to Ptahshepses and his two sons. It is, however, a rare title. Its earliest mention is on this lintel, which is dated to the reign of Unas, but the other examples are dated to Pepy I or Pepy II.

Nine of his titles (nos 1–5, 7, 8, 10, 11) seem to confirm that he had direct relations and contacts with King Unas. These functions kept him close to the person of the king. His highest title, the one connected to the supervision of the



Fig. 5. Façade of the tomb, looking west (the author).

thrones of the palace, is *imy-r swt špswt nt pr-ʿ3*.¹⁹ The second level of Ptahshepses' titles is *smr wʿty* and *šhd pr-nzwt*. His third class of titles is *hry-sšt3 n wdt-mdw nbt št3t nt nzwt* and *hry-sšt3 n nzwt m s(w)t.f nb*.

Two of his epithets are *ir htpt* and *zbi im3h*. They are only attested at Saqqara, with ten examples from eight tombs: Mehi,²⁰ Geref (two instances),²¹ Hesi,²² Nyankhnepem,²³ Nyankhpepy (*ir htpt* only),²⁴ Iyenhor (*ir htpt* only),²⁵ Herimeru (two instances),²⁶ and Ptahshepses. The oldest attestation is on the lintel of the last tomb, dated to Unas, the other five are dated to the reign of Teti (Hesi), the end of Teti's reign and the beginning of Pepy I's reign (Mehi, Geref), and Pepy I's reign (Nyankhnepem, Nyankhpepy, Iyenhor, and Herimeru). *ir htpt zbi im3h* is translated as 'One who caused peace and who lived in a state of reverence',²⁷ or 'who achieved graciousness and who attained honours'.²⁸

¹⁹This comment was made by Mysliwicz and Kuraszkiewicz with regard to the titles of Nyankhnepem: Mysliwicz and Kuraszkiewicz, *Saqqara*, IV, 128–9.

²⁰A. el-Khouli and N. Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara, North-West of the Teti Pyramid*, II (Sydney, 1988), 14; N. Kanawati, 'New Evidence on the Reign of Userkare?', *GM* 83 (1984), 32.

²¹N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VII: *The Tombs of Shepsipuptah, Mereri (Merinebti), Hefi and Others* (Warminster, 2001), 61, pl. 53; N. Kanawati and A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, I: *The Tombs of Nedjet-em-pet, Ka-aper and Others* (Sydney, 1996), 72, pl. 65.

²²N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, V: *The Tomb of Hesi* (Warminster, 1999), 22–3, pls 9, 10, 52.

²³Mysliwicz and Kuraszkiewicz, *Nyankhnepem*, 136, fig. 49.

²⁴PM III², 630; S. Hassan, re-edited by Z. Iskander, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938*, II: *Mastabas of Ny-cankh-Pepy and Others* (Cairo, 1975), 6, figs 2, 3, pls i–iii.

²⁵PM III², 630; S. Hassan, re-edited by Z. Iskander, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938*, III: *Mastabas of Princess Hemet-Re and Others* (Cairo, 1975), 62, fig. 33.

²⁶Hassan, *Saqqara*, III, 72–7, figs 37.b, 93; PM III², 626.

²⁷Mysliwicz and Kuraszkiewicz, *Saqqara*, IV, 136.

²⁸El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 14; Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VII, 61; Kanawati and Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, I, 72.

On the lintel of Ptahshepses, the epithet *zbi im3h* is followed by *hr ntr ʿ3*, 'by the great god'. It is the only example I have found. There are other expressions that exist in Giza: *ir.f htpt* (Nyhetepptah G 2430 = LG 25), *zbi htpt* and *ir im3h* (Khuiwer LG 95).²⁹

The lintel decoration

The scenes

Three individuals are shown on the left side of the lintel at its southern end (see Figs 11 and 12). The first, and largest person, represents the tomb owner, standing, facing right (north), wearing a short wig covering the ears, a short and straight beard, a collar and a triangular kilt. His left arm is bent in front of him holding a staff, the same height as him. His right arm is straight and extended behind him, holding an object (possibly a handkerchief, a cloth or a sceptre).

The second individual represents the tomb owner's son, Nebieb, standing in front of his father, facing him, and bending towards him in a respectful posture. He is dressed in a triangular kilt, both arms are bent in front of him holding a censer, burning incense before his father.

The third represents the tomb owner's other son, Hesy. He is standing behind his father, facing right (north), wearing a triangular kilt. He holds his father's leg with his left hand, while his right arm is straight and extended behind him.

The inscriptions

The lintel is inscribed with four horizontal lines and one vertical line of hieroglyphs for the tomb owner in sunken relief, directed from right to left. They represent the offering formula, the story of building the tomb, the making and transporting of the sarcophagus, 11 titles, epithets and his two names (Figs 6–12). There are also some inscriptions identifying his two sons (Figs 11 and 12).

²⁹N. Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung* (SAK 8; Hamburg, 2002), 12, 26, 113–16

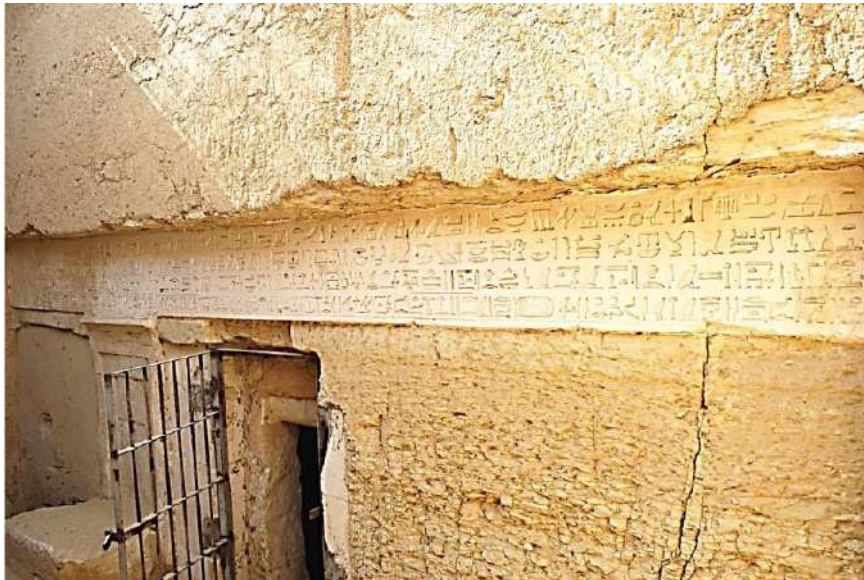


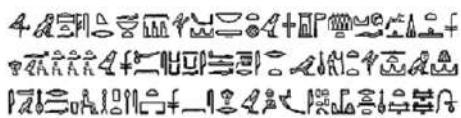
Fig. 6 Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses (photo: the author).



Fig. 7. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses (photo: the author).

The inscriptions of the tomb owner

First line:

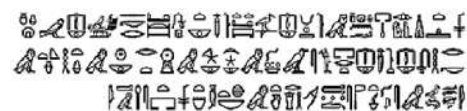


*h̄tp di nzw̄t h̄tp Inpw tpy dw.f h̄nty zh-ntr̄ imy-wt nb t3 dsr
zmyt imntt n swt.f nbt k̄rs.t(i).f m h̄rt-ntr̄t m zmyt imntt i3w
nfr wr̄t indr̄ ʿ.f in k̄3w.f s̄sm.n sw tfw.f / itw.f³⁰ hr̄ w3wt nfrwt
nt h̄rt-ntr̄t h̄p̄pt im3hw̄ hr̄.sn sh̄d pr-nzw̄t Pth-šps̄s rn.f nfr
tmi*

³⁰A three-times repetition of the word, one of several ways to express the plural in Old Egyptian. For more details see: E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, I (Rome, 1955), 117.

An offering which the king gives and an offering which Anubis, who is on his hill, foremost of the divine booth, who is in the embalming place, lord of the sacred land of the western desert of all his places (gives), that he be buried in the necropolis in the western desert having reached a very good old age. May his document be held by his souls (kaw) and his fathers guide him upon the beautiful roads of the necropolis on which the honoured ones walk, inspector of the royal domain Ptahshepses, whose good name is Themi.

Second line:



*h̄tp di nzw̄t Wsir prt-hrw̄ n.f m wpt-rnpt̄ h̄b dh̄wt̄y tpy rnpt̄ h̄b
w3g skr̄ h̄b wr̄ rkh̄ h̄b tpy rnpt̄ h̄b prt Mnw̄ s3d m 3bd smdt m*



Fig. 8. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses, the right part (photo: the author).



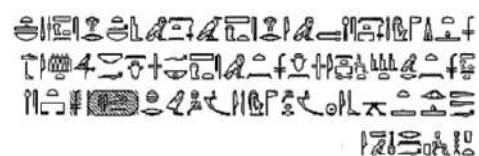
Fig. 9. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses, the central part (photo: the author).

*hrt-hrw r^c-nb³¹ m t hnk̄t m iw̄f 3pd(w) m sdt sntr mr̄ht m ht nbt
ndmt sh̄d pr-nzwt tmi*

An offering which the king and Osiris give, may an invocation offering come forth for him at the opening of the year feast, the Thoth feast, the first of the year feast, the Wag-feast, the Sokar feast, the great feast, the fire-lighting feast, the first of the year feast, the coming forth of Min (feast), the Sag-feast, at the monthly feast, the half-monthly feast, at the course of every day from the bread, beer, from meat,

birds, from the lit incense, perfumes, from all the sweet things (to) the inspector of the royal domain, Themi.

Third line:



*h̄tp di nzwt ntr ʿ3 n sh̄d pr-nzwt tmi h̄ry-sš̄t3 n nzwt m s(w).t.f nb
h̄ry-sš̄t3 n wdt-mdw nbt š̄t3t nt nzwt imy-r swt š̄pswt nt pr-ʿ3
imy-ib n nzwt m sš̄t3.f hb[sic] imy-ib nb.f h̄nty idbwy.f ir h̄tpt zbi
im3h hr ntr ʿ3 im3hw hr [Wnis] sh̄d pr-[nzwt] pth-šps rn.f nfr tmi*

³¹The word *nb* is written *hb*, a mistake due to the close proximity of the two signs and the six-times repetition of *hb* in this sentence.



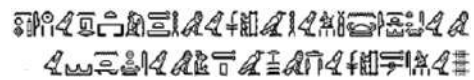
Fig. 10. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses, the central part (photo: the author).



Fig. 11. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses, the left part (photo: the author).

An offering which the king and the great god give to the inspector of the royal domain Themí, privy to the secret of the king in all his cult-places, privy to the secret of all secret decrees of the king, overseer of the august places of the great house, confidant of the king in all his secrets, confidant of his lord presiding over his two banks, one who caused peace, who lived in a state of reverence before the great god, honoured by [Unas] and inspector of the [royal] domain, Ptahshepses, whose good name is Themí.

Fourth line:



*shd pr-nzwt tmi dd ir.n.tw n(i) iz pn m-sw im3h(i) hr ity wnís
ir.n.f n(i) wd n sd3t n rdit.f n dd(i) rsyt.f mhyt.f imnt.f imy-wrt.f
iw gr rdi.n hm.f int n(i) krs(w) m r-3w m wsht nt ht h3swt in
prw dpt wh3 sw m htt n hrw 2 in s3w iwnw sB sw dy m r-mw 3tp
m wsht nt ht h3swt*

The inspector of the royal domain Themí says: this tomb was made for me because I was honoured by the sovereign Unas who made a decree for me including my request for its south, north, west and east measurements. More than this,



Fig. 12. Inscribed entrance lintel of Ptahshepses, image of the tomb owner with his sons, on the left part of the lintel (photo: the author).

his majesty caused to bring a sarcophagus to me from Turah in a *wšht*-bark of foreign wood by boat crews (sailors), cutting it in the *hṯt*-workshop in two days by the phyles of Heliopolis, dragging and bringing it to the river (or water) edge, and loading it in *wšht*-bark of foreign wood.

Fifth line:

𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏

smr w^cty pth-šps rn.f nfr tmi

The sole companion Ptahshepses, whose good name is Themi.

The inscriptions of the first son

There are three horizontal lines identifying the son, shown in front of his father and facing him:

𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏

z3.f smsw šḥd pr-nzwt nb-ib

His eldest son, inspector of the royal domain, Nebieb

The inscriptions of the second son

There are complete and some incomplete words in these inscriptions identifying the son, standing behind his father and looking in the same direction:

𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏𓂏

z3.f smsw šḥd pr-nzwt ḥzy

His eldest son, inspector of the royal domain, Hesy

Comment

The entrance lintels of Old Kingdom tombs have three main kinds of decorations. The first is the text rendered in one or

more horizontal or horizontal and vertical lines with a seated or standing figure of the deceased. He may be shown with his hands empty or holding a staff and a sceptre or a handkerchief. Sometimes he is shown sitting before the offering table or in a gesture of invocation. Seated figures are more common than standing ones, being larger and needing less space. The figure functions as a determinative and thus appears at the end of the text, after the titles and names, looking in the same direction, usually positioned to the left and facing right.³²

The second form of decoration is that of two sitting or standing figures with two texts on one lintel. The third one shows many standing figures with accompanying texts. Both styles appear from the second half of the Fifth Dynasty onwards and add to the symmetry of the tomb entrance decoration.³³

Ptahshepses' tomb is an example of the first style, which appears from the Fourth Dynasty onwards. It is more common than the others on the entrance lintels and the upper lintels of the false doors.³⁴ Ptahshepses is shown standing, with his left leg in front of his right leg, and holding symbols of authority (staff and handkerchief). He looks north towards the northern stars, those which never disappear, hoping for his soul to be amongst them, in company with all of the justified. He, like most officials, clearly preferred a longer formula at the expense of symmetry.

The tombs' owners are usually represented standing, holding two symbols of authority. One arm is shown bent in front holding a staff, while the other arm is straight and extended down behind the body, holding a handkerchief or a sceptre. This position is mainly associated with male tomb owners.³⁵ It is known in the early Old Kingdom³⁶ and usually depicted on the sides of the tombs' main facades,³⁷ the lintels, jambs, thicknesses,³⁸ drums,³⁹ and the wooden doors of the tomb entrances,⁴⁰ the sides of pillars,⁴¹ lintels, jambs,⁴² panels⁴³ and the central niche⁴⁴ of the false doors, the offering tables,⁴⁵ the walls of rooms, corridors and

³²Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford, 1987), 44.

³³Harpur, *Decoration*, 44–5.

³⁴Harpur, *Decoration*, 45–6.

³⁵Harpur, *Decoration*, 452–9 (figs 4, 5, 8–10, 14, 19–21, 23, 25).

³⁶J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1911–1912): The Tomb of Hesy* (Cairo, 1913), pl. xxx.

³⁷E. Broverski, *Giza Mastabas, VII: The Senedjemib Complex*, I (Boston, 2000), fig. 80.

³⁸Harpur, *Decoration*, 453–9 (figs 8–10, 14, 19–21, 23, 25, 26).

³⁹LD II, 79.

⁴⁰A. H. Zayed, *Trois etudes d'egyptologie* (Le Caire, 1956), 8–10 (fig. 8).

⁴¹N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara, III: The Tombs of Neferseshemre and Seankhuptah* (Warminster, 1998), pls 7–17, 46–57.

⁴²N. Kanawati, A. el-Khouli, A. Mcfarlane, and N. V. Maksoud, *Excavations at Saqqara, North-West of the Teti Pyramid*, I (Sydney, 1984), pls 5, 6, 12, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 29, 33, 38.

⁴³H. Fechheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter* (Berlin, 1923), taf. 120.

⁴⁴LD II, 23.

⁴⁵S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1929–1930*, I (Oxford, 1932), 32, fig. 25, pl. xxxii.

porticos of the tomb super-structures,⁴⁶ the jambs⁴⁷ and the thicknesses⁴⁸ of the niche and on preceded walls.⁴⁹

Ptahshepses' wig is similar to others known from the period and, as pointed out by Cherpion, cannot be used as a dating feature beyond a general dating to the second half of the Old Kingdom.⁵⁰ Equally, his staff, with a pommel on top, is no indicator of a definite date within the Old Kingdom (unlike other models with the pommel at the bottom, which can be dated to the period from King Send of the Second Dynasty to Djedefre of the Fourth Dynasty).⁵¹ Ptahshepses' staff is the same height as him, as are other staffs generally.⁵²

Ptahshepses' lintel includes a picture of his two sons, marking a further development in the pictorial aspect of lintel decoration. An extended variant of this, the inclusion of several family members near the figure of the deceased, might be dated to the Sixth Dynasty, but because most of these lintels are not *in situ* it is difficult to be certain that they belong to tomb entrances.⁵³ This recently discovered lintel of Ptahshepses' tomb entrance, though, which was found in its original location, gives us an earlier date for the appearance of this tradition. It is the end of the Fifth Dynasty.

Ptahshepses' sons are shown standing, depicted as adults, with none of the identifying features of childhood.⁵⁴ One son is pictured in front of his father, between his father's staff and left leg, facing him and holding a censer. The other stands behind his father, looking in the same direction, holding his father's right leg. There are similar scenes for sons standing,⁵⁵ accompanying the deceased,⁵⁶ in front⁵⁷ or

behind him,⁵⁸ facing him⁵⁹ or looking in the same direction,⁶⁰ holding the father's leg,⁶¹ or burning incense for him.⁶²

All figures are shown with the same triangular kilt, the earliest attestation for which dates to the reign of Cheops at the tomb of Nefermaat (G 7060), in the eastern field at Giza,⁶³ continuing in the Fifth⁶⁴ and Sixth⁶⁵ Dynasties. This kind of kilt is not limited to the tomb owner and his sons, attendants can also be seen wearing it.⁶⁶

The entrance lintels of Old Kingdom tombs carry a number of different inscriptions: the offering formula,⁶⁷ the titles and name of the deceased,⁶⁸ his autobiography and his

⁴⁶G. Steindorff, *Das Grab des Ti* (Leipzig, 1913), pls 12, 14, 20, 23, 24, 88, 94, 113.

⁴⁷K. O. Kuraszkiewicz, 'Saqqara 2002: Inscriptions', *PAM* 14 (2002), 134–5 (fig. 1.a, b).

⁴⁸L. Terrace and H. Fischer, *Treasures of the Cairo Museum* (London, 1970), 39.

⁴⁹N. Kanawati, A. Woods, S. Shafik, and E. Alexakis, *Mereruka and his Family, III: The Tomb of Mereruka*, I (Oxford, 2010), pls 1–3, 63.

⁵⁰N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées d'Ancien Empire: Le problème de la datation* (Brussels, 1989), 56, fig. 43.

⁵¹Cherpion, *Mastabas*, 64–5, 187, figs 57, 58

⁵²A. Mariette, *Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire* (Paris, 1889), 200; L. Épron, *Le tombeau de Ti*, I (Le Caire, 1939), pls xii, xxxvi, xxxvii, xlv, lx; A. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-Hay*, (Mainz, 1971), pls 28, 36; M. Bárta, *Abusir, V: The Cemeteries at Abusir South*, I (Praha, 2001), figs 3.7, 3.28; A. N. Roth, *Giza Mastabas, VI: A Cemetery of Palace Attendants* (Boston, 1995), pls 171, 173, 175, 179, 206.

⁵³Harpur, *Decoration*, 452–9 (figs 4, 5, 8–10, 14, 19–21, 23, 25).

⁵⁴For these symbols: Y. Harpur and P. Scremin, *The Chapel of Ptahhotep: Scene Details* (Oxford, 2008), 354.

⁵⁵R. F. E. Paget and A. A. Pirie, 'The Tomb of Ptahhetep', in J. E. Quibell (ed.), *The Ramesseum* (London, 1898), pls xxxi, xxxii; Roth, *Giza Mastabas*, VI, 143.

⁵⁶A. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz, 1977), figs 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 21, 22; M. Verner, *Abusir, I: The Mastaba of Ptahshepses*, I (Prague, 1977), pls 13, 18, 38.

⁵⁷LD II, 22, 29, 33, 36, 73; M. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, I (London, 1905), pls vii, xxxi; Paget and Pirie, in Quibell (ed.), *Ramesseum*, pls xxxi, xxxii.

⁵⁸LD II, 38, 50, 57, 73, 77, 79; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1930–1931*, II (Cairo, 1936), figs 11, 20, 23; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1935–1936, VII: The Mastabas of the Seventh Season and their Description* (Cairo, 1953), fig. 68; Hassan, *Saqqara*, II, figs 3, 5; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, II: Die Mastabas der Beginnenden V Dynastie auf dem Westfriedhof* (Wien and Leipzig, 1934), fig. 9; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, VI: Die Mastabas der Nfr (Nefer), Kdfy (Kedfy), Kḥif (Kahjef) und die westlich anschliessenden Gräbanlagen* (Wien and Leipzig, 1943), fig. 40; N. G. Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhetetep*, II (London, 1901), pls xviii, xx.

⁵⁹LD II, 18, 29; Verner, *Ptahshepses*, pl. 24.

⁶⁰W. K. Simpson, *Giza Mastabas, IV: The Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, I (Boston, 1980), figs 31, 48.

⁶¹LD II, 25, 40, Hassan, *Giza*, VII, fig. 68; Junker, *Giza*, VI, fig. 40

⁶²W. K. Simpson, *Giza Mastabas, II: The Mastabas of Qar and Idu* (Boston, 1976); fig. 39; Simpson, *Giza Mastabas*, IV, fig. 41. S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1931–1932*, III (Cairo, 1941), fig. 16; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1934–1935*, VI, part 3 (Cairo, 1950), fig. 217; Hassan, *Saqqara*, II, figs 4, 5; Hassan, *Giza*, III, fig. 39; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, III: Die Mastabas der vorgeschrittenen V. Dynastie auf dem Westfriedhof. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* (Wien and Leipzig, 1938), fig. 16; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, V: Die Mastaba des Seneb und die umliegenden Gräber* (Wien und Leipzig, 1941), fig. 5.b; Junker, *Giza*, VI, fig. 82; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, VII: Der Ostabschnitt des Westfriedhofs. Erster Teil* (Wien und Leipzig, 1944), figs 48.a, 51, 53; H. Junker, *Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza, IX: Das Mittelfeld des Westfriedhofs* (Wien, 1950), fig. 75; A. M. Blackmann and M. R. Apted, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, V (London, 1953), pls xii, xiv.

⁶³PM III², 183; LD. II, 17.

⁶⁴Davies, *Ptahhetep*, II, pls ix, xviii, xx; N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Unis Cemetery at Saqqara, II: The Tombs of Iynefert and Ihy* (Oxford, 2003), pl. 42.

⁶⁵Blackmann and Apted, *Meir*, V, pls xxvi, xxvii, xxx; N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Saïd* (London, 1901), pl. xvii.

⁶⁶W. S. Simpson, *The Offering Chapel of Sekhem-Ankh-Ptah in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1976), pl. D; A. Moussa and F. Junge, *Two Tombs of Craftsmen* (Mainz, 1975), pl. 3; Y. Harpur and P. Scremin, *The Chapel of Kagemni: Scene Details* (Oxford, 2006), figs 2, 4, 5, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 30, 35, 36.

⁶⁷H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz, 1998), fig. 1, pls 2, 3; Hassan, *Saqqara*, III, figs 33, 39.

⁶⁸Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VII, pls 44, 51, 53; C. M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Excavations at Saqqara: Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, II (Cairo, 1926), pl. 59.1.

Appeal to the Living,⁶⁹ the titles and names of his family,⁷⁰ and the dedication texts.⁷¹ Ptahshepses' text includes all except the last one.

Ptahshepses' lintel has four horizontal and one vertical line of text, though the majority of Old Kingdom lintels show between one and three horizontal lines, either incised or carved in raised relief.⁷² Ptahshepses has a double line which includes one title and his two names. This tradition appeared in the late Fifth Dynasty and becomes more frequent in the Sixth Dynasty, partitioning off the figure and enclosing the vertically written name.⁷³

The offering formula (*hṯp di nzwṯ*) is shown on Ptahshepses' lintel three times. As is common, offerings are presented by the king and gods to the deceased, or presented, in the name of the king, to the deities Anubis, Osiris and the great god. The name of Anubis is followed by four titles and epithets. Anubis appears in the offering formula from the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty, during the reign of Snefru, in the tombs of Rahotep at Maidum⁷⁴ and Methen (LS 6) at Saqqara.⁷⁵ The king is associated with Anubis in the same formula since the reign of Cheops in the Fourth Dynasty in the tomb of Kawab (G 7120) at Giza.⁷⁶ The appearance of Osiris in private funerary texts, such as the offering formula, is attested from the reign of Isesi onwards.⁷⁷

Ptahshepses' formulas comprise four wishes: the first is to be buried in his tomb in the necropolis after enjoying a long and good life. This is a common and conventional expression.⁷⁸ The second, to receive his document by his souls (*k3w*), is comparatively rare.⁷⁹ What kind of document this might be and its contents are not clear in the Old Kingdom texts. This document was received by the ancestors of the deceased, his *k3w*, the beautiful west or the western desert (the necropolis). It could include the royal permission to the deceased to construct his tomb, his funeral rituals, or his ceremonies in the afterlife⁸⁰ I think that it might refer to the papyrus document on which god Djehuty was recording the result of the judgement of the deceased, could be a record of the good and bad deeds of the deceased in his life, or represents the piece held in the hands of his statues, and these

statues represent his *k3w* according to the names of the serdab *pr-twt* and *hwt-k3*, *pr* equals *hwt*, so *twt* equals *k3* and the text of Ptahshepses mentions that the *k3w* receive this document.

The third wish of Ptahshepses' formulas is to be guided by his ancestors upon the good roads of the necropolis upon which the honoured ones walk. This expression is not attested in the previous study of the offering formula. There are similar expressions, but without mentioning the ancestors.⁸¹ The last wish is for the invocation offering to come forth for him at the feasts and certain daily offerings – a well-known formula.⁸²

The name of King Unas is mentioned twice on the lintel; in one instance it is completely erased (third horizontal line) and partially erased in the other (fourth line). Kanawati mentioned a variety of punishments inflicted on tomb owners, their sons and retainers who perpetrated a conspiracy against the king, such as the deliberate erasure of depictions, titles and names from the tombs; tomb reuse; and the sudden cessation of the decoration of tombs.⁸³ In the case of Ptahshepses, we find the highly unusual, and maybe unique, occurrence of the king's name having been erased.

This might have occurred upon Teti's ascension to the throne. There were a number of high officials remaining loyal to the previous king, Unas, and conspiring against Teti, incurring his revenge. As Ptahshepses was among those switching allegiance to Teti, he may have erased the name of Unas on his lintel in order to indicate his loyalty – and to avoid the wrath of the new king. He also expresses his support of Teti by referring to the new king 10 times inside the chapel, while mentioning Unas only three times. He certainly appears to have succeeded in convincing Teti of his loyalty, as he ascended to many high positions during the reign, including overseer of the two granaries, overseer of the two treasuries, and overseer of the two houses of gold, and overseer of the two workshops.

The name of Unas, as usual for royal names, is written in a cartouche, here taking a simple line shape, as described by Cherpion.⁸⁴

Ptahshepses mentions in his autobiography a reward he received from his lord Unas – a tomb and its sarcophagus. There are some other officials who received a tomb, such as Merykhufu, who has a short text, similar to that of Ptahshepses, referring to the bestowing of a tomb.⁸⁵ Debehen (tomb LG 90 in the central Field at Giza), though, has a longer text with unique details describing the different steps of constructing the tomb: from choosing its location, cleaning and preparing the place, cutting the tomb into the rock, casing its main parts with fine limestone, providing it with funerary equipment and constructing the mummification building.⁸⁶ Merefnebef also

⁶⁹El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, pls 3, 6; E. Drioton and J. P. Lauer, 'Un groupe de tombes à Saqqara: Icheti, Nefer-khouou-ptah, Sébek-em-khent et Ânkhî', *ASAE* 55 (1958), pls i, iii, iv, ix.

⁷⁰Marriette, *Mastabas*, 416–7; Mysliwiec and Kuraszkiwicz, *Saqqara*, IV, fig. 49.

⁷¹Hassan, *Giza*, III, 219–20, fig. 104, pl. lxxviii; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1933–1934*, V (Cairo, 1944), 259, fig. 116.

⁷²Harpur, *Decoration*, 47.

⁷³Harpur, *Decoration*, 44.

⁷⁴PM IV¹, 90–1; W. F. Petrie, *Medum* (London, 1892), pl. xiii; Y. Harpur, *The Tombs of Nefermaat and Rahotep at Maidum* (Oxford, 2001), pl. 65.

⁷⁵PM III², 493–4; LD II, 5.

⁷⁶PM III², 187–8; W. K. Simpson, *Giza Mastabas*, III: *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II* (Boston, 1978), fig. 8.

⁷⁷O. Bolshakov, 'Princess *hmt r'(w)*: The First Mention of Osiris?', *CdE* 67 (1992), 203–10.

⁷⁸G. Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches* (Mainz, 1986), 48.

⁷⁹Lapp, *Die Opferformel*, 81–2.

⁸⁰Lapp, *Die Opferformel*, 81–2.

⁸¹Lapp, *Die Opferformel*, 51–8, 72, 76–8, 86.

⁸²Lapp, *Die Opferformel*, 105.

⁸³N. Kanawati, *Conspiracies in the Egyptian Palace: Unis to Pepi I* (New York, 2003), 177–85.

⁸⁴Cherpion, *Mastabas*, 75–6, fig. 70.

⁸⁵PM III², 213; A. Fakhry, *Sept tombeaux à l'est de la grande pyramide de Guizeh* (Le Caire, 1935), 19–21, fig. 12, pl. vi.

⁸⁶PM III², 235; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Egyptian Records*, I (Chicago, 1906), 94–5; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 1932–1933*, IV (Cairo, 1943), 166–9, fig. 118, pl. lxxviii.

has a long text which includes the location of the tomb (which was chosen by the king), the specifications of that place, the provision of everything the tomb owner will need, the purposes of his tomb, and some of the craftsmen working in it.⁸⁷ In Ptahshepses' case, the king gave his official leave to choose the location and size of his tomb in the royal cemetery himself (unlike the cases of Debehen, Merefnebef and Iri⁸⁸).

Ptahshepses indicates that being honoured by the king is the condition one has to fulfil in order to get a tomb. There are other officials of the same status, such as Abdu,⁸⁹ Iri,⁹⁰ Pehnuika (D 70),⁹¹ Debehen, Merykhufu, Merefnebef, Nimaatre,⁹² Nefer II (S 576),⁹³ Kaaper,⁹⁴ Kapunesut,⁹⁵ Khenu (D 6),⁹⁶ and Tefnen.⁹⁷ All these officials, including Ptahshepses, had their tombs ready before their death, as did Kapunesut,⁹⁸ Mehi,⁹⁹ and Geref.¹⁰⁰ This is explicitly recorded in their tombs, stating: 'I built this tomb, when I was alive standing on my feet', unlike others for whom the tomb was built after their death (e.g. Neferseshemptah, who built a tomb for his dead father, Sekhentiu¹⁰¹).

Ptahshepses acquired a sarcophagus, as did Hetepherakhet, who refers to the fact that he obtained it from the king.¹⁰² 'The son of Senedjemib/Inti, Senedjemib/Mehehi, begs his lord for a sarcophagus for his dead father.'¹⁰³ Methethi makes the same request of the king for his dead parents.¹⁰⁴ 'Weni asked his majesty for a sarcophagus of white Turah limestone.'¹⁰⁵

⁸⁷Mysliwiec et al., *Saqqara*, I, 80–3, fig. 5, pl. xvi.

⁸⁸El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 7–10, pls 2, 3.

⁸⁹PM III², 51; A. Abu-Bakr, *Excavations at Giza* (Cairo, 1935), 73, fig. 47.

⁹⁰El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 7–10, pls 2, 3.

⁹¹PM III², 491; Marriette, *Mastabas*, 370–2; *Urk.* I, 48–9 [30 A, B]; LD II, 46; S. B. Shubert, *Those Who (Still) Live on Earth: A Study of the Ancient Egyptian Appeal to the Living Texts* (Toronto, 2007), 30.

⁹²PM III², 283; Hassan, *Giza*, II, 213, fig. 231; A. Roccati, *La littérature historique sous l'ancien Empire Égyptien* (Paris, 1982), 158.

⁹³PM III², 154; Junker, *Giza*, VII, 146, fig. 60, pl. xxix.b.

⁹⁴PM III², 501; Bárta, *Abusir*, V, 158–60, fig. 4.12, pl. lviii.a, b.

⁹⁵Z. Hawass, 'The Biographical Text of *Ka-pu-nswt/kai* in the Western Field at Giza', *SASAE* 42 (2011), 191–2, figs 2, 3.

⁹⁶PM III², 488; *Urk.* I, 34–5 (22); Marriette, *Mastabas*, 184–6, 465–7; N. C. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Leiden, 2005), 221.

⁹⁷PM III², 69; N. Cherpion, 'La fausse-porte d'Itefnen et peretim au Musée du Caire', *BIFAO* 82 (1982), 129, pl. xvi.

⁹⁸Hawass, *SASAE* 42, 191–2, figs 2, 3.

⁹⁹El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 14, pls 5, 6; Kanawati, *GM* 83, 31–2.

¹⁰⁰Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VII, 61, pl. 53.

¹⁰¹Moussa and Junge, *Craftsmen*, 13, 24, pls 3, 4; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley, 1973), 16.

¹⁰²PM III², 593; H. T. Mohr, *The Mastaba of Hetep-Her-Akhti* (Leiden, 1943), 34–5.

¹⁰³LD II, 76.e; *Urk.* I, 65–6; E. Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex*, I (Boston, 2000), 108, figs 21, 22, pls 75–80.a

¹⁰⁴PM III², 646; P. Kaplony, *Studien zum Grab des Methethi* (Rigisberg, 1976), 32.

¹⁰⁵*Urk.* I, 99; Strudwick, *Texts*, 352–3.

It is notable that Ptahshepses and Hetepherakhet did not ask the king for the sarcophagus – he bestowed it on them. Senedjemib, Methethi, and Weni, though, made requests of the king.

The text of Ptahshepses provides us with some interesting details, as do the texts of Senedjemib and Weni. The texts of Hetepherakhet and Methethi do not have these details. Ptahshepses refers to the boat-crew responsible for bringing the sarcophagus, Senedjemib mentions the overseer of the expedition or troops and the overseer of the officials. Weni mentions the seal-bearer and the boat-crew. Ptahshepses does not refer to the departure for Turah and its preparation, as do Senedjemib and Weni. The three of them name the boat, Ptahshepses calls it *wsht nt ht h3swt*, but Senedjemib and Weni have the same boat and call it *s3t 33t n hnw*, a great cargo vessel of the residence.

Ptahshepses gives us some unique details about the construction of the sarcophagus – its cutting in the workshop, the name of this workshop (*htt*), the time that it took (two days), the craftsmen who cut it (*s3w Twnw*), the transport to the river bank and its loading onto the wooden boat.

Ptahshepses' text ends without giving further details of the next stages, but Senedjemib's text completes the story: shipping the sarcophagus from Turah, its arrival in the royal necropolis of Khufu, and its placing in the tomb, after five or seven days in transit. Ptahshepses refers to the sarcophagus as a single object, but Senedjemib and Weni refer separately to the box and its lid. Ptahshepses mentions the name of the quarry as do Senedjemib and Weni (Turah, in all three cases). When we excavated the burial chamber of Ptahshepses, we also discovered the sarcophagus mentioned in his text. It consists of two pieces, a roughly cut convex rectangular lid measuring 287 x 131 x 53 cm and a well-cut and polished rectangular chest. The external dimensions of the chest measure 280 x 130 x 111 cm, its internal dimensions are 208 x 65 x 80 cm. Old Kingdom rulers often bestowed gifts or rewards on their officials.¹⁰⁶ This could be a complete tomb or parts of it such as an entrance (Weni),¹⁰⁷ a false door (Nyankhsekhmet [no. 74/D12],¹⁰⁸ and Weni), a statue (Debehen),¹⁰⁹ an offering table (Weni), a coffin (Djau)¹¹⁰ or a sarcophagus.

Ptahshepses inscribed his autobiography and Appeal to the Living on the entrance lintel. These kinds of texts are found in different sections of the Old Kingdom tombs, the most

¹⁰⁶The rewards are physical and moral such as promotions; jewelry; letters written by the king himself; fields and estates; guards and slaves; bread and beer; a new name; the praise, honour, trust and love of the king; entering the residence and greeting him; eating with the king; joining him in the royal boat; becoming a member of the court and discussing the cases with the king. For these rewards see: S. Soleiman, *The Self-Talks and Appeal to the Living in the Old Kingdom Private Tombs at the Memphis Necropolis: A Cultural Analysis* (PhD thesis, Helwan University; Cairo, 2014), 446–61.

¹⁰⁷Strudwick, *Texts*, 353.

¹⁰⁸PM III², 482; *Urk.* I, 38 (26, A, B); L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches*, I (Berlin, 1937), 169–73, Bl. 39; Marriette, *Mastabas*, 202–5.

¹⁰⁹Hassan, *Giza*, IV, 162–7, fig. 118, pl. xlvi.

¹¹⁰*Urk.* I, 145–7; Strudwick, *Texts*, 353.

common one being the main façade. They are incised on the lintel, jambs and thicknesses of the entrance, the lintel being the most common as it offered the most space for lengthy texts, such as the offering formula, the autobiography and the Appeal to the Living. The first attestation of a lintel inscribed with the autobiography and Appeal to the Living dates to the end of the Fifth Dynasty (in the tomb of Meruka).¹¹¹

Scholarly opinion differs over the exact dating of Meruka's tomb, whether the tomb was constructed and decorated during the reigns of Cheops,¹¹² Isesi¹¹³ or Teti.¹¹⁴ If dating to the reign of Teti, the tomb of Ptahshepses would be the earliest known example of an inscribed lintel with these texts.

Ptahshepses' lintel is considered to represent a single decorative unit: it includes the offering formula, his autobiography and his Appeal to the Living as one text. This is also the case in other tombs (Hesi,¹¹⁵ Mehi,¹¹⁶ Mereri,¹¹⁷ Merefnebef,¹¹⁸ Inumin,¹¹⁹ Iri,¹²⁰ Nyankhnepferem,¹²¹ Mereri,¹²² Nedjemib [E 14],¹²³ Mehu,¹²⁴ Sobekemkhent,¹²⁵ Iyehor,¹²⁶ Iy,¹²⁷ Herimeru¹²⁸), although there are other examples where these texts are split into two parts and inscribed as two facing units (Bia,¹²⁹ Haunefer and Khui - two unpublished tombs in south Saqqara, the French expedition in Tabet el-Guesh). The first type was common and

earlier (Isesi), the second one is rare and appears later (Pepy I).

Ptahshepses wrote his speech and autobiography in one horizontal line in common with Hesi, Mereri [Teti cemetery] and Iyehor, unlike other individuals (Mehi, Merefnebef, Mereri [west of the Step Pyramid], Nedjemib, Sobekemkhent, Iy and Herimeru), who had their texts carved across more than one line. Some (Meruka, Nyankhnepferem, and an unknown individual [tomb F 2]¹³⁰) inscribed them as part of a line.

Ptahshepses' autobiography and Appeal to the Living are sandwiched between the offering formula and his titles and names. The offering formula comes first, perhaps being considered more important than the autobiography. The titles and names following, written close to the figure, which represents a determinative. There are other tombs that follow this tradition: Iyehor, Iy, Inumin, Hesi, Herimeru, Mehu, Merefnebef, Nedjemib, Sobekemkhent.

Both Ptahshepses' sons have the same title and epithet, *z3.f.smsw*, 'his eldest son'. There are three possible explanations for this: the elder of the two may have died before the younger, making the younger son the 'eldest'; they could have been twins; or they had different mothers, each son being the eldest of his mother.¹³¹ High officials often had more than one wife to foster relations and support between powerful families. Sometimes, they married a second wife after losing the first in successive marriages.¹³²

Ptahshepses, a high official, thus might have married two wives, yet as there is only one wife depicted it is possible the first wife died or he divorced her before decorating his tomb. There are examples in other tombs where two sons are both referred to as 'his eldest son'.¹³³

Both sons also bear the same title of *shd pr-nzwt*, inspector of the royal domain. They inherited this title from their father.

The first son was called Hesy, a name that appeared in the Old Kingdom and continued into the New Kingdom as a male name meaning 'the praised one'. It can also be part of a compound name¹³⁴ or a title or an epithet.¹³⁵ The second son was called Nebib, equally attested since the Old Kingdom,¹³⁶ which I would translate as 'the lord of the heart' or 'the owner/possessor of love'.

The dating

I suggest that Ptahshepses' lintel dates to the reign of Unas, of the Fifth Dynasty, based on the fourth line of texts, which

¹¹¹PM III², 118; H. Junker, *Giza*, IX, 70, 73, figs 23, 28, 30, pls xii.a.

¹¹²Cherpion, *Mastabas*, 225, 233.

¹¹³N. Kanawati, *The Egyptian Administration in the Old Kingdom* (Warminster, 1977), 153 (128).

¹¹⁴Harpur, *Decoration*, 267 (95).

¹¹⁵Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, V, 22–3, pls 1, 2, 7, 8, 47, 52.

¹¹⁶El-Khouli, and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 14, pls 5, 6; Kanawati, *GM* 83, 31–2.

¹¹⁷Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VII, 34–8, pls 8.a, 44.

¹¹⁸Mysliwiec et al., *Saqqara*, I, 72–3, pls xi, xiv.

¹¹⁹N. Kanawati, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VIII: *The Tomb of Inumin* (Oxford, 2006), 28, pls 1 [a], 39.

¹²⁰El-Khouli and Kanawati, *Excavations at Saqqara*, II, 7–10, pl. 3.

¹²¹Mysliwiec and Kuraszkiwicz, *Saqqara*, IV, 36, fig. 49.

¹²²PM III², 607; Hassan, *Saqqara*, III, 27–38, fig. 22, pl. xxiv.b; E. Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches* (Göttingen, 1981), 86, figs 31, 33.

¹²³PM III², 611; L. Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches*, II (Cairo, 1964), Bl. 94; J. S. F. Garnot, *L'appel aux vivants dans les textes funéraires Égyptiens des origines à la fin de l'Ancien Empire* (Le Caire, 1938), 24–5.

¹²⁴PM III², 619; H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz, 1998), 87–8, fig. 1, pls 2, 3; Z. Hawass, 'An Inscribed Lintel in the Tomb of Vizier Mehu at Saqqara', *LingAeg* 10 (2002), 219–24; Kloth, *SAK* 8, fig. 3.

¹²⁵PM III², 610; Drioton and Lauer, *ASAE* 55, 240, pls i, xxiv.a.

¹²⁶PM III², 630; Hassan, *Saqqara*, III, 60–2, fig. 33, pls xlvi, xlvi; Kloth, *SAK* 8, 117

¹²⁷PM III², 625.

¹²⁸PM III², 626; Hassan, *Saqqara*, III, 75–7, fig. 38, pls lii, lvi.

¹²⁹PM III², 623; J. A. Wilson, 'A Group of Sixth Dynasty Inscriptions', *JNES* 13 (1954), 265; figs 1, 2; H. G. Fischer, 'B3 and the deified Vizier Mhw', *JARCE* 4 (1965), 50, pl. xxix.

¹³⁰PM III², 753; Marriette, *Mastabas*, 432–33; Borchardt, *Denkmäler*, I, Bl. 28; Roccati, *La literature*, 150.

¹³¹Harpur, and Scremin, *Ptahhotep*, 319 (Details 225–7).

¹³²N. Kanawati, 'The Mentioning of More than One Eldest Child in Old Kingdom Inscriptions', *CdE* 51 (1976), 235–55.

¹³³Davies, *Ptahhotep*, pls iv, xiii, xiv, xviii, xx, xiv; Paget and Pirie, in Quibell (ed.), *Ramesseum*, 25–36, pls xxxi, xxxii; N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Raziq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara*, VI: *The Tomb of Nikauisesi*, (Warminster, 2000), pls 43–6, 48, 49, 52, 54.

¹³⁴Ranke, *PN*, I, 254.29, 255.

¹³⁵Jones, *Index*, 658–9 (2400–06).

¹³⁶Ranke, *PN*, I, 183.9.

mentions the tomb's construction and refers to the sarcophagus being brought from Turah by a royal decree of Unas.

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Saleh Soleiman is an Egyptian Researcher of Egyptology, he is interested in the private tombs of the Old Kingdom. He worked from 2000 to 2016 as an inspector of Antiquities at Saqqara, SCA, Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt. He is now a lecturer of ancient Egyptian Monuments at Damietta University. He supervised and was a member of SCA Excavations at Saqqara at Kaemmesu, Gisir el-Mudir Cemetery, and Teti Cemetery. He

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