






THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HAIRSTYLIST


4.1 The Ancient Egyptian Hairstylist and Barber

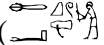
The majority of information on ancient Egyptian hairstylists and barbers comes from tomb-scenes, inscriptions and other texts, tools and hairpieces. Along with other indirect evidence these illustrate hair's apparent social importance, and show that many hairstylists and barbers plied their trade throughout ancient Egypt. Hairdressers and barbers can be divided into two distinct categories: Private and State, with state hairdressers being divided again into two institutions: Royal and Palace.

The difference between a barber and a hairstylist is not primarily of gendered roles for there are both male and female barbers and hairstylists working on men and women, but one of tools and actions. The barber used the razor primarily to shave the head and body and was associated with surgery, whereas the hairstylist would use the razor, composite tool, combs, bodkins and hair ornaments and unguents to not only cut and style the hair and wigs but to also dress them (Tassie in press a).

4.1.1 Private Hairstylists and Barbers

The word used to describe a hairstylist is *ir(w)-šn* () , and the rarely found feminine *irt-šn* () - literally hairmaker or hairdoer and the even rarer *is-šn* () wigmaker (Speidel 1990). Other related words are *nšt* () , hairdresser, and *nšy* () , which means 'to dress hair'. These words are used occasionally from the Middle Kingdom onwards, but do not usually refer to a hairstylist of prominence but personal hairdressers (Riefstahl 1952; 1956). Only members of the highest echelons of society would have had a hairstylist attached to their staff (Speidel 1990: 105-6), most would have arranged for one to visit their homes. The lower segments of society would go to a travelling hairstylist to have their hair styled (Tassie in press a). Tomb-scenes indicate that for the everyday care and attention of their hair, the elite women would have had a maidservant trained to do the dressing (see **Fig. 23**). Poorer people would have to rely upon a relative or friend to style their hair. Members of the *iry p^ct* (royal family) were probably attended by special hairdressers attached to the palace staff (see below).

The word for barber $\underline{h}^{\prime}k(w)$, () is known from the Old Kingdom. The literal meaning of the word is 'someone who uses a spatula', coming from the phrase 'someone who makes a wall', this title has a spatula as its determinative. The first depiction of a spatula as a razor occurs in the Dynasty III tomb of Hesire at Saqqara (Kaplony 1975).

The meaning of the title starts to change in Dynasty V. In the tomb of Niankhkhnun and Khnumhotep at Giza, a relief shows barbers busily shaving heads, faces, and bodies whilst standing behind their clients, who are seated on the floor. In one scene a barber is shown supporting the back of his clients head with his left hand whilst shaving him (Moussa & Altenmüller 1977: 80-81). There are five named private barbers recorded for the Old Kingdom – Djedisneferu, Nefer, Neferkhuptah, Khnesuhesi, and Ifen, and three Overseer of Barbers – Maa, Setju and Nefer (Jones 2000: 196, 776). Originally the barber's title ($\underline{h}^{\prime}k(w) tp$) is written with two spatulas, both in 'razor' cases and a man's head, changing the definition from brick-layer, but not the way the word was pronounced. The meaning is now 'one who uses the spatula on the face' and the variation $\check{s}^{\prime}k(w)$ is also first used in this period (Kaplony 1975). The determinative in the Old Kingdom may also show a hand connected to the razor by a stroke. In the Middle Kingdom the case is replaced by a rotating razor () $\underline{h}^{\prime}k(w)$ and the word $\underline{h}^{\prime}k$ becomes more defined as the word to shave (Kaplony 1975).

The work of the barber was not thought to be as highly skilled as that of the hairstylist (Gauthier-Laurent 1935-8; Riefstahl 1952; 1956). Barbers would set up beneath the shade of a tree (see **Fig. 24**), placing their stool and cutting the hair of their clients. Barbers workshops (salons) are not known until the Graeco-Roman Period (Fletcher 1995: 432), although not having a barbershop would not have affected the skill of the barber. In the Middle Kingdom *The Satire of the Trades (Instructions of Duakhety)* the barber is portrayed as a poor man shaving clients (Lichtheim 1973: 186):

‘The barber labours until dusk.
 He betaketh (travels) himself to a town,
 He sets himself up in his corner,
 He moves from street to street
 Seeking someone (a client) to barber
 He strains his arms to fill his stomach,
 Like the bee that eats as it works’

The work of the ancient Egyptian barber was probably only limited to shaving the head, face, and body, and then washing away the residue afterwards, although he was possibly also a surgeon as well, but as well as the living, the barber was also required to shave the dead before mummification (Fletcher 1995: 432).

4.1.2 State Hairdressers and Barbers

Many Old Kingdom inscriptions bear witness to the fact that the hairdresser was a very important person, and held high rank. All except one of these inscriptions refers to men holding these positions. There is usually a modifying noun before or after the word *ir(w)-šn*, denoting that the bearer of the title was either a ‘royal hairstylist’ or a ‘palace hairstylist’ with further nouns denoting the rank – overseer, inspector or director (Riefstahl 1952; 1956).

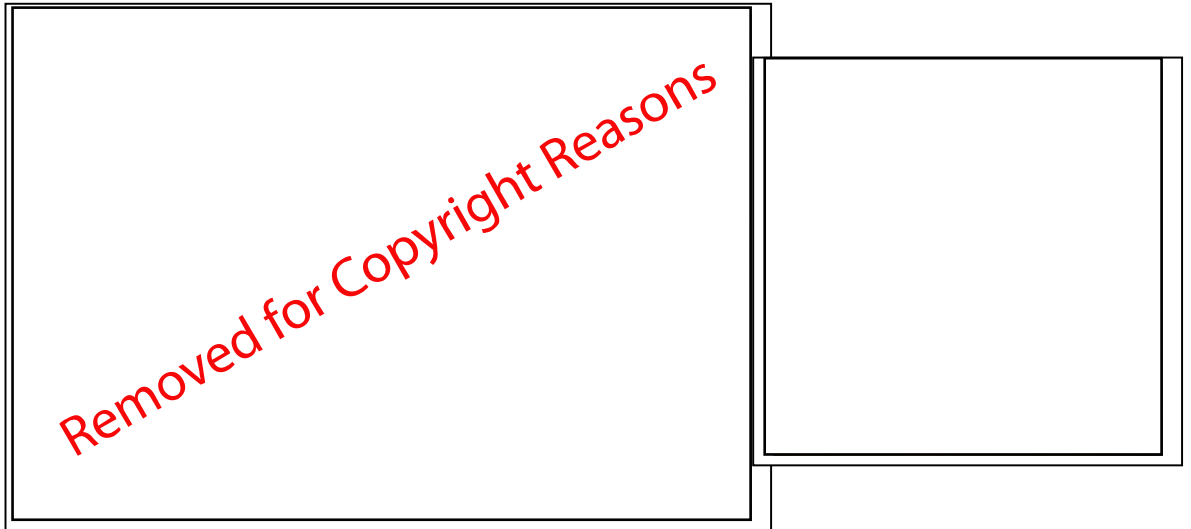


Figure 16. The false door and scene showing a statue of the Inspector of Hairdressers, Hetepka (# 379)¹, all portraying him wearing the shoulder-length bob, Dynasty V, Saqqara (after Baines & Malek 1984: 147-9).

In ancient Egypt hairstylists were frequently important officials who held other important offices in addition to their tonsorial duties (Riefstahl 1956). Hetepka, who has a tomb at Saqqara of mid-Dynasty V date, bears amongst his priestly titles, such as *ḥm-ntr Nfr-ir-k3-r^c* (Prophet of Neferirkare) the titles of *ir(w)-šn pr-ʿ3* (𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛) ‘Palace Hairdresser’ and *šḥd ir(w)-šn pr-ʿ3* (𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛 var. 𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛) ‘The Inspector of Palace Hairdressers’ (Martin 1979). Some like Rawer who is given the title of ‘Royal Hairdresser’ on a Dynasty V inscription from Giza and has an impressive tomb in the Central Mastaba Field recording his long list of titles were part of the *p^ct* [royal kinsman] (Hassan 1932: 2; Speidel 1990: 15-24; Malek 1986: 35). A particularly impressive title *ir(w) šn pr-ʿ3 m3t bit nswt* – ‘Palace Hairdresser For One Who Acclaims the Lower Egyptian Crown of the King’ was held by Khentika of late Dynasty V (Moussa & Altenüller 1981: 292). As important people, they were frequently buried in tombs of their own near their king. Depictions of hairdressers even made it on to the royal monuments. Two men depicted in a procession of attendants on the funerary

¹ This number refers to the number given to the artefact in the database.

temple of King Niuserre of Dynasty V are designated as ‘Royal Hairdressers’ (Riefstahl 1952: 11).

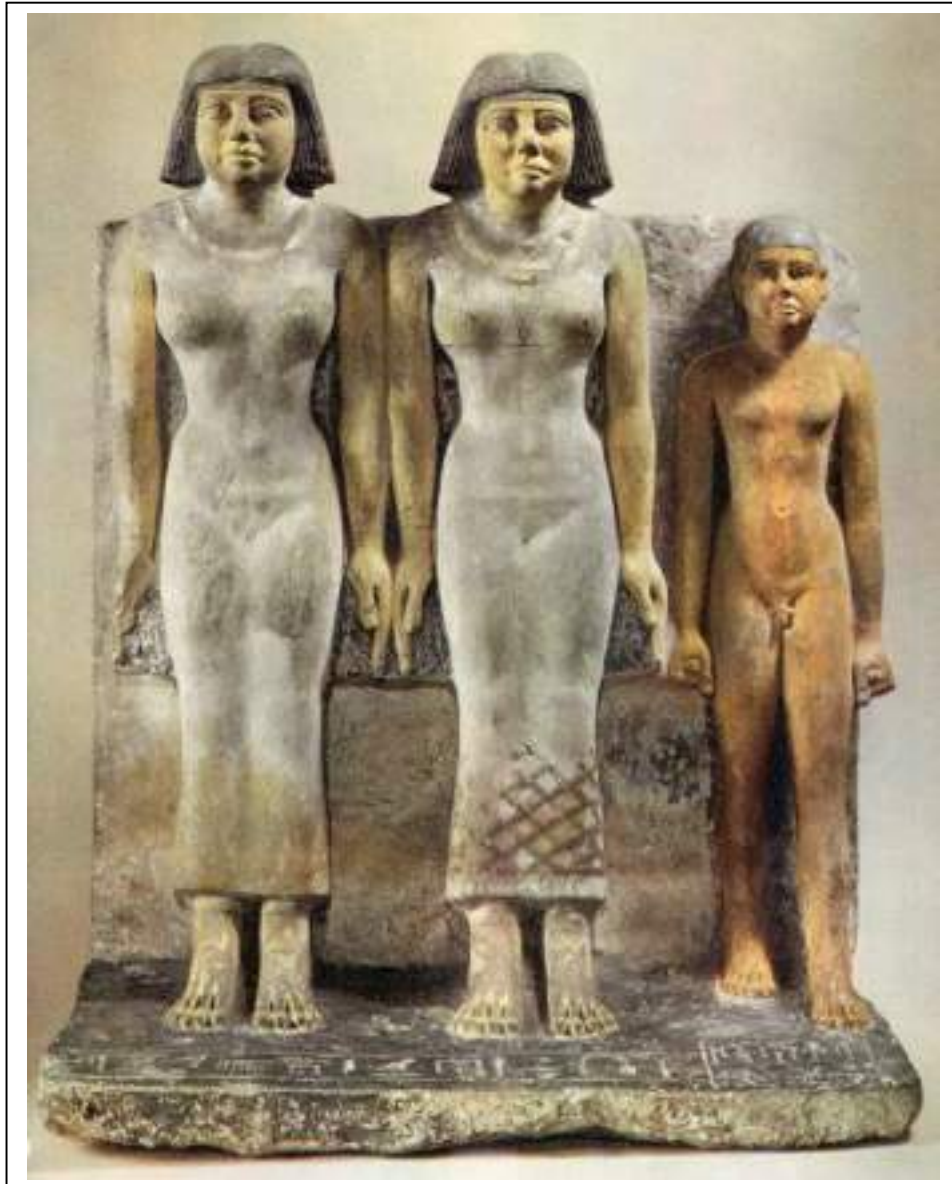


Figure 17. Statue of the Lady Meretites Overseer of the House of Hairdressing (# 380) with her son Khenu who is identified as Scribe and Chief of the Ka-priests, Dynasty V, Saqqara, Leiden Museum (AST 9) (Photograph Joris van Wetering).

The only woman yet found that held the title ‘Overseer of the House of Hairdressing’ *imy-r3 is-šn pr* (Speidel 1990: 199 translates this as Overseer of the Wigmakers Workshop) is the Lady Meretites, from the reign of Neferirkare, Dynasty V. On her statue in the Leiden Museum she is also described as: Royal Ornament, Royal Relative, and Mistress of Ceremonies (Riefstahl 1952: 14). This title in association with her other titles does not indicate that she was a private hairdresser (contra Speidel 1990: 105-6), but seems to indicate that she may have been connected with the dressing of courtesans hair in the court of Neferirkare. The only other women with hairdressing titles in the Old Kingdom, although not so high ranking, being associated with personal

hairdressers (*ir(t)-šn*) are found in the Dynasty V mastaba of Uhmka, where a woman named Hy has the title, and on the Dynasty VI false-door of Senuhem (MFA Boston 27.444) where a woman named Nefer is shown styling the hair of the tomb-owner's wife Minefert (Kayser 1964: 37, 69; Fischer 1976: 72; Riefstahl 1965: 16).

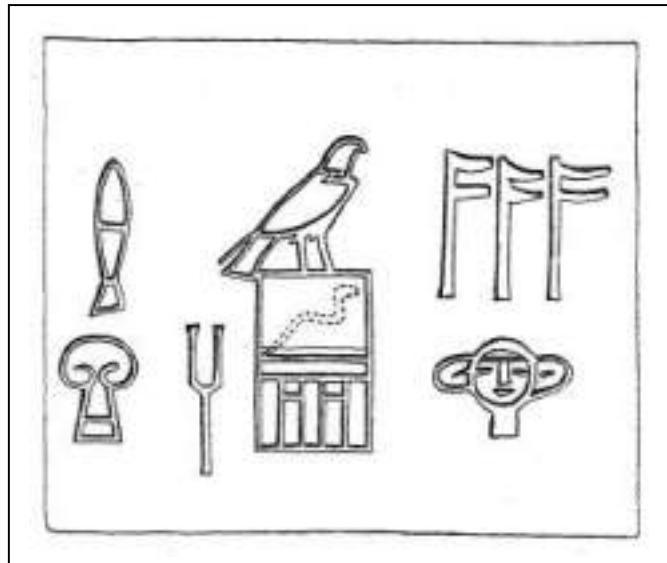


Figure 18. Ivory box from the tomb of Djet, Dynasty I, Abydos (after Petrie 1900: Pl. 13.2).

In the Old Kingdom 62 individuals are recorded as having held important hairdressing positions in the bureaucracy with another four personal hairdressers recorded (see **Tab. 1**). The distinction between Royal Hairdresser and Palace Hairdresser was one of function. However, the division in the work of the holders of the titles such as ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’ *hrp ir(w)-šn nswt* or the highest ranking of all ‘Overseer of Royal Hairdressers’ *imy-r3 ir(w)-šn nswt* is not quite so clear. These two hairdressing institutions may have evolved out of the earlier state office of *hnmš ir(w)-šn* (𓆎𓆏) ‘Friend/*hnmš*-Functionary of Hairdressing’, the earliest public hairdressing office recorded (Kahl 1994: 422, n.15; Jones 2000: No. 2516). The writing of the *šn* sign on early monuments is not as developed as the Old Kingdom sign, showing about seven shorter strands and one longer strand of hair at the end of the sign. Two officials are recorded as holding this office: Whemrud and Niseti from Dynasty II and III respectively (see **Fig. 81.13 & 81.55**). Whemrud also held the title ‘Chief of the Chiefs’ and Niseti held the titles ‘He Who Embraces the Spirit’ (Priest) and ‘Secretary of the Judiciary’ (Helck 1987: 240; Jones 2000: 688). The first mention of the *hnmš* tile appears in the title *hnmš wšht* - *hnmš*-functionary of the *wšht*-hall, found on the Dynasty II funerary stele from subsidiary grave μ22 around Funerary Enclosure E (Peribsen’s) at Abydos (Petrie 1904: 39, Pl. 1.15). Although the exact function of the *wšht*-hall is unknown, it is possible that it was where the king’s morning toilette rituals

were performed. On an ivory box found in Tomb Z at Umm al-Qa'ab the titles *hrp hm(w) dw3-wr* – ‘Director of the Servants of Duawer’ and *hry ntr* – ‘Supervisor of the God’ (king) appear either side of the *serekh* of King Djet (Petrie 1900: Pl. 10.9, 13.2; Jones 2000: No. 2650). These titles seem to imply that the royal chin beard used by the Director of Barbers to dress the face of King Djet may have been kept in this box. It is uncertain what role these hairdressers and barbers played in Early Dynastic court life, but they probably either dressed statues of gods and kings or actually shaved the king’s face, attached the false beard and dressed his hair (see **Fig. 18**).

The titles and profession of the Old Kingdom hairdresser could be passed from father to son or be held by brothers. Ty, the son of the Vizier Ty, followed his father into the profession entering it as ‘Palace Hairdresser’ and progressing to ‘Inspector of Palace Hairdressers’, whereas his father entered as ‘Director of Palace Hairdressers’ and progressed to ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’ (Speidel 1990). Other father-son professional relationships can be observed, such as those between Kaemnefert and his father, the son holding the titles ‘Palace Hairdresser’, whereas his father was ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’, Speidel (1990: 121-5) listing many such relationships. Two brothers that held hairdressing titles were Shepsesre and Niankhre-Nedjes who both held the title ‘Royal Hairdresser’ amongst other titles, mainly priestly (Speidel 1990).

Progression through the hairdressing ranks is also observable. The lowest institutional title was ‘Palace Hairdresser’ - *ir(w)-šn pr-3* and the highest being ‘Overseer of Royal Hairdressers’ - *imy-r3 ir(w)-šn nswt*. Movement between the two institutions is also observed, usually going from palace hairdressing to the more prestigious royal hairdressing. Manefer goes from ‘Inspector of Palace Hairdressers’ – ‘Inspector of Royal Hairdressers’ – ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’, whereas, Ankhkhafre rises from ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’ to ‘Overseer of Royal Hairdressers’, the highest of all hairdressing titles (Speidel 1990). Ankhkhafre who owns a large tomb in the Central Mastaba Field at Giza served under King Sahure and his successor Neferirkare was also ‘Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the House of the Morning’, ‘Unique Friend’, ‘Controller of the Palace and Overseer of All the King’s Adornment’ amongst other titles (Speidel 1990: 10). A particularly interesting path through the hairdressing ranks of just one institution was held by Khabauptah of Dynasty V, who started his career as a ‘Palace Hairdresser’ progressing through ‘Inspector of Palace Hairdressers’ to ‘Overseer of Palace Hairdressers’ (Speidel 1990: 53, 101-2). Khabauptah also had an impressive list of other titles: ‘Overseer of Palace

Manicurists’, ‘Royal Friend’ and ‘Relative’, ‘Beloved and Honoured of his Lord’, ‘Royal Confident’, ‘Priest of the Pyramids of Sahure, Neferirkare, and Neferefre’, and ‘Priest of the Goddess Hathor in the Sun-Temple of King Neferirkare’ (Mariette 1976: No. 42; Riefstahl 1952: 11).

Title\Period	1	2A	2B	3
1) <i>Ir(t)-šn(y)</i>		Hy (f.)	Merykenefer, ????	Nefer (f.)
2) <i>hrp ir(w)-šn**</i>	Kaunisut			
3) <i>imy-rš is-šn pr</i>		Meretites (f.)		
4) <i>Ir(w)-šn pr-š</i>		Hepka, Hesetenptah, Kaihap, Nisuredj, Ptah, ????, ????, ????, ????	Ankhuserkaf, Ipi, Kaemnefert (son), Khakare, Khentika, Nikaankh, ...fa, ...m., ????, ..m..a, ????, Seshemnefer, Suf, ????, ????, ????, Tchenka, ????	
5) <i>shd ir(w)-šn pr-š</i>		Hetepka, Ty (son), ????, ????, ????, ????	Ahauka, Ankhmare, ????, Kaires, ????, Niankhhor	Meryeankh, Niankhirtipepy, ...Pepy, ????
6) <i>hrp ir(w)-šn pr-š</i>			Shepses	
7) <i>imy-rš ir(w)-šn pr-š</i>		Khabauptah	Neferherentah	
8) <i>ir(w)-šn nswt</i>		Niankhre-Nedjes, Rawer, ????, Schepsesre		
9) <i>shd ir(w)-šn nswt</i>		Niankhre	Nimaatptah, Ptahemhat	Ankhi, Khnumnefer
10) <i>hrp ir(w)-šn nswt</i>		Ty, ????	Manefer, Nefer, Kaemnefert*	
11) <i>imy-rš ir(w)-šn nswt</i>		Ankhkhafre		

Table 1. Holders of various hairstyling offices during the Old Kingdom based on the data given in Speidel 1990, who gives full references. As some have more than one hairdressing titles, only the highest is used; f. denotes a lady hairstylist, * denotes un-named father of the individual, ** is probably Director of Royal Hairdressers although Jones 2000: 699 omits the *nswt*, Speidel 1990: 61-2 correctly includes it, and ??? denotes an unreadable or missing name. Date: 1 = Khafre-Shepseskaf, 2A = Userkaf-Menkauhor, 2B = Djedkare-Teti, 3 = Userkare-Pepy II, Title in Jones 2000 *Index* 1 - 1131, 2 - 2555, 3 - N/A, 4 - 1132, 5 - 3361, 6 - 2556, 7 - 284, 8 - 1135, 9 - 3362, 10 - 2557, 11 - 283.

Certain titles and positions seem to have had a close association with the institutions of royal and palace hairdressing. The title *iry nfr-ḥst* – ‘Keeper of the Headdress’ is held by the following royal hairdressers: Ankhi, Ankhkhafre, Kaemnefert, Kaunisut, Khnumnefer, Manefer Nimaatptah, Ptahemhat, Rawer, Ty, and palace hairdressers: Meryeankh, Hetepka, Khabauptah, Neferherenptah, Nekhetsas, and Suf (Speidel 1990: 5-86; Barta 2001: 72-3). Whereas, only royal hairdressers are recorded as holding both the title ‘Director of the Palace’ and ‘Keeper of the Headdress’: Kaunisut, Kaemnefert, and Rawer; Ty held a similar position ‘Keeper of the Crown’ with the other two titles (Barta 2001: 73). The position of *hry sšb n pr-dwst* – ‘Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the House of the Morning’ is also associated with royal hairdressing titles, although only with persons of high rank, such as Kaunisut of Dynasty IV and Ty and Ankhkhafre of Dynasty V, and two palace hairdressers from Dynasty V: Hetepka and Suf. Speidel (1990: 143-8) suggests that the promotion through the hairdressing ranks could eventually lead to a higher position in the *pr-dwst* – the House of Morning or in the *iswy (n) ḥkr(w) nswt* – ‘Two Bureaux of the Royal Regalia’, although no hairdresser reached the rank of *imy-rš iswy (n) ḥkr(w) nswt* (see Jones 2000: 67-8 for a list of possessors of this title, such as Kagmeni who was also *imy-rš iswy (nw) hry-ḥtmt* – ‘Overseer of the Two Bureaux of the Registry’).

The higher of the two institutional branches of hairdressing was that of royal as opposed to palace (Speidel 1990: 101-4). From reliefs on the pyramid temples (Borchardt 1907, 1909, 1910, 1913), seal impressions and the Abusir Papyrus Archives (Posener-Krieger 1976; Posener-Krieger & De Cenival 1968) it is clear that palace hairdressers, such as ‘Director of Palace Hairdressers’ *hrp ir(w)-šn pr-ḥ* were concerned with three areas of activity: 1. The ritual cleansing, applying of cosmetics, dressing, placement and dressing of wigs, and adornment of the cult statues of the kings and gods in sun-temples and active in the rites of the rituals of cleansing in the House of Morning attached to these temples, 2. The ritual cleansing, applying of cosmetics, dressing, placing and dressing of wigs, and adornment of the cult statues of the kings as part of the mortuary ritual in pyramid temples and, 3. The administration, safe-keeping and supervision of articles necessary for the dressing of the cult statues. They would also be engaged in the usual priestly duties at these temple institutions. Some palace hairdressers could also be employed in the mortuary cults of the highest officials, such as Ptah and Hepka recorded in the cult of Ptahshepses (Verner 1977; Speidel 1990). Speidel (1990:94) suggests that palace hairdressers may have been peripatetic (see Shafer *et al.* 2005: 9-74 for priestly rituals).



Figure 19. The copper cult statues of Pepy I (right: JE33034) (# 382) and Merenre (left: JE33035) (# 381), which originally had a wooden core were found in a deposit in the temple enclosure at Hierakonpolis (Quibell 1900). Pyramid temples had five main cult statues, which were cleansed and clothed each morning (Shafer *et al.* 2005: 72).

Although there is less direct evidence, it seems from the associated titles that the duties of the royal hairdresser were more concerned with the care and decoration of the king's body and perhaps those of his direct household. These hairdressers would have been directly responsible for the care of the king's hair, wigs and possibly placing of the diadems and crowns on his head, as indicated by the close association of the title 'Keeper of the Headdress' with that of royal hairdressers (Speidel 1990: 112). As some royal regalia was probably kept in the temples, its safety was the concern of the palace hairdressers, although elements of the regalia were probably kept in chambers within the palace presided over by the Two Royal Decoration Chambers - the *iswi hkr-nswt*, chambers in which the royal hairdressers also probably had to serve (Speidel 1990:113). It seems that the main function of the royal hairdresser was to participate in the king's morning toilet ritual, which was held in the House of Morning attached to the palace or in the ones that were attached to temples. The lower ranking royal hairstylists may not have actually done the hairstyling themselves, just assisted those of higher rank in dressing the hair of the royal household. The higher ranking officials probably told the lesser stylists what to and how to do the courtesans hair, although it is probable that the highest ranking hairdresser actually did the king's hair himself (Riefstahl 1952; Speidel 1990). The associated titles of both the royal and palace hairdressers indicate that some of the jobs they performed were parallel or overlapped (Speidel 1990: 112).

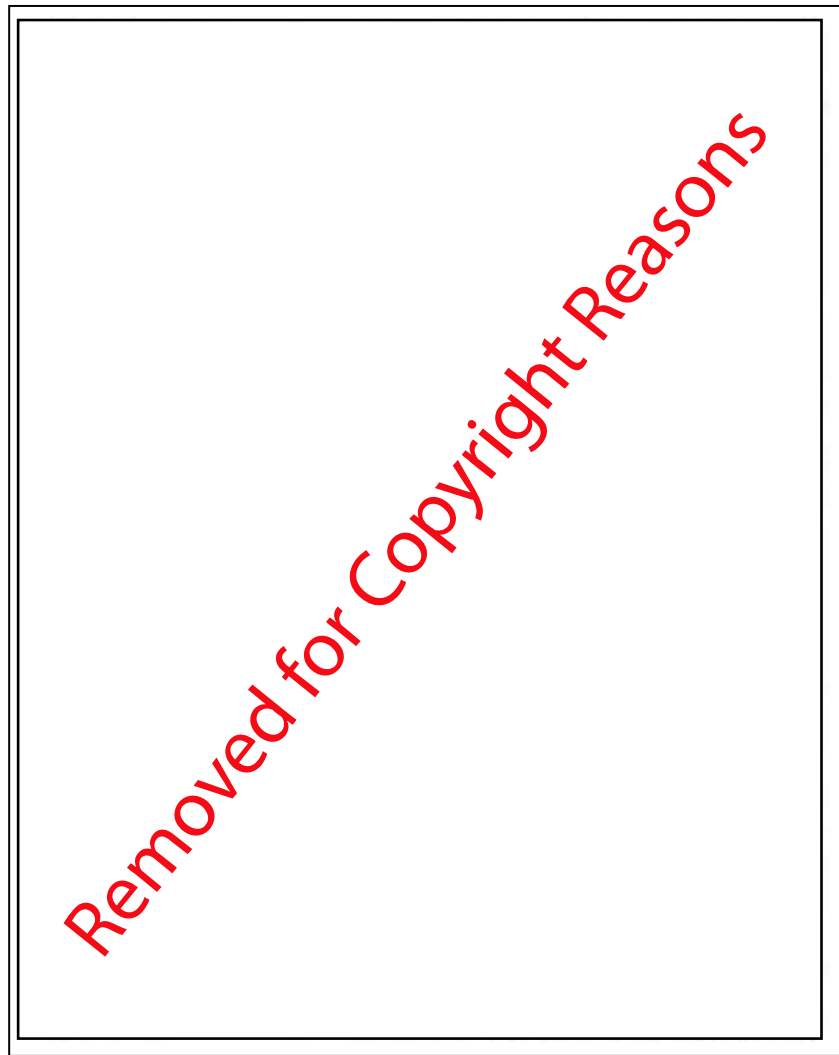


Figure 20. The stele of Director of Palace Barbers Nekhetsas (# 383), Saqqara D. 67, Dynasty V (after Mariette 1976: 366).

Also involved in the rituals concerning the body of the king were royal barbers, who were also priests of the Duawar – the royal beard (Kaplony 1975: 618). Unlike hairdressers, only one branch of state barbers is recorded – palace barbers. These state barbers were probably engaged in the shaving and washing the king. Although not as many state barbers are recorded as hairdressers, one particular barber, Nekhetsas from the reign of Niuserre of Dynasty V (see **Fig. 20**), held a whole string of barbering titles including: *imy-r3 h'k(w) pr-3* – ‘Overseer of Palace Barbers’, *imy-r3 h'k(w) šnbt m pr dḥwty* – ‘Overseer of Barbers in the Temple of Thoth’, *Imy-r3 h'k(w)* – ‘Overseer of Barbers’, *šḥd h'k(w) pr-3* – ‘Director of Palace Barbers’, and *ḥm-ntr dw3-wr* – ‘Priest of Duawar’ (Mariette 1976: 366, D.67; Jones 2000: No. 737, No. 3513, No. 2143). Nekhetsas also held many other titles, some concerned with decorating the king’s body, such as: *mḥnk nswt m k3t-šn* – ‘Intimate of the King in the Works of Hair’, *šḥkr ḥ3t ntr.f m k3t-šn* – ‘Adorner of the God’s Brow (front) with Works of Hair’ and *iry nfr-ḥ3t* – ‘Keeper of the Headdress’ (Mariette 1976: 366 D.67; Jones 2000: No. 1687, No. 3596, No. 1183). Kaplony (1975: 618) suggests that Nekhetsas and others of his rank and title decorated the king with his beard, the Duawar, during his morning toilette.

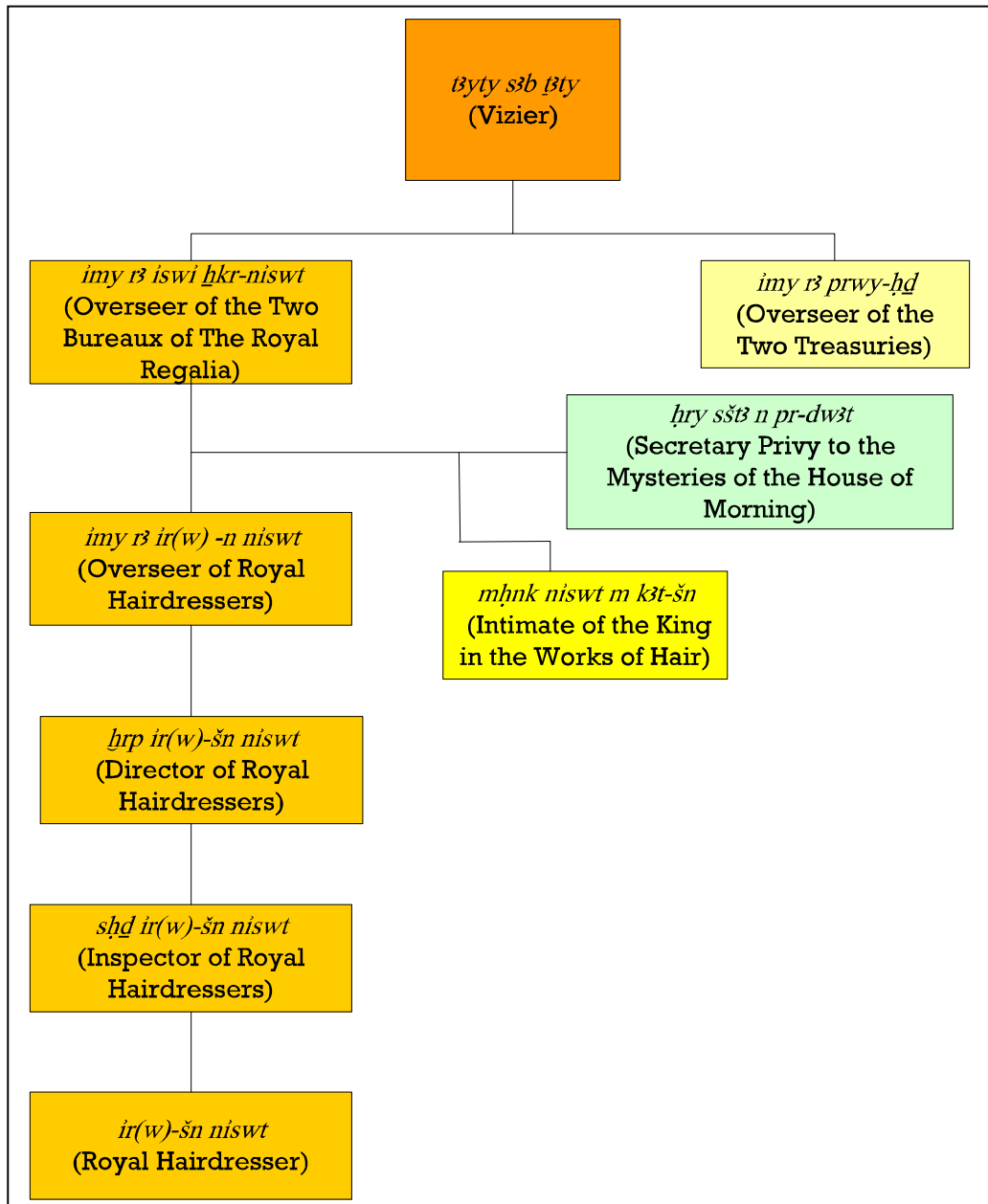


Figure 21. Ranking of royal hairdressing titles and their links with other institutions concerned with the care and decoration of the king's body (after Speidel 1990: 144).

During the Old Kingdom there seems to have been a ritualistic aspect to the king's morning toilette, which was held in the House of the Morning, a building/room that was attached to the palace or sun-temple (Blackman 1918). Many titles, such as those just mentioned are concerned with this institution along with others such as 'He who Adorns Horus', 'Overseer of All the Adornments of the King', 'Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the King's Regalia', 'Inspector of the King's Regalia of the Palace', 'Overseer of the King's Linen', 'Superintendent of the King's Bathroom', 'Royal Body Servant', 'Overseer of Oils', (Blackman 1918: 152; Jones 2000: *passim*; Kriesel 1958: 69-70). The titles surrounding the House of Morning along with passages from the Piy Stele (Lichtenstein 1980: 66-84) suggest that the king was assisted at his morning toilette by high officials who ritually cleansed him with water and incense, dressed and

groomed him and adorned him with jewellery and other royal regalia (Blackman 1918: 150-2). During this morning ritual the 'Overseer of Royal Hairdressers' would have been concerned with the grooming and maintenance of the king's hair and crowns, although he may have also held other duties. Whereas, the 'Director of Palace Barbers' shaved the king and attached the royal beard. A similar ritual overseen by officials was also performed in the sun temples and the derived ritual of washing of the dead king's body may have been presided over by the 'Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the House of the Morning' at the king's funeral (Blackman 1918: 164).

To understand how a hairdresser could reach such prominence, particularly during Dynasty V, it is important to remember that the king was regarded as a god (Baines 1993a; 1993b), and as such every act of his was a ceremony, and every ritual was presided over by a courtier. During this period the king was seen as the embodiment of the sun-god Re and the king's toilette at sunrise was thus a religious re-enactment of the sun-god's daily birth where he washes his face in the Waters of Nun (Blackman 1918: 154). No commoner was allowed to approach this god on earth, so it makes sense that the hairdressers - and other attendants that were intimate with the royal personage - should be recruited from his kin group or at least from the nobility. Being allowed to touch the body of the one living god on earth, gained the individual concerned with the hairstyling a certain amount of prestige and elevated his status in importance, particularly in terms of religious ritual standing, and would have smoothed their path to other still higher offices in the royal court (Verner 2002a: 172).

Two of the most prominent individuals associated with the king's toilette were the Dynasty V nobles Ty and Ptahshepses. Both of these courtiers were allowed to build huge mastaba tombs which display some of the finest examples of Old Kingdom decoration, Ty at North Saqqara and Ptahshepses at Abusir [the fragmentary reliefs recorded by Verner 1977, 1992; Oerter 2004]. Ty, who lived in the reign of Niuserre, could boast amongst his tiles: 'Beloved Unique Friend of His Sovereign', 'His Lord's Favourite Keeper of the Crown' and 'Superintendent of Pyramids and Sun-temples of the Great Kings of Dynasty V', and was also related to the king by his marriage to Princess Neferhetepes was 'Secretary Privy of the Mysteries of the House of the Morning' and 'Director of Royal Hairdressers' (Epron & Daumas 1939; Steindorff 1913). Perhaps the most impressive biography belongs to Ptahshepses, whose great tomb is located in front of the pyramids of Sahure and Niuserre and equidistance from both, seeming to complete the architectonic composition, so much so the Lepsius gave

the as then uncovered tomb the pyramid number XIX (Verner 2002a: 154-8). Ptahshepses titles included: ‘Vizier’, ‘Chief Justice’, ‘Overseer of all the Royal Works’, ‘Local Prince’, ‘Only Friend’ (of the Pharaoh), ‘Ruler of Nekheb’, ‘Beloved One of his Lord’, ‘Servant of the Throne’, ‘Lector Priest’, ‘Privy to the Secret Sacred Writings of the God’s Words’, and like Ty was also married to a Princess, Niuserre’s daughter Khamerenebty [probably a second wife] (Verner 2002a: 162: 166). Ptahshepses also held the titles: ‘Keeper of the (royal) Headdress’, ‘Secretary Privy to the Secrets of the House of the Morning’, and ‘Overseer of the Two Bureaux of the Royal Regalia’, the first title seemingly held near the beginning of his career. However, by the end of his career he had risen to being a prince, having the title *sꜣ nswt* at the head of his titulary on the badly eroded pillars in his pillared court, the third and final extension of his tomb (Verner 2002a).

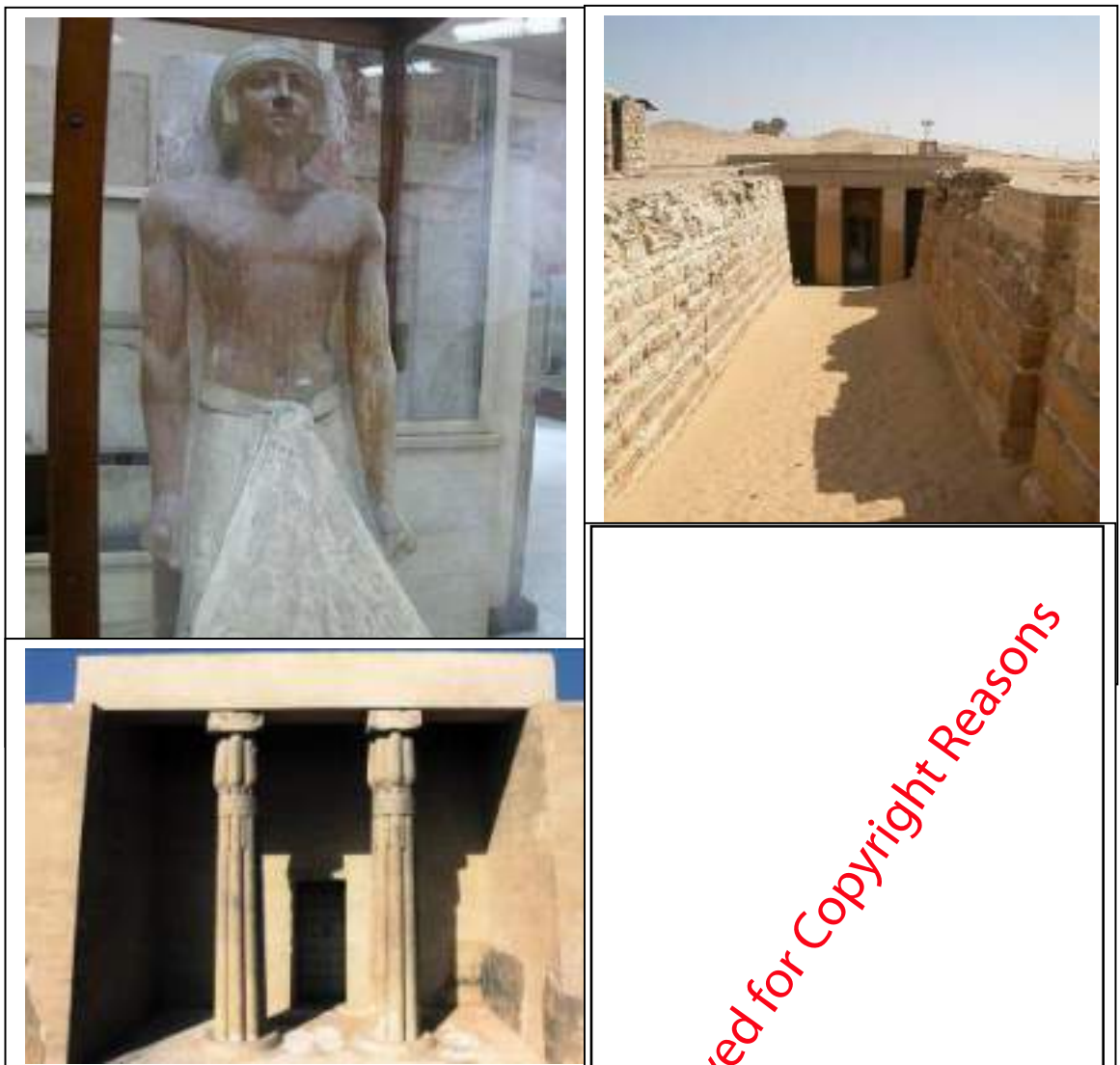


Figure 22. Tomb and representation of the owner, Ty (top # 300) and Ptahshepses (bottom # 384) Dynasty V, Saqqara and Abusir (Photos G. J. Tassie [top] & Verner 2002: 154, 174 [bottom]).

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As these two men held similar positions in the royal toilette during the reign of King Niuserre, they probably did not hold them concurrently. The location (away from Abusir) and style of Ty's tomb would seem to indicate that he followed Ptahshepses. The inclusion of these titles in the titulary of these two powerful men indicates the importance of the duties connected with the Mysteries of the House of the Morning. However, it is uncertain whether both men kept all their duties as they rose through the ranks, and it may be that working in the House of Morning was a step to greater things.

The rise in importance of the House of Morning seems to coincide with the rise of the Heliopolitan ennead and of the Sun-God Re to ultimate power during Dynasty IV (Verner 2002; Quirke 1992; Wilkinson 2003), a rise consolidated by the introduction of *SꜣRꜥ* (Son of Re) title by Djedefre to the royal titulary (Shaw & Nicholson 1995: 247-8). The rise in importance of Re's cult centre at *Iwnw* – Heliopolis, with its sun-temple – 'The High Sand' and associated priesthood is also attested at this period as is another centre called *Sꜥḥbw* (Verner 2002: 69-70). Although an earlier shrine of Netjerikhet has been found at Heliopolis and even earlier Predynastic remains neither can definitely be associated with the sun-cult (Debono & Mortensen 1988; Wilkinson 1999). The concepts of order, truth and justice were embodied in Re's daughter Maat, with Re emerging in theological constructs as the universal cosmic deity, creator, ruler of the gods, god of the dead, and ruler of the underworld (Verner 2002: 68-9). The king, the embodiment of god on earth, was the guarantee that hostile internal and external forces of evil and chaos would not prevail over the forces of good and order (Verner 2002: 68). At the beginning of Dynasty V, the kings, often termed the 'sun-kings' continued and enhanced the power of Re, with Userkaf, the founder of Dynasty V, building a sun-temple at Abusir near the pyramids of his successors (Verner 2002: 67-87). The building of sun-temples is also attested by Sahure, Neferirkare, Neferefre, Niuserre and Menkauhor, although only those of Userkaf and Niuserre have been located archaeologically (Verner 2002: 67-87). These temples seem to have been related to rites of the setting sun and had a *benben* stone (squat obelisk) as the focal point (Verner 2002: 86).

The earliest attestations of the title 'Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the House of the Morning' are from early-Dynasty IV, where named individuals such as Kanefer, Setka, and Iunminu held the post (Blackman 1918; Rydström 1994). In Dynasty IV all the holders of the title were king's sons, whereas in Dynasty V non-royal high officials could hold the post and only by the end of Dynasty VI does it seem to

have become an honorary title held by provincial officials [a prerequisite for the function of the ‘active’ office was the presence of the king] (Rydström 1994: 65-8). Rydström (1994: 86-91) records 49 holders of the position for dynasties 4-6 and Blackman (1918: 149-51) one more from dynasties 7-8: 7 (14%) are from Dynasty IV, 26 (52%) from Dynasty V, 16 (32%) from Dynasty VI and 1 (2%) from Dynasty VII-VIII. Of these 50 title holders 46 also held the title *smr w'ty* (the king’s) Sole Companion (Rydström 1994: 66). Hairdressing titles follow a similar pattern (see **Chart 1**), although to reflect social changes more clearly they have been split into four segments of time: 1 = Khafre-Shepseskaf, 2A = Userkaf-Menkauhor, 2B = Djedkare-Teti, 3 = Userkare-Pepy II, this follows (Fitzenreiter 2001) phases of statuary and changes in the religious focus and movement of royal residence. Only one title (1.5%) is recorded for Phase 1, that of ‘Director of Hairdressers’, although it was probable that it should be restored as ‘Director of Royal Hairdressers’ (Speidel 1990: 61-2). In Phase 2A the widest range of titles is attested with 9, the only major title not attested is ‘Director of Palace Hairdressers’. Phase 2A has the second largest amount of hairdressers attested 25 (37.9%). Phase 2B has the next largest range of titles with 7, the only titles missing are those of ‘Royal Hairdresser’ and ‘Overseer of Royal Hairdressing’, although the hairdressers shown in the tomb of Idut and Ptahhotep do not actually have their titles shown. However, this phase contains the largest amount of hairdressers with 33 (50%). In Phase 3 only 3 titles are recorded: ‘Hairdresser’, ‘Inspector of Palace Hairdressers’ and ‘Inspector of Royal Hairdressers’. The amount of hairdressers recorded for this phase is reduced to 7 (10.6%). The amount of palace hairdressers 47 (71.2%) far out ways the amount of royal hairdressers 15 (22.7%) and private 4 (6.1%). This imbalance between palace and royal hairdressers can be explained by the fact that there were several temples where the hairdressers worked, but only one royal court.

The correlation between the proliferation of hairdressing titles (particularly those concerned with the House of Morning) and the rise of the sun-cult emphasises the role of ritual concerning the king’s body during this period. From the reign of Djedkare Isesi there was a gradual Osirianisation of theological constructs and traditional rituals and after the reign of Teti greater emphasis on the provinces (Malek 2000). These changes are observed in the diminishing of titles from the reign of Djedkare Isesi and further diminishment after Teti of both titles and amount of hairdressers. It is also worth noting that from the end of Dynasty IV onwards that the holders of the highest titles in the administration were no longer solely members of the royal family. Trusted and

proficient private officials were allowed to hold these positions, such as vizier and overseer of royal works, and it was also at this time that the honorary titles, such as *sꜣnswt*, *ḥꜣty* and *smr wꜣty* became meritocratised (Rydström 1994: 66)

However, with the demise of Dynasty VI the religious aspect of the royal toilette and focus on the king’s body seems to diminish even further, and mention of the House of the Morning seems to disappear, with the title ‘Secretary Privy to the Mysteries of the House of Morning’ seeming to pass to an honorary position held by Middle Kingdom Theban officials (Blackman 1918: 155-6; Riefstahl 1952: 12). Indeed the amount of titles connected with the toilette of the king was reduced toward the end of the Old Kingdom, some never to reappear again. Although certain titles such as ‘Overseer of the Royal Hairdressers’ and ‘Royal Hairdresser’, along with ‘Keeper of the Headdress’ and ‘Keeper of the Kilt’ infrequently occur after the end of the Old Kingdom, Riefstahl (1952) suggests that many of these hairdressing titles were just honorary. Temples continued to possess Houses of Morning so that the king could be purified before entering, although in this period it was the priests without further titles who performed the king’s ceremonial toilette, thus retaining an aspect of the solar ritual (Blackman 1918; Kaplony 1975). An inscription in the British Museum (EA 574) details the ritualistic aspect of King Amenemhet II’s dressing and toilette as performed by the priest Khentemsmeyt (Sethe 1924: 75).

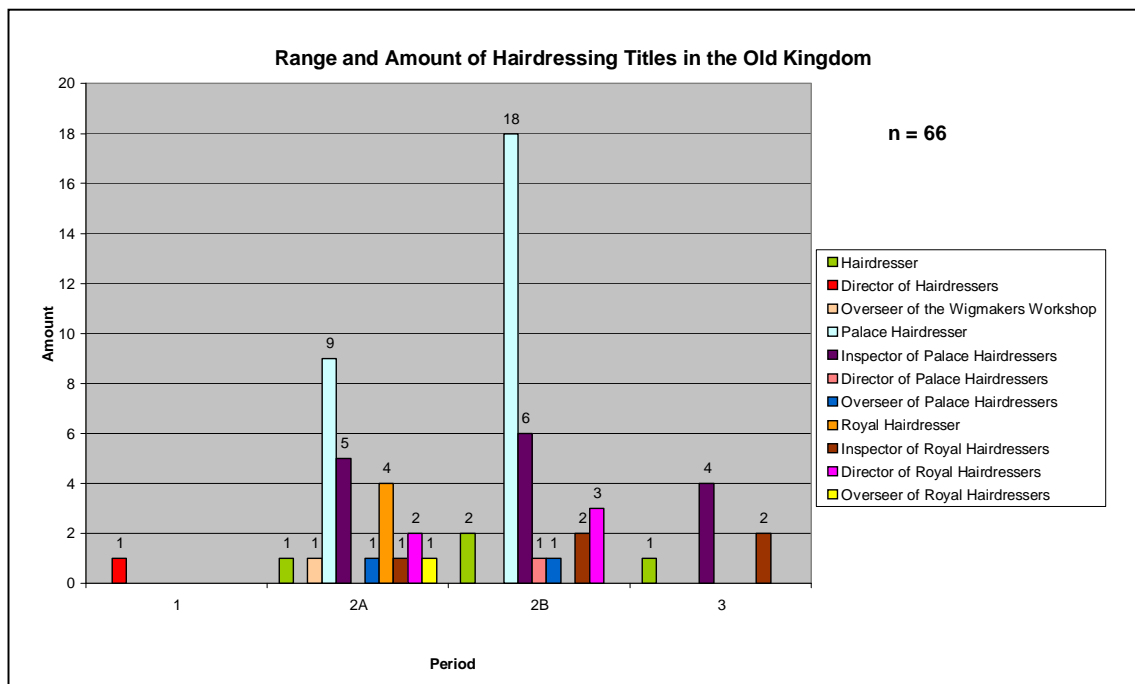


Chart 1. Amount and range of hairdressing titles in the Old Kingdom from the data in Table 1. 1 = Khafre-Shepseskaf, 2A = Userkaf-Menkauhor, 2B = Djedkare-Teti, 3 = Userkare-Pepi II.

In Dynasty V, probably as a result of the ritual surrounding the king's body, mention increases of the barber god and texts refer for the first time of a hairdressing goddess. The Goddess Khonsuot is described in the Pyramid Texts as personifying the hairstyle, the goddess of hair (Faulkner 1969: Pyr. 456c). This text is addressed to the Sopdu, the god of the evening sun, marker of the east, whose main cult-centre was Saft el-Henna in the north-east Delta, the naos of which shows Khonsout as his consort (Barguet 1950: 1). Originally Khonsout may have designated the red crown (Barguet 1950: 5). Duawer (as well as being the protective deity of barbers) also denotes a royal chin beard called the 'Great Morning One' (Otto 1975). In the Old Kingdom, along with other royal toiletries it was looked after by the priests or prophets of Duawer and in particular the - *hrp hm(w) dw3* 'Director of the Servants of the Duawer' (Jones 2000: No. 2650). The beard itself was deified and treated as a god, together with other toiletry gods. Duawer is personified in the procession of the environment of the king depicted on the walls of the festival hall in the mortuary temple of Pepy II (Jéquier 1938: Pl. 60).

4.2 Hairdressing Scenes and Cultural Transmission

Although the bulk of the hairdressing scenes occur from Dynasty X in the First Intermediate Period and continue into the New Kingdom rare scenes are known from the Old Kingdom. However, real hairdressing scenes, rather than genre scenes, seem to die out in Dynasty XVII of the Second Intermediate Period (for a full list of hairdressing and barbering scenes see **Appendix 3**). All the hairdressers shown styling hair are designated as personal or private hairdressers, no depictions of the higher ranking officials actually doing hair have been discovered. Riefstahl (1952: 16) points out that the difference between the scenes from the Old and Middle kingdoms (Type 1) and those of the New Kingdom (Type 2), is one of subject, for those of the earlier periods depict the dignified life of the elite and royalty, and reflected what they would want to take with them into the afterlife, whereas, the genre scenes of the New Kingdom suggest women of the harem, or at a banquet whiling away the hours dressing each others hair. Hairdressing scenes can be split into two categories:

- 1) The hairdressing being the main subject, with offerings secondary.
- 2) The offerings being foremost, with the hairdressing being secondary.

In nearly every hairdressing scene, food and drink are shown, along with tables and chairs. According to Gauthier-Laurent (1952: 695), Type 2 is just an offering scene, and the scenes of hairdressing are incidental scenes of everyday life. Type 1 he suggests shows hairdressing as it was practiced, and the presence of food and drink is an

indicator of how long it took to actually do the hairstyling. From ethnographic evidence, and actual experience of plaiting hair, to style a whole head of plaits can take between six and 12 hours.



Figure 23. Queen Kawit having her hair styled by a maidservant while at breakfast. Scene on her limestone sarcophagus, Cairo Museum, originally from her tomb at Deir el-Bahari, Dynasty XI, Middle Kingdom (photograph G. J. Tassie).

Oils to keep the hair conditioned and smelling nice are indicated as being poured over people's hair during the Old Kingdom. In the Dynasty VI tomb of Niankhpepi the Black at Meir, the tomb owner can be seen having scented oil poured over his head by his servant (Blackman 1953 pl. XI). A Dynasty V text in the tomb of the Vizier Senedjemib, states that King Djedkare Isesi 'caused that I be anointed with fat' (Breasted 1906: 122). This indicates that the ancient Egyptians were not only concerned with styling their hair, but with keeping it well maintained.

These scenes possibly represent just another daily activity of court life. The royal ladies would also have wished to have their servants with them in the afterlife to do their hair, for it was as important to the ancient Egyptians to look good in the afterlife as it was in this life. The ancient Egyptians often depicted objects or rituals they hoped to have with them in the next life. These hairdressing scenes, unlike the barbering scenes which normally show the activity taking place outdoors, show the activity being

conducted in the shaded comfort of the house, such as shown on the coffin scenes of Henwy, which depict the hairdressing taking place in columned halls. This firstly shows the dichotomy in roles between the two sexes, exemplified by the difference in skin colour, men normally being shown darker skinned than women indicating that the women did not have to do hard manual labour and could stay indoors out of the harsh sun (Fischer 1963: 17-22). Secondly, it shows the difference between the elite and commoners, as these scenes normally depicted elite women having their hair styled and in one case a man – Ptahhotep who is also shown having his hair dressed in-doors, whereas the barbering scenes normally show army recruits and other lower status people having their hair shaved or cut. Dynasties IX and X of the First Intermediate Period have the largest amount of hairdressing scenes showing elite hairdressing, this may be a residual of the rituals surrounding the toiletry of king and *iry pꜣt* devolved to the provincial elites. As with a lot of Egyptian art these scenes of hairdressing probably have more than one meaning, but until more conclusive evidence is found, the conclusions may be summarised thus:

- Actual hairstyling being practiced.
- The need for being well groomed in the afterlife.
- The symbolism of the Hathoric qualities of the royal ladies.



Chart 2. Graph showing amount of depictions of hairdressers and barbers by Dynasty out of a total of 15 hairdressing scenes, 4 barbering scenes and 8 hairdressers and barbers depicted as statuettes or on ostraca and papyri.

Hairdressing and barbering are very intimate professions, not only involving the styling of hair, but acting to restore self-esteem with the stylist also acting as a third-party confidant (McFarquhar & Lowis 2000). The hairstylists involved in the creation of the various hairstyles and wigs helped to perpetuate the hegemonic situation and reinforced the social relations, even when creating new styles. The hairstyles of the ancient Egyptians helped define them ethnically from others, acted as status and class markers, upheld social order and maintained and helped evolve the social organisation and stratification. Through the agency of the state hairdressers the institutionalised practices were themselves maintained. However, although embedded within institutions, hairstylists as agents were conduits of change, creating new hairstyles that complied with the social norms but at the same time altered the Egyptians view of themselves. The subtle changes or additions to the codified hairstyles show the individualism and intention of the hairstylist, which gradually had an impact on the social institutions.



Figure 24. Army recruits having their hair cut (note bowl with water between barber and client for keeping the hair moist), Tomb of Userhet (TT 56), Dynasty XVIII, New Kingdom (photograph G. J. Tassie).