



Contents lists available at [EKB](https://ejournals.ekb.eg/)

Minia Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research

Journal homepage: <https://mjthr.journals.ekb.eg/>



The Conventional Formula under the Offering Tables at the Private Tombs of the Old Kingdom

Mostafa Ali Anas^a

Sherif Mohamed El-Saban^b

Gamal Mohamed Abd El-Razek^c

^a PhD Researcher, Tourist Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University, Egypt.

^b Professor of Egyptology, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University

^c Professor of Egyptology, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University

Keywords

Private tombs
Offering tables
Conventional formula,
Inscriptions
Offering lists

Abstract

Carved beneath offering tables in Old Kingdom private tombs, the “conventional formula” – a text and image combination – offers unparalleled insights into the beliefs, social order, and artistic expression of ancient Egypt. This abstract delves into the significance of these formulae, exploring their textual and visual components, their evolution over time, and their multifaceted roles in funerary practices. Studying these formulae unlocks a treasure trove of information about Old Kingdom religion, social structures, artistic trends, and individual narratives. They offer a link between the written word and the visual world, illuminating the complex tapestry of beliefs and practices that underpinned ancient Egyptian civilization. This paper dealt with 10 scenes between the time period from the fourth dynasty to the sixth dynasty. The study reached results including The depictions under the offering tables in the Old Kingdom tended to follow traditional iconographic conventions that had been established in earlier periods. Inscriptions are simple and formulaic, generally consisting of offerings for the deceased's.

Printed ISSN 2357-0652

Online ISSN 2735-4741

1. Introduction

The abundance and variety of burial implements, continued across several millennia. The deceased was depicted before an offering-table beside which, there was an inscription known as the “offering-list”. Offering-lists enumerated all that was offered in the offering-table and provided a series of ceremonies. In addition to the offering list a funerary one meal was presented to the deceased at the time of interment and was supposed to be presented daily and certainly during all feast-days (Hassan , S., 1948: 157).

The offering formula in ancient Egyptian private tombs, manifested through diverse textual and visual forms, served as a dynamic and context-dependent framework for structuring offerings presented on offering tables, reflecting evolving beliefs about the afterlife and societal dynamics. (Rady, M., 2021: 154). Hartwig, M (2000) refer to the offering table formulae are not mere inscriptions; they are vibrant links between the physical and the eternal, the individual and the divine. Understanding the ancient Egyptians, their culture, and their persistent search for life after death is deepened by unraveling their mysteries (Rady, M., 2021)

Kanawaty (2005) Investigated of the ornamentation of Old Kingdom tombs, included scenes for musicians from Kaiemankh's (4th or 5th dynasties) burial chambers and a scene depicting food supply from Remni's tomb. He declared that the walls of burial chambers were devoid of any decoration up until the late 5th dynasty, under the reign of Djedkare Isesi (Kanawaty, N., 2005: 55-71). Chauvet (2013: 57-71) asserts that using his research on tomb inscriptions as a historical data source, the most extensive collection of textual sources for studying the Old Kingdom is found in the inscriptions found on private tombs. She displayed a picture for the first two columns in Tomb CG1432, the Kaemfofret Tomb.

Mahran and Kamal (2016: 169-192) examined the various ways that physical disability was portrayed in these tomb scenes. They brought a relief from Mereruka's tomb in Saqqara (6th dynasty) for the dwarf goldsmiths. They displayed a number of reliefs from various tombs, including those belonging to Ptahhotep (5th dynasty), Iho and Idiots (5th and 6th dynasties), Iymery's tomb (5th dynasty), Nikauises' tomb (5th Dynasty), Ti's tomb (5th Dynasty), Nykahem's tomb, and other scene.

Offering tables are common in both temples and tombs as necessary components of the funeral architecture (Mariette, A., 1846: 14). The majority of the offering tables are located next to false doors or inside statues that depict aristocratic people in their tombs (Lundius, E., 2020: 78).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Offering Formula

The so-called offering-formula or offering-list was frequently also carved on the offering-table (The Egyptian Museum Worldwide, n.d). Mauss refer to "An offering which the owner gives" is the offering formula found in the tombs. This was accurate because of an oddity in the Egyptian offering system known as "reversion of offerings," which stated that the offerings were given to the gods by the donor and thereafter returned to the owner or the departed (Mauss, 1923-1924, pp. 30-186).

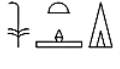
Formulas can be read without an in-depth understanding of their internal grammar because they are essentially determined phrases. The most prevalent illustration, the offering formula, is a characteristic shared by all hieroglyphic inscriptions found in museums across the globe. One can obtain a plethora of hieroglyphic texts by working through and getting acquainted with the components of the formula that are covered here (Barta 1968: 26).

The official and personal functions are combined in the offering formula. According to official terminology, the ability to carry out official duties in royal service and follow ethical principles during life were required for the deceased's status as one of the blessed deceased. This achievement was important in enabling the deceased to be qualified for burial inscriptions and burial monuments as a form of commemoration. (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, n.d.)

The deceased's private, family-based elements of the funerary cult are primarily related to the second, or personal, function. Private offerings to the deceased can be made verbally (by pronouncing the offering formula) or physically (by providing food, drink, and goods). Moreover, these gifts might be preserved both visually and verbally (through writing and art). In this sense, the stela, visitors to the tomb, and family employees—especially the son and heir—could all continue the offerings made during the burial (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, n.d.).

2.2. Offering Formula Forms




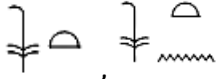
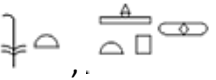

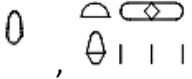
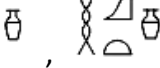
It has been usual to translate the formula's first phrase into two distinct languages: 1) In Old Kingdom literature, the king and god (s) are introduced using parallel phrases. 2) For manuscripts dating from the Middle Kingdom and later, introducing the god(s) with a dative construction. The Old Kingdom phrase "ran": "An offering that the king gives, (and) an offering that Anubis (gives)...," introducing the monarch and the god (s) as the offering's benefactors in a parallel construction. A revised version of the phrase by the Middle Kingdom read as follows: "An offering that the king gives (to) Anubis/Osiris, that he [i.e. the god] may (in turn) give invocation-offerings to..." The god (s) are introduced by a preposition, and "hr,2" is typically left unwritten.

The 'htp di nsw' formula  'an offering which the king gives': It has been usual to translate the formula's first phrase into two distinct languages: 1) In Old Kingdom literature, the king and god(s) are introduced using parallel phrases. 2) For manuscripts dating from the Middle Kingdom and later, introducing the god(s) with a dative construction. The Old Kingdom phrase "ran": "An offering that the king gives, (and) an offering that Anubis (gives)...," introducing the monarch and the god(s) as the offering's benefactors in a parallel construction. A revised version of the phrase by the Middle Kingdom read as follows: "An offering that the king gives (to) Anubis/Osiris, that he [i.e. the god] may (in turn) give invocation-offerings to..." The god(s) are introduced by a preposition, and "hr,2" is typically left unwritten. As a result, the king offered the offerings to the god, who then gave them to the recipient (Leprohon, 1990, p. 163).

Ancient Egyptians typically measured material needs in huge quantities of "h₃" meaning a thousand (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, n.d.). Strangely enough, though, the offering-formula of this object ended the demand by requesting all the good and pure things, which are endless in quantity, rather than limited its specific needs to a certain amount.

The offering formula's most popular form includes of three parts, which can be divided based on the unique Egyptian expression present in each (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, n.d.):

Table (1): Forms of the offerings formula

	<i>htp-di-nsw</i>	an offering which the king gives.
	<i>pri-xrw</i>	a verbal offering.
	<i>n k3 n</i>	for the <i>k3</i> of
	<i>nsw</i>	king
	<i>htp</i>	offerings
	<i>di</i>	give
	<i>t</i>	bread
	<i>hnkt</i>	beer

Source: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, n.d.).

2.3. Relationship between Offering Formula and the offerings under Tables

Offering tables were common in the Old Kingdom but became extremely rare in the New Kingdom (Mariette, A. 1864: 28). Beginning in the late Old Kingdom and continuing into the early Middle Kingdom, this element (s) (*htp dj*) in offering formulas is a relatively common feature (G. Lapp 1986: 9-28). These might be seen as reflecting the Middle Kingdom's common offering formula, which was—I'll threat to guess here—essentially the same as it was in the Old Kingdom: "an offering which the king has given and which Osiris has given," and not, as is usually translated in the tradition of (A. H. Gardiner's Egyptian Grammar, p.171) 'an offering (or: boon) which the king has given (to) Osiris...'. (N. De Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, 1915: 89)

In the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the support of the king was frequently the only source of the equipment used by wealthy individuals to create their tombs and funeral residences (D. Franke 1994: 22), and the gods, such as Anubis, for example, were divine guarantors for burial'. It is generally accepted that the food offerings made to the gods come from royal estates and periodicals, and that the Old Kingdom offering formulas refer to the ruler and the god(s) as the givers of the "offerings" and favors. The phrase (s) *htp di nswt* and (*htp dj*) god's name could be understood as a formulaic description of the traditional custom of the reversion of offerings ('Umlaufop'): the king offers *htp*, 'food offerings', to the gods, and after they have 'satisfied' (*htp*) themselves, Offering tables, stelae, and/or human representations receive the offerings from the gods' sacrifices in order to support their owners (A. H. Gardiner, 1915: 89).

Thus, the formula symbolizes the king and/or the gods as the theoretical origin and sources of the food offerings provided during the performance of the offering ritual.



3. Methodology

This paper aims to analyze the depictions of the "Conventional Formula" found under offering tables in private tombs of the Old Kingdom from 4th dynasty till 6th dynasty, To understand the significance of this formula in the context of Old Kingdom beliefs and practices. Through examine variations in the depictions of the formula across different tombs or regions, connect the formula to broader artistic trends and developments in Old Kingdom tomb decoration.

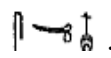



This paper did not address the scenes from the 3rd dynasty, Because of their rarity and the lack of clarity of the conventional formula depictions under the offering table at the private tombs. All the scenes from Saqqara and Giza only, because they were the main necropolis in the Old Kingdom.

4. Table of scenes:

4.1. 4th dynasty

S.	TT& Owner	Location	Place of the scene	PM	Fig.
1.	<i>Iy-nefert</i> 	Saqqara. (Tomb C56) ¹ (in G 4940).	Room III, south wall of the tomb of Iy-nefert.	PM III ² , p. 482.	2
2.	Stela of Princess <i>Nefertabet</i> 	Giza (G 1225). Now in the Louvre. E 15591 E 22745.	Western Cemetery 1200:G. 1225.	PM III ¹ , p. 59-60.	1


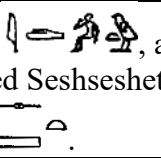


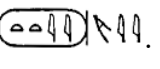

4.2. 5th dynasty

S.	TT& Owner	Location	Place of the scene	PM	Fig.
3.	<i>Seshemnufer II sšm-nfr</i> 	Giza (G 5080)	Chapel, West wall, center	PM III ² , pp.146-147	3
4.	<i>Seshethotep</i>  called <i>Heti</i> 	Giza (G 5150)	Chapel, south wall, middle part, Giza	P.M. III ¹ , pp. 149-150.	4
5.	<i>Kaemankh k₃(j)-m-nh²</i> 	Giza (G 4561)	Chapel, recess, south wall, the burial chamber	PM III ¹ . pp.135, 136.	5

¹ N. Kanawati and Abdel Raziq, the Units Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. II, The tomb Iy-nefert and Ihy (used by Idut), (oxford, 2003), pp. 41-46

² Ranke, H., Die altgyptischen Personennamen, Vol. I. (Gliickstadt, 1935-77), 339, p.17.

4.3. 6th dynasty

S.	TT& Owner	Location	Place of the scene	PM	Fig.
6.	<i>Iasen</i> 	Saqqara (G 2196)	Chapel, west wall, left of the statue.	PM III ² , p. 490.	6
7.	<i>Idut</i>  , also called Seshseshet	Saqqara	Room IX, north wall of Idut's tomb	PM III ² , p. 623.	7
8.	<i>Mereruka</i>  , <i>Meri</i> 	Saqqara	Room A8, south wall, west section of Mereruka's tomb	PM III ² , pp. 525-534.	8
9.	<i>Meryteti</i> 	Saqqara	Room C3, South wall, Right of Meryteti's tomb	PM III ² , pp. 536, -537.	9
10.	<i>S'ankhuptah</i> 	Saqqara (G 8893)	Room I, west wall	PM III ² , p. 723.	10

5. Samples of the study

5.1. Scene.2: The Tomb of *Iy-nefert* 'Royal acquaintance.' (T C56).³ (in G 4940)

Dynasty: 4th.

Title: "High Priest of Pharaoh *Teti*"

Scene Location:

Room III, south wall, Saqqara.

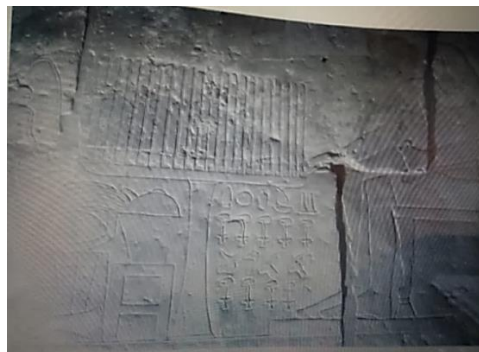


Fig. 1: Tomb of *Iy-nefert*, High Priest of Pharaoh *Teti* (Tomb C56) (after Kanawati N, Abder-Raziq M.2003, pl. 37 [b])

Description	<i>Iy-nefert</i> is shown in the scene sitting on a chair with padded backrest and bull's legs. He presents one hand to an offering table full of offerings while holding a folded cloth in the other. He is dressed in a collar, a beard, and a shoulder-length wig.
--------------------	---

Beneath the table is inscribed,

³N.Kanawati and Abdel Raziq, the Units Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. II, The tomb *Iy-nefert* and *Ihy* (used by *Idut*), (oxford, 2003), pp. 41-46.

Inscription



t h₃ p₃t h₃ hnqt h₃ šs h₃ mnht h₃
 ‘Bread, one thousand; cake, one thousand; beer,
 one thousand; alabaster, one thousand; clothes,
 one thousand’



k₃ h₃ 3pd h₃ m₃-hd h₃ ghs h₃
 ‘Oxen, one thousand; fowl, one thousand; Oryx,
 one thousand; gazelle, one thousand.’

Commentary

A litany of several offerings, including bread, cake, beer, alabaster, garments, oxen, poultry, Oryx, and gazelles, is inscribed beneath the table, to the right of it. A variety of offerings are arranged in front of the ewer in a basin that is supported by a stand to the left of the stand beneath the table.



5.2. Scene.1: Stela of Princess *Nefertiabet nfrt-j'bt* (G 1225).

Dynasty: 4th
 ca. 2590-2565 BC.
Title: “Princess
Nefertiabet”.
 “Khufu’s daughter”⁴
Scene Location:
 Western Cemetery
 1200:G. 1225, Giza,
Current location: in
 the Louvre museum,
 E 15591 E 22745.

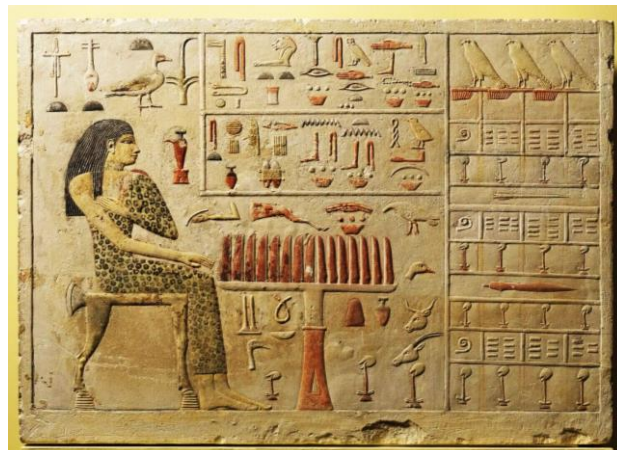


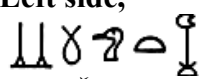
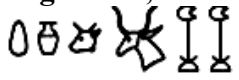
Fig. 2: Stela of Princess Nefertiabet
 (after Dodson, Aidan; Hilton, Dyan. *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson.2004, p.60)

Description

Nefertiabet is seen in the scene presenting offerings to the gods. She is shown sitting at a table with meat, drink, and bread spread out in front of her. Little figures of the gods are seen looming over the offerings. Details on the offerings are included in hieroglyphic inscriptions above the scene.

⁴ Der Manuelian, Peter. "The Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2160 BC)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 49-73.

Nefertiabet was a princess during the reign of King Khufu; the best artists of the day were called upon to portray her food for the afterlife.

<p>Inscription</p>	<p>Left side,  <i>mnht Šs 3pd t h₃</i> ‘Linen, alabaster, fowl, bread, one thousand.’</p> <p>Right side,  <i>P₃t hnqt ka Ss₃ h₃ h₃</i> ‘Cakes, beer, ox, gazelle, one thousand, one thousand’</p>
<p>Commentary</p>	<p>Inscription under the table described variety of offerings for the deceased at the afterlife, especially the sign <i>h₃</i> 'one thousand' is mentioned many times under them, So it means the sign refer to a very big quantity of different items like bread, beer, clothes, ox, linen, Oryx.</p>

5.3. Scene.3: The tomb of Seshemnufer II *sšm-nfr*  , (G 5080).⁵

Dynasty: 5th.
Title: “The name *Seshemnufer* means "He who makes beautiful things.”⁶
Scene Location: Chapel, west wall, center

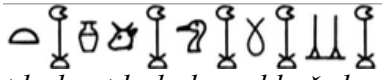
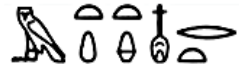


Fig. 3: *Seshemnefer II, chapel, west wall, centre* (after Kanawati, Naguib. Tombs at Giza. Kaiemankh (G 5080), Vol. II. 2001, Pl. 30)

<p>Description</p>	<p>In front of an offering table laden with eighteen half-loaves of bread, <i>Seshemnefer II</i> and his wife are shown sitting on chairs. <i>Seshemnefer</i> is decked up in a leopard skin, short wig, beard, and collar, while his wife is decked up in a long, tight dress, long wig, dog collar, wide collar, and anklets.</p>
---------------------------	---

⁵ Porter, B., & Moss, R. L. B.. Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings: The Theban necropolis. Vol. 3, Part 2. Private tombs (Vol. 3). Oxford University Press. 1994, pp. 146-147.

⁶ N. Kanawati, Tombs at Giza. SeshathetepIHetI (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080), Volume II. Australian Centre for Egyptology Report 18. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2002, pp.59,60.

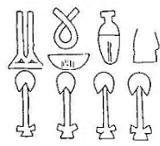
Inscription	<p>Beneath the table is inscribed,</p>  <p><i>t h₃ hnqt h₃ k₃ h₃ 3pd h₃ šs h₃ mnht h₃</i> ‘bread, one thousand; beer, one thousand; fowl, one thousand; alabaster, one thousand; clothes, one thousand.’⁷</p>  <p><i>m ht nb(t) nfrt</i> ‘of every good thing’</p>
Commentary	<p>The hieroglyphics inscription under the table highlights <i>Seshemnefer</i> II riches and rank by emphasizing the amount of items offered for the deceased.</p>

5.4. Scene.4: The Tomb of Seshethotep , called **Heti** ,
 (G 5150).⁸

Dynasty: 5th.
Title: King's son of his body, Overseer of all works of the King, Greatest of the Ten of Upper Egypt.
Scene Location: Chapel, south wall, middle part, Giza.



Fig. 4: The Tomb of Seshathetep/Heti
 (after N. Kanawati (2002). Tombs at Giza, Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Pl. 5)

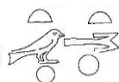
Description	<p>The owner of the tomb is seated on a chair with bull's legs and raises his right hand to a table that has eleven half-loaves of bread on it. Below the offering table, to the right is written the amount of offerings: Bread, one thousand; beer, one thousand; alabaster, one thousand; clothes, one thousand; <i>rth</i> – bread, <i>wr</i> – bread.</p>
Inscription	<p>Beneath the table is inscribed,⁹</p>  <p><i>t h₃ hnqt h₃ šs h₃ mnht h₃</i> “Bread, One thousand; Beer, One thousand; Alabaster,</p>

⁷ N. Kanawati. Tombs at Giza II. Seshathetep/Heti (G 5150), Nesutnefer (G 4970), and Seshemnefer II (G 5080), A. McFarlane, S. Shafik, E. Thompson, N. Victor, S. Winlaw (Edts) ACE Reports 18, 2002, p. 60.

⁸ P.M. III², pp. 149-150. For more information, see: N. Kanawati, 2002, pp.59, 60.

⁹ N. Kanawati, 2002, Pl. 46.

One thousand; Clothes, One thousand.”



m h̄t nb(t) nfrt

“All beautiful for everything”

Commentary The scene in the tomb of *Seshathetep/Heti* reflects the typical offering scenes commonly found in Old Kingdom tombs, where the tomb owner is depicted making offerings to the gods. The accompanying figures represent different roles in the offering ceremony, including the presentation of offerings, announcement of offerings, and acceptance of offerings. The inscriptions provide details about the types and quantity of offerings being made.

5.5. Scene.5: The tomb of Kaemankh $K_3(j)$ -m- 'nh¹⁰  (G 4561).¹¹

Dynasty: Late dynasty 5th.

Title: *w'b nswt*
“Priest of the king.”¹²

Scene Location:
Chapel, recess, south wall, the burial chamber.

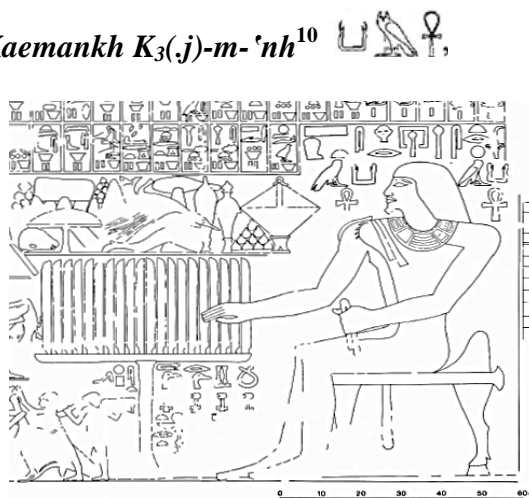
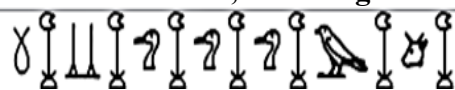


Fig. 5: Kaiemankh, chapel, recess, south wall (after N. Kanawati. Tombs at Giza. Kaiemankh (G 4561), Vol. I. 2001, Pl. 29)

Description The owner of the tomb is seated on a chair with a cushion behind him and bull's legs protruding. He's got a collar, a beard, a shoulder-length wig, and a leopard skin on. With his right hand he extends to a table piled with twenty half-loaves of bread, and in his left hand he holds a folded cloth.

Inscription **Beneath the table, to the right is inscribed:**



šs h̄3 mnht h̄3 r h̄3 t h̄3 [zt h̄3 s h̄3]

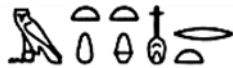
‘alabaster, one thousand; clothes, one thousand; r-goose, one thousand; t-goose, one thousand; zt-goose, one thousand; pigeon, one thousand; young ox, one thousand; all fine things, every day’

¹⁰ Ranke, H., Die altagyptischen Personennamen, Vol. I. (Glickstadt, 1935-77), 339, p.17.

¹¹ PM III. pp.135, 136.


¹² N. Kanawati. Tombs at Giza I. Kaiemankh (G 4561) and Seshemnefer I (G 4940), Volume I. Australian Centre for Egyptology Report 16. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2001, p. 25.

At the opposite side, beneath the table is inscribed,



*mn [wt h₃ rn k₃ h₃] ht nbt nfrt hrw [nb]*¹³
 'bringing the choice food'

Commentary The owner of the tomb is depicted in the scene making a ceremonial offering of bread and other goodies. He will receive daily supplies of food and other opulent things, according to the inscription. The scene on the other side of the table shows someone bringing food to the Choi, which could have been a momentous occasion in the life of the tomb owner.¹⁴

5.6. Scene.6: The Mastaba of *Iasen* , (G 2196).¹⁵

Dynasty: 6th.¹⁶
Title: Unknown.
Scene Location:
 Chapel, west wall,
 left of the statue.

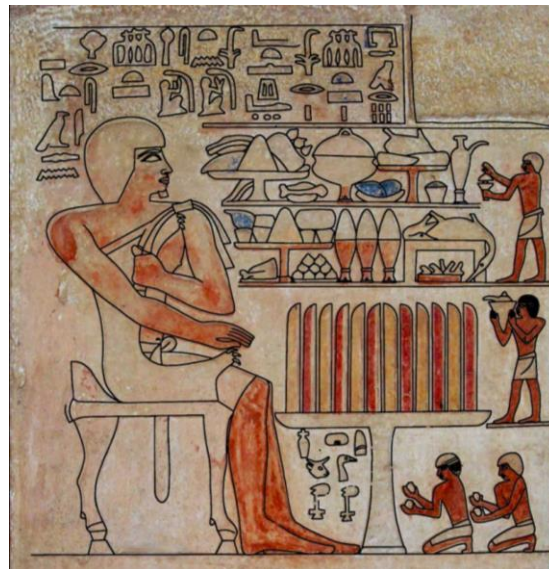


Fig. 6: The Mastaba of *Iasen*
 (https://www.osirisnet.net/mastabas/iasen/e_iasen_03.htm)

Description Two "one thousand" signs are placed after the conventional hieroglyphic formula for offerings that includes bread, cakes, beer, birds, and livestock on the left side of the offering table. Two individuals are represented for purify him before starting the offering ritual on their knees, one in each hand, are carrying tiny offering vessels on the right.

¹³ The items written in [] are no longer visible, but were recorded by Junker, Giza 4. Fig 7. In: N. Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I. 2001. p. 25.

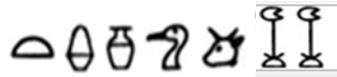
¹⁴ PM III², pp. 639-641; Van Walsem, René. Iconography of Old Kingdom Elite Tombs: Analysis and Interpretation, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

¹⁵ PM III², p. 490.

¹⁶ Simpson, William Kelly : "Mastabas of the Western Cemetery, Part 1: Sekhemka (G 1029) ; Tjetu I (G 2001) ; Iasen (G 2196) ; Penmeru (G 2197) ; Hagy, Nefertjentet, and Herunefer (G 2352/53) ; Djaty, Tjetu II, and Nimesti (G 2337X, 2343,2366). Guiza Mastabas 4, Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1980.

Inscription

Beneath the table is inscribed :


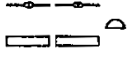


t t hnqt šs apd k₃ h₃ h₃

‘bread, cakes, beer, birds, and livestock, one thousand (tow times).’

Commentary

The scene is representative of Old Kingdom funerary art, emphasizing the giving of food and drink to the dead so that they may continue to exist in the hereafter. It could be a funerary scene.

5.7. Scene.7: Idut , also called *Seshseshet* . ¹⁷

Dynasty: 6th.

Title: “Prophetess of Hathor.”

Scene Location:

Room IX, north wall of Idut's tomb in Saqqara.



Fig. 7: Idut tomb (King's Ddaughter)
(after Aldred, C. (1980). Ancient Egyptian art. Thames & Hudson, Pl. 25)

Description

The north wall of Room IX is occupied by an offering table scene, similar in many ways to that on the west wall of the same room. The princess is depicted sitting on a chair with lion's legs, holding a perfume jar to her nose, and extending her right hand towards an offering table laden with eighteen half-loaves of bread. The inscription beneath the table lists offerings of bread, beer, cakes, oxen, fowl, and Oryx, each in a quantity of one thousand. On the other side of the table is an ewer in a basin placed on a stand. The bottom register beneath the offering table scene shows six offering bearers, five of whom are wringing the necks of geese while the last carries a pigeon in one hand and supports a tray of food on his shoulder with the other. ¹⁸

¹⁷ PM III², p. 623.

¹⁸ N. Kanawati and Abdel Raziq, the Units Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. II, The tomb *Iy-nefert* and *Ihy* (used by Idut), (oxford, 2003), pp. 41-46; Budge, E. A. W. The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day. Chronicle Books. 2010; Malek, J.. "The Old Kingdom (c. 2686-2160 BC)". In The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt, edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 203.

Inscription

Beneath the table is inscribed¹⁹:



t h₃ hnqt h₃ p3t h₃ k₃ h₃ 3pd h₃ m₃ – hd h₃
 ‘Bread, one thousand; beer, one thousand; cakes, one thousand; oxen, one thousand; fowl, one thousand; Oryx, one thousand.’

Commentary

In the context of the Tomb of Princess *Idut*, the inscription you gave, describing copious amounts of food, beer, cakes, oxen, poultry, and Oryx, presents a complex tapestry of meaning. Each offering carries specific meaning; Bread: Staple food representing nourishment and life. Beer: Refreshment and enjoyment, often associated with Osiris, god of the afterlife. Cakes: Sweet offerings for appeasement and divine favor. Oxen: Sacrificial animals symbolizing strength and offering meat for sustenance. Fowl: Associated with the sky and rebirth, potentially linked to Princess *Idut*'s journey to the afterlife. Oryx: Powerful animals linked with the sun god *Ra*, potentially offering protection and divine connection.²⁰

5.8. Scene.8: The Tomb of *Mereruka* , *Meri* .

Dynasty: 6th.

Title: “Chief Justice and Vizier, Inspector of prophets and tenants of the Pyramid of *Teti*.”

Scene Location: Room A8, south wall, west section of *Mereruka*'s tomb in Saqqara.

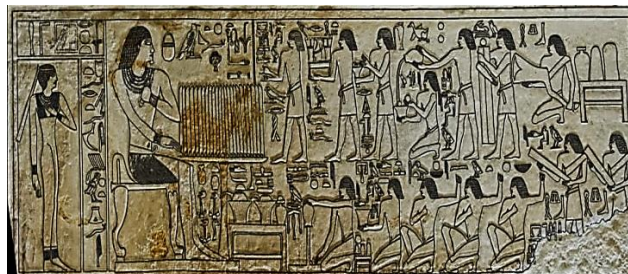


Fig. 8: Mereruka

(after N. Kanawati, & M. Abder-Raziq. 2005, pl. 49)

Description

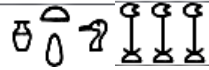
In this scene, *Mereruka* is seated in a luxurious chair with a backrest, and his wife is standing behind him, clutching a lotus blossom. Underneath the table, which is raised on one pedestal, are many offerings. To the left of the table are piles of other offerings. *dp ht htpt*.

¹⁹ Mastaba of *Idut*, https://www.meretsegerbooks.com/gallery/522/mastaba-of-idut_Idute-016. (Retrieved 0 December 2023) 02:16 am.

²⁰ J. Malek. *The Old Kingdom*. In: I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 134; Dodson A and Hilton D. *Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, thames & Hudson, 2004, p. 156.

²¹ PM III², pp. 525-534.

Inscription **Beneath the table is inscribed:**



hnqt h₃ t h₃ p₃t h₃ 3pd h₃

‘One thousand; beer, one thousand; cakes, one thousand; bread, one thousand; geese.’

Commentary The different offerings that are under and to the left of the table indicate that *Mereruka* was a wealthy and well-respected individual who could support his family and others working for him. Because the lotus flower represents rebirth and regeneration in ancient Egyptian culture, its portrayal is significant.

5.9. Scene.9: Meryteti .²²

Dynasty: 6th.
Title: “Chief Justice and Vizier, King's eldest son of his body, Inspector of prophets of the Pyramid of *Pepy* I, Temp. *Pepy* I or later.”

Scene Location: Room C3, South wall, Right of tomb, Saqqara.

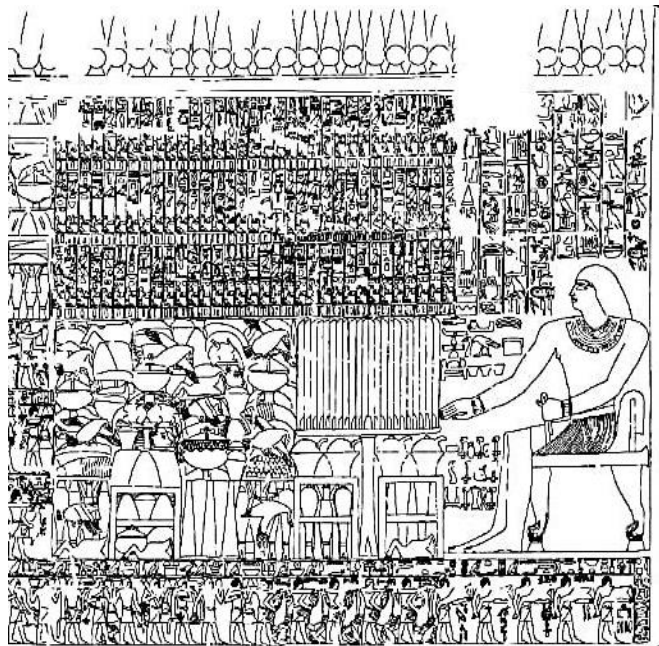


Fig. 9: Meryteti Tomb (King's Daughter.)
 (after Mereruka and his Family - PART 1 - The tomb of Meryteti" is "Report 21;

https://www.osirisnet.net/mastabas/meryteti/e_meryteti_04.htm)

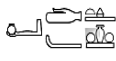
Description The scene, an intricate and beautifully maintained offering table scene, shows *Meryteti* sitting on a cushioned chair with lion-legs, a shoulder-length wig, bracelets, and a half-pleated kilt. He extends one hand toward an offering table filled with twenty-two half-loaves of bread, and he carries a folded cloth in the other²³. *Meryteti* appears to have been a wealthy and well-respected individual who could support his family and people under his employment based on the intricate inscriptions and gifts

²² PM III², pp. 536,537.

²³ J. Malek. The Old Kingdom. In: I. Shaw (ed.), the Oxford History of Ancient Egypt). Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 21.

Inscription

There are two inscriptions to the right of the offering table, one of which explains the requirements of the

htpt-offerings and *hnk*-offerings 
hnk dbht-htp 'food requirement',²⁴.

Beneath the table is inscribed,



h₃ t h₃ hnqt h₃ p₃t h₃ k₃ h₃
 'One thousand bread, one thousand beer, one thousand oxen'



3pd h₃ šs h₃ mnht
 'One thousand fowl, one thousand alabaster, and one thousand clothes.'

Below the table are two stands on which are placed four ewers and jars, with one foreleg on the ground. To the left of the table are more stands and piled offerings of food and drink, including loaves, geese, cuts of meat, vegetables, and fruits.²⁵

- *h₃* (pronounced "kha"): thousand
- *t* (pronounced "te"): bread
- *hnqt* (pronounced "hanket"): beer.
- *p₃t* (pronounced "pet"): cake.
- *k₃* (pronounced "ka"): oxen .
- *3pd* (pronounced "aped"): fowl.
- *šs* (pronounced "shesh"): alabaster.
- *mnht* (pronounced "menket"): linen.

Commentary

The scene offers insight into the religious customs and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. A relationship between the pharaoh and the divine is implied by the use of the lion-legged chair and other animal themes in the tomb decorations. Almost every offering scene in the tombs of the officials from the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth dynasties has a type tow portrayal. Either behind the conventional formula list or in one or more registers, they are situated.²⁶

²⁴ G. LEGRAIN, Les temples de Karnak. Fragment du dernier ouvrage de Georges Legrain, Directeur des Travaux du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Bruxelles, 1929, p. 152 et fig. 96.

²⁵ Dodson, A., The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt. Pen and Sword, 2016, p. 90; N. Kanawati, M. Abder-Raziq, Mereruka and his Family I. The Tomb of Meryteti, ACE Reports 21, Oxford, 2004, p. 49.

²⁶ N. Kanawati, M. Abder-Raziq, Mereruka and his Family I. The Tomb of Meryteti, ACE Reports 21, Oxford, 2004, pp.47-51.

5.10. Scene.10: The tomb of *S'ankhuptah*     (G 8893)²⁷

Dynasty: 6th
dynasty.
Title: “Overlord of
Nekheb, Director
of the Two Seats,
Secretary of the
Toilet-house, etc.”
Scene Location:
Room I, west wall



Fig. 10: The tomb of Seankhuptah
(after N. Kanawati, A.Hassan, pl. 64; Kanawati and Abder-
Raziq, 1998: pl 27)

Description *S'ankhuptah* is depicted sitting on a lion-legged chair holding a folded cloth in his left hand, while extending his right hand to a table with 18 half-loaves of bread. Above his head are two vertical lines of hieroglyphs identifying him as:²⁸

hm – ntr dd – swt – Itj smr w^ctj ...
S [^cnh] . w (j) - pth
‘The priest of the pyramid; one steadfast of places is Teti, the sole companion *S'ankhuptah*.’

On the opposite side of the table is a heap of offerings, including meat, fowl, fruit, vegetables, food items in baskets, stands with jars of drink and ewers in basins. Above the table is written “*dbht htpt hnk*” (requirements of *htpt* and *hnk*-offerings) followed by an inscription of the offerings:²⁹

h₃ 3pd h₃ 3pd h₃ k₃ h₃ mnht h₃t
hnqt p₃t n S cnh – w (j) - [P] th
‘One thousands of fowl, one thousands of fowl, one thousands of oxen, one thousands clothes, one thousands of bread, beer and cakes for *Seankhuptah*.’

Inscription **Beneath the table** is another transliteration and translation of offerings:³⁰



²⁷ PM III², p. 723.

²⁸ Wilkinson, R. H. The complete temples of ancient Egypt. Thames & Hudson, 2005, p.117.

²⁹ Lorton, D. Lorton, D. Egypt: Ancient Sites and Modern Scenes. Xlibris Corporation, 2016, p.210

³⁰ N. Kanawati and M. Abdel-Raziq, The *Titi* Cemetery at Saqqara, Vol. III, The Tombs of *Nerfrseshemre* and *seankhuptah* The Australian center for Egyptology, Sydney, 1997, pp.47-51.

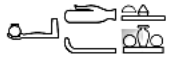
h₃ 3pd h₃ 3pd h₃ k₃ h₃ t h₃ mnht
 h₃ p₃t h₃ hnqt h₃ h₃t t (?) h₃ 3pd
 h₃ 3pd h₃ 3pd h₃ ŠŠ

‘One thousands of fowl, one thousands of fowl, one thousands of oxen, one thousands of bread, one thousands of clothes, one thousands of cakes, one thousands of beer, one thousands of unguent, one thousands of fowl, one thousands of fowl, one thousands of alabaster.’

Commentary	The scene depicts the offering of food and other items to <i>S'ankhuptah</i> for use in the afterlife. The use of hieroglyphs and the specific items offered provide insight into the religious beliefs and practices of the time. ³¹
-------------------	--

6. The conventional formula under offering tables

6.1. Analysis Conventional formula in scenes

	4 th Dynasty	5 th Dynasty	6 th Dynasty
Invocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begins with <i>htpt</i>-offerings and <i>hnk</i>-offerings  <p><i>hnk dbht-htp</i> ‘food requirement’ Invokes Anubis, Osiris, or other deities for sustenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depictions of deities receiving offerings </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar to 4th Dynasty: <i>htpt</i>-offerings and <i>hnk</i>-offerings <p><i>hnk dbht-htp</i> ‘food requirement’. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May include more deities, reflecting a broader pantheon </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued Use of <i>hnk dbht-htp</i>. - Expanded Inclusion of a wider range of deities, reflecting theological developments. - Personalized Appeals: Direct addresses to specific deities for favors or protection
Offering List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bread, beer, oxen, fowl, incense, and more. - Reflects social status and afterlife aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wider range of food, drink, and ritual items. - Inclusion of luxury goods like fine linen or exotic perfumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed lists of food, drink, clothing, ritual items, and luxury goods. - Items chosen to reflect the deceased's personal preferences, status, and spiritual aspirations
Beneficiary	- Names the	- Lists the	- Inclusion of

³¹ Wilkinson, R. H. (2017), p.117.









	<p>deceased and their titles, asserting identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cartouches enclosing the deceased's name 	<p>deceased's official and religious titles, signifying their accomplishments and social standing</p>	<p>professional, religious, and honorary titles, highlighting the deceased's career and achievements</p>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "That he/she may live" or "that his/her name may endure" - Depictions of the deceased enjoying offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasized Individuality: Phrases like "that his/her name may endure in the house of the king" or "that he/she may be remembered among the living." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phrases expressing desires for sustenance, remembrance, eternal life, divine company, and even participation in cosmic cycles. - Use of metaphors, similes, and literary flourishes to convey the deceased's hopes and beliefs
Source of Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The king or a deity, highlighting divine favor - Royal figures or deities presenting offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - King's Role: Continued emphasis on the king as the provider of offerings, but with increased mention of deities as direct sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased emphasis on deities as the direct providers of offerings, reflecting a growing focus on personal piety. - Continued mention of the king as a mediator, but with less prominence than in earlier dynasties
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conciseness: Focus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration: Longer and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulas display a

	<p>essential elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal structure: Consistent patterns - Divine authority: Emphasis on king and deities 	<p>more detailed formulas compared to the 4th dynasty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Expression: Greater emphasis on the deceased's personal achievements and relationship with deities. - Artistic Flourish: Often accompanied by more intricate and colorful reliefs and paintings 	<p>heightened level of literary sophistication and religious sentiment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater emphasis on personal expression and unique aspects of the deceased's life and beliefs. - Often accompanied by increasingly elaborate and expressive reliefs and paintings
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carved on stone offering tables or stelae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar to 4th dynasty, carved on stone offering tables or stelae in tombs and chapels 	<p>Similar to earlier dynasties, carved on stone offering tables or stelae</p>

7. Conclusion


This paper deals with 10 scenes of the conventional formula under tables in which the tomb owner offered to gods or to his relatives. The paper did not detect any scenes after the old kingdom, almost 50% of the counted scenes date to the 6th dynasty period which reached to 5 of scenes. The 5th dynasty included 3 scenes, while the 4th dynasty included tow scenes. Used some scenes from these dynasties, to show the development of the conventional formula under the table and show the development of elements and symbolism in them, and complete the time periods according to methodology.

The depictions under the offering tables in the old kingdom tended to follow traditional iconographic conventions that had been established in earlier periods. The

Conventional formula depictions  “one thousand” of different items like:  
 ‘bread’,  ‘beer’,  ‘linen’,  ‘alabaster’,
 ‘ox’,  ‘geese.’

Inscriptions are simple and formulaic, generally consisting of offerings for the deceased's ‘*k₃*’ (spirit) and the gods. They include the name and titles of the deceased.

Food and drink offerings take center stage, alongside depictions of wealth and abundance. Inscriptions detail the types and quantities of offerings, ensuring their provision in the afterlife. Symbolic objects.

The majority of the offering formulas in old kingdom times show a sequence $nswt + dj + htp$ ().

The *htp*-sign is actually the substantive 'offering' in the phrase 'an offering that Anubis gives'; it serves much the same purpose in the first phrase 'an offering that the king gives'. I suggest that this palaeographic distinction is how the Egyptians showed the change-over from the earlier rendering with the parallelism between king and god to the newer re-interpreted formula with the preposition introducing the god.

The formula specified exactly what kinds and how much food, drink, and other offerings were meant for the deceased. This provided direction for both the living and the dead, ensuring that the latter were given what they needed to live on in the afterlife. Changes in the formula could be a reflection of societal standing, personal preferences, or changing ideas about the afterlife. Certain deities were linked to particular sacrifices in certain formulas, for instance, suggesting a relationship between heavenly favor and earthly rituals.

The formula's word and image choices offered symbolic meanings about the deceased's identity, standing, and connection to God.

Offering formulas, though they shared a basic framework and necessary components, also showed variation between tombs within the Old Kingdom. This capacity for change offers significant insights into the dynamic nature of ancient Egyptian funeral culture, reflecting variations in beliefs, interactions between people, and artistic styles.

Standardized scenes and formulas dominate, with less focus on personal details or unique attributes of the deceased. The focus remains on maintaining social order and securing divine favor through established rituals and representations.

Studying the inscriptions and depictions under offering tables provides a valuable window into the evolving beliefs and practices surrounding death and the afterlife in ancient Egypt. The inscriptions and depictions found beneath these tables reveal fascinating layers of meaning, offering glimpses into the deceased's desired afterlife experiences, relationships with deities, and their aspirations for the journey beyond life.

Bibliography

- Baines, J., & Malek, J. (2000). "Atlas of Ancient Egypt". Revised 2nd edition. Oxford University Press.
- Bibliotheca Alexandrina. (n.d.). The Offering Formula Phonetics. Retrieved 12 February, 2024, from Biblioteca Alexandrina: https://www.bibalex.org/learnhieroglyphs/lesson/LessonDetails_En.aspx?l=88
- Budge, E. A. W. (2010). "The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day". Chronicle Books.
- Chauvet, V. (2013). "Between a tomb and a hard place: Tomb inscriptions a source of historical information." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, vol. 49, (pp. 57-71).
- Dawood, K. (2005). "Animate decoration and burial chambers of private tombs during the Old Kingdom: New evidence from the tomb of Kairer at Saqqara." *Annee*, vol. 40, (pp. 107-127).
- Der Manuelian, Peter. (2003). "The Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2160 BC)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford University Press, (pp. 49-73).
- Dodson A and Hilton D. (2004). "Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt", Thames & Hudson.
- _____. (2016). "The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt". Pen and Sword.
- Ezz, M. (2014). "A study of animal motherhood scenes in the private tombs in ancient Egypt", *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality*, vol. 11, (pp. 33-45).
- G. Legrain. (1929). *Les temples de Karnak*. Fragment du dernier ouvrage de Georges Legrain, Directeur des Travaux du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Bruxelles.
- Garcia, J. C. (2007). "A new Old Kingdom investigation from Giza." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 93, (pp. 117-136).
- Global Egyptian Museum. (n.d.). Offering table. Retrieved 07 12, 2021, from Global Egyptian Museum: <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/glossary.aspx?id=278>
- Hartwig, M. (2000). "Method in Ancient Egyptian Painting". Brill.
- Hassan , S. "Excavations At Giza -The Offering-List In The Old Kingdom", (Vols. VI-Part II). Cairo: Government Press, 1948.
- Kanawati, N., and Abdel Raziq. (2003). "The Units Cemetery at Saqqara, vol. II, The tomb Iy-nefert and Ihy (used by Idut), Oxford (pp. 41-46).
- Kanawati, N. (2002). "Tombs at Giza II. Seshathetep/Heti (G 5150), Nesutnefer (G 4970), and Seshemnefer II (G 5080), A. McFarlane, S. Shafik, E. Thompson, N. Victor, S. Winlaw (Edts) ACE Reports 18.
- Kanawati, N., and Abdel Raziq. (2001). "Tombs at Giza I". Kaiemankh (G 4561) and Seshemnefer I (G 4940)", Australian Centre for Egyptology Report 16. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- _____. (2003). "The Units Cemetery at Saqqara", vol. II, The tomb Iy-nefert and Ihy (used by Idut), Oxford.
- _____. (2004). "Mereruka and his Family I: The Tomb of Meryteti", ACE Reports 21, Oxford.
- _____. (1997). "The Titi Cemetery at Saqqara, Vol. III, The Tombs of Nerfrseshemre and seankhuiptah", *The Australian center for Egyptology*, Sydney.

- Kanawati, N. (2002). "Tombs at Giza. Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080)", Volume II. *Australian Centre for Egyptology Report 18*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Kanawati, N. (2005). "Decoration of burial chambers, Sarcophagi and coffins in the Old Kingdom." In: Dawood, K., Bedier, S. and Abdel-Fattah, S. (Editors), *Studies in honor of A; I. Radwan, Cahier*, No.34, Conseil Supreme des Antiquites, Caire. (pp. 55-71).
- Leprohon, R. J. (1990). The Offering Formula in the First Intermediate Period. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 76, (pp.163-164).
- Lorton, D. Lorton, D. (2016). "Egypt: Ancient Sites and Modern Scenes". Xlibris Corporation.
- Mahran, H. and Kamal, S. (2016). "Physical disability in Old Kingdom tomb scenes." *Athens Journal of History*, vol. 2, (pp. 169-192).
- Malek, J. (2000). "The Old Kingdom (c. 2686-2160 BC)". In *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw, Oxford University Press.
- _____. (2000). "The Old Kingdom". In: I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford University Press.
- Mastaba of Idut. (2023). https://www.meretsegerbooks.com/gallery/522/mastaba-of-idut_Idute-016. (Retrieved 11 December 2023) 02:16 am.
- Mauss, M. (1923-1924). Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques" in *Année Sociologique*,. *L'Année sociologique* , I, 30-186.
- Porter, B., & Moss, R. L. B. (1994). "Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings: The Theban necropolis". Vol. 3, Part 2. Private tombs (Vol. 3). Oxford University Press.
- Porter, B., & Moss, R. L. B. (1960). "Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings: The Theban Necropolis", Vol. 3, Part 1. Oxford University Press.
- Rady, M. "The offering-table of rdi.n Ptah", *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol.4, Issue 2, December 2021.
- Ranke, H. (1935). "Die altägyptischen Personennamen", Vol. I. Glickstadt.
- Simpson, William Kelly. (1980). "Mastabas of the Western Cemetery, Part 1: Sekhemka (G 1029); Tjetu I (G 2001); Iasen (G 2196) ; Penmeru (G 2197); Hagy, Nefertjentet, and Herunefer (G 2352/53); Djaty, Tjetu II, and Nimesti (G 2337X, 2343,2366). *Guiza Mastabas 4*", Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.
- Van Walsem, René. (2006). "Iconography of old kingdom elite tombs: analysis and Interpretation, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects", Leuven: Peeters.
- Wilkinson, R. H. (2005). "The complete temples of ancient Egypt". Thames & Hudson.