

## FISHING AND FOWLING WITH THE SPEAR AND THE THROW-STICK RECONSIDERED

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The Moscow Papyrus speaks of a royal pleasure trip in the following manner:

„...wives, the king's children were in jubilation...”

presumably on account of Seheteptibreankh's proposal to go on a pleasure trip. The story then continues:

„...proceeding happily...

in a boat of faring over (the bird pool?)

...

the king's children were gathered together.”<sup>1</sup>

The description fits the well-known scene of fishing and fowling in the marshes, as found in tomb-decoration from the Old to the New Kingdom. The nobleman, accompanied by his wife and children, is shown gliding through the marshes in a light papyrus-boat, spearing fish and catching birds with the throw-stick.<sup>2</sup> His wife stands behind<sup>3</sup> or in front of him,<sup>4</sup> or may sit between his legs,<sup>5</sup> while holding on to her husband in the swaying vessel. His

1) Caminos, *Lit.Frag.*, 29, B 2,1. This copy, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> dyn., goes back to a text from the 12<sup>th</sup> dyn.

2) For the evidence not recorded here cf. *LÄ* VI, 1052 with lit.; Joachim S. Karig, *Die Landschaftsdarstellungen in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reiches*, Diss. Göttingen, 1962, 120 sqq.; Vandier, *Manuel* IV, 715-773; Staehelin, *Tracht*, 250 sqq. and List 5; also Moussa-Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, 58 sq. with note 110 sqq.

3) Wife standing behind the tomb-owner, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Neferirtenef. Saqqara. 5<sup>th</sup> dyn. time of Sahure; B. van de Walle, *Le mastaba de Neferirtenef*, Bruxelles 1930, Pl. VI; Junker, *Giza* IV, Abb. 8 a1.

2. Middle Kingdom:

2.1. Ukhhotep. Meir C 1. Sesostri II; *Meir* VI, Pl. XIII (two women) fowling and spearing fish.

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 125. Hatshepsut.

3.2. TT 22. Thutmose III (?); Wresz., *Atlas* I, Pl. 40 (2x).

3.3. TT 18. Thutmose III; Gauthier, in: *BIFAO* VI (1908) Pl. XI; Wresz., *Atlas* I, 117.

3.4. TT 39. Thutmose III; Davies, *Pujemre* I, Pl. IX.

3.5. TT 92. Amenophis II; Baud, *Dessins*, *MIFAO* LXIII, Pl. XXI; Wresz., *Atlas* I, 294.

3.6. TT 69. Thutmose IV; Albert Champdor, *Die altägyptische Malerei*, Leipzig 1957, S. 19.

3.7. TT 165. Thutmose IV (?); Baud, *op.cit.*, Pl. XXX.

3.8. Nebamun. Thutmose IV; BM 37, 977.

4) Wife standing in front of the tomb-owner, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep. 5<sup>th</sup> dyn., time of Niuserre and Menkauhor; Moussa-Altenmüller, *op.cit.*, Pl. 4 & 5.

2. Middle Kingdom:

2.1. Ukhhotep. Meir C 1. Sesostri II; cf. n.3.2.1. (spearing fish, 2 women)

sons and daughters may be depicted standing in front<sup>6</sup> or behind<sup>7</sup> their father, though in some cases a son<sup>8</sup> or daughter<sup>9</sup> sits between the father's legs. The children hold the birds or fish which have been caught or point out the prey to their father.<sup>10</sup>

5) Wife squatting between the legs of the tomb-owner, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Neferirtenefer; cf. n.3.1.1

1.2. Seshemnefer. Gisa. 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; Junker, *Giza* XI, Abb. 60.

2. Middle Kingdom:

2.1. Khnumhotep. Beni Hassan. 12<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *LD* II, Bl. 130; *Beni Hasan* I, Pl. XXXIV and *Urk.* VII, 39.

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 123. Thutmose III; Text: *Urk.* IV, 917.

3.2. TT 52. Thutmose IV; Wresz., *Atlas* I, Pl. 174; Davies, *Nakht*, Pl. 22-24; Text: *Urk.* IV, 1605.

6) Child standing in front of tomb-owner, e.g.:

a. Son.

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Niankhkhnum und Khnumhotep. 5<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.4.1.1.

1.2. Seshemnefer. Gisa. 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.5.1.2.

1.3. Kaiemankh. Gisa. 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; Junker, *Giza* IV, Abb. 8.

1.4. Hanqu. Deir el-Gebrawi. Late 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *Deir el-Gebrawi* II, Pl. XXIII.

1.5. Ini-Snofru-ishetef. Dahshur. 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *Dahshur* II, Pl. XXIV (with loin-cloth, harpooning fish and swinging throw-stick).

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 125. Hatshepsut (adult).

3.2. TT 123. Thutmose III (adult).

3.3. TT 22. Thutmose III (?); cf. 3.3.2. (first wearing loincloth and looking forwards; second looking backwards and lifting arm towards father).

3.4. TT 18. Thutmose III; cf. n.3.3.3.

3.5. TT 39. Thutmose III; cf. n.3.3.4.

3.6. TT 92. Amenophis II; cf. n.3.3.5. (naked, turning towards father).

3.7. TT 256. Amenophis II (naked, turning towards father and presenting him an arrow; cf. n.6.3.11.-TT 257)

3.8. TT 69. Thutmose IV; cf. 3.3.6.

3.9. TT 165. Thutmose IV(?); cf. n.3.3.7. (turning towards father).

3.10. TT 52. Thutmose IV; cf. n.5.3.2. (naked, turning towards father and swinging throw-stick).

3.11. TT 257. Thutmose IV-Amenophis III; Keimer, *RdE* IV (1940) Pl. II (naked; turning towards father in the scene of spearing fish and presenting him an arrow; cf. n.6.3.7.-TT 257.).

b. Daughter:

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 53. Thutmose III.

3.2. TT 78. Thutmose III; Annelies und Artur Brack, *Das Grab des Haremheb. Theben Nr. 78*, AV 35, 1980, Pl. 67. p. 60 and 87 (turning towards father and pointing out birds).

3.3. TT 52. Thutmose IV; cf. n.5.3.2. (naked, turning towards father).

3.4. TT 18. Thutmose III; cf. n.3.3.3. (dressed, seated).

7) Child standing behind the tomb-owner, e.g.:

a. Son:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Henqu. Deir el-Gebrawi. late 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.6.1.4.

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 125. Hatshepsut (adult).

b. Daughter.

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 69. Thutmose IV; cf. n.3.1.1. (dressed).



W. Westendorf, inspired by S. Freud, interpreted this scene as a sexual union between the nobleman and his wife meant to guarantee his rebirth (based on the wordplays: *stj* = to shoot, to spear fish – *stj* = to impregnate and *qmš* = to throw – *qmš* = to beget).<sup>11</sup> M. Eaton-Krauß and G. Graefe reject this interpretation.<sup>12</sup> D. Kessler, in turn, contradicts them again. According to him, the killing of the birds and fish is to the benefit of the dead on the New Year's feast of rejuvenation and the scenes depict the *hieros gamos* for the rejuvenation.<sup>13</sup>

3.2. TT 52, Thutmoses IV; cf. n.5.3.2. (dressed; holding chicken).

8) Son squatting between legs of tomb-owner, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Neferiretenef. cf. n.3.1.1.

1.2. Ini-Snofru-ishetef. Dahshur. 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.6.a.1.5. (dressed with pigtail).

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 125. Hatshepsut (grown-up daughter).

9) Daughter squatting between legs of tomb-owner, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep. 5<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.4.1.1.

2. Middle Kingdom:

2.1. *Meir* VI, Pl. XIII (fishing and fowling. In the scene of spearing fish with the inscription „his beloved daughter, the housewife Henutsen“).

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 125. Hatshepsut (grown-up daughter or wife?).

3.2. TT 22. Thutmoses III (?); cf. n.3.3.2.

3.3. TT 18. Thutmoses III; cf. n.3.3.3. (dressed).

3.4. TT 39. Thutmoses III; cf. n.3.3.4.

3.5. TT Nebamun. Thutmoses IV, BM 37, 977 (naked, wearing jewellery, looking backwards).

3.6. TT 92. Amenophis II; cf. n.3.3.5. (dressed).

3.7. TT 69. Thutmoses IV; cf. n.3.3.6. (grown up in the fishing scene, naked, only wearing a girdle, leaning towards water).

3.8. TT 165. Thutmoses IV(?); cf. n.6.a.3.9.

3.9. Fragment from a Theban Tomb. Thutmoses IV–Amenophis III; Keimer, *BIE* 34 (1951–52) 427 fig. 146 (naked, wearing jewellery and a pigtail).

10) Child pointing out prey to father, e.g.:

1. Old Kingdom:

1.1. Seshemnefer. Giza. 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.5.1.2.

2. Middle Kingdom:

2.1. Ukhhotep. *Meir* B 4. 12<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *Meir* III, Pl. VI.

3. New Kingdom:

3.1. TT 78. Thutmoses III; cf. n.6.b.3.2.

3.2. TT 22. Thutmoses III(?); cf. n.3.3.2.

3.3. TT 69. Thutmoses IV; cf. n.3.3.6.

11) *ZÄS* 94 (1967), 139 sqq.; esp. 142 sqq. Followed by K. Martin, *LÄ* IV, 1052, S. Vanek, *Proc. of Coll. The Archaeology, Geography and History of the Egyptian Delta in Pharaonic Times, Discussions in Egyptology*, SN I, Oxford 1989, 314 sqq. Also Buchberger, contradicting without proof, *GM* 66 (1983), 23.

12) *The Small Golden Shrine from the Tomb of Tutankhamun*, Oxford 1985.

13) *GM* 90 (1986), 35 sqq. and *ZÄS* 114 (1987), 59 sqq., esp. 84. His polemic rejection of all current interpretations and his interpretation of the scenes as episodes of the New Year's festival, without giving any Ancient Egyptian evidence pointing in that direction, is not convincing. Following Westendorf, he interprets the hunting-scene in the marshes as a *hieros gamos* and a rebirth in the thickets of the papyrus. At my objection that the wife of the tomb-owner, who should be present at a *hieros gamos*, is missing in some of the depictions, he replied that the wife's presence was not necessary since the Egyptian was familiar with the icon and would mentally add the missing link.

Considering the Egyptian's fondness for puns, the possibility of a pictorial wordplay should at least be considered. But a number of facts speak against it: First of all, there is not a single hint of doublemeaning in any of the texts accompanying the scene. Secondly, this interpretation would imply that the wife must always accompany her husband.

But in the oldest scene of fowling having come down to us, the wife is missing. Nebemakhet, a son of Khefren and Meresankh III, swings two sticks towards the birds.<sup>14</sup> His image is only preserved down to the waist, but as in the other scenes of the tomb his wife is depicted in about the same size as her husband (LD II, 13. 14a), we can exclude the possibility that she accompanied him on a smaller scale, though a son might have been standing in front or behind him. At the stern-post a small man is pooling the boat. The five registers in front of Nebemakhet show the typical motifs of the marshes: the preparing and bringing of fish and fowl, the gathering of papyrus, the construction of papyrus-boats, the crossing of a ford and the procession of the estates (Fig.1).

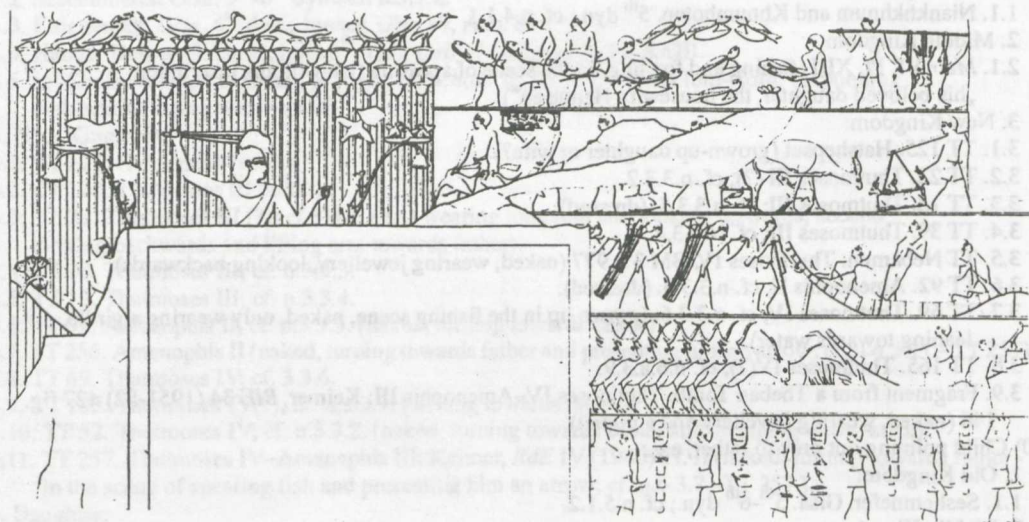


Fig.1

Khufukhaef II, who lived at the time of Niuserre, seems to be accompanied only by his son and an assistant while indulging in his pleasures (Fig.2),<sup>15</sup> and in at least six tombs of the Old Kingdom the tomb-owner is shown spearing the fish alone with his son(s). His wife does not appear. In five cases the tomb-owner is accompanied by his eldest or beloved son, in the sixth the genealogical specification is missing.

In the tomb of Hetepherakhti, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the son (*z3.f smsw z3b z3 Niankhptah*) is twice depicted with full titlature, both in front and behind his father. Small and naked, he holds two birds in his hands.<sup>16</sup>

14) LD II, 12b.

15) W. Kelly Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II*, Boston, 1978, fig. 47.

16) Saqqara, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> dyn, offering chamber, northwall; Hertha T. Mohr, *The Mastaba of Hetep-herakhti*, *Mededeelingen* 5, Leiden 1943, 34 and fig. 34; Wresz., *Atlas* I,1, pl. 106.



In the tomb of Kaemankh, from the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the naked *z3.f smsw zš pr-ḥd* Huiwer stands in front of his father, a *rhjt*-bird in his right and a harpoon in his left hand (Fig.3).<sup>17</sup>



Fig.2

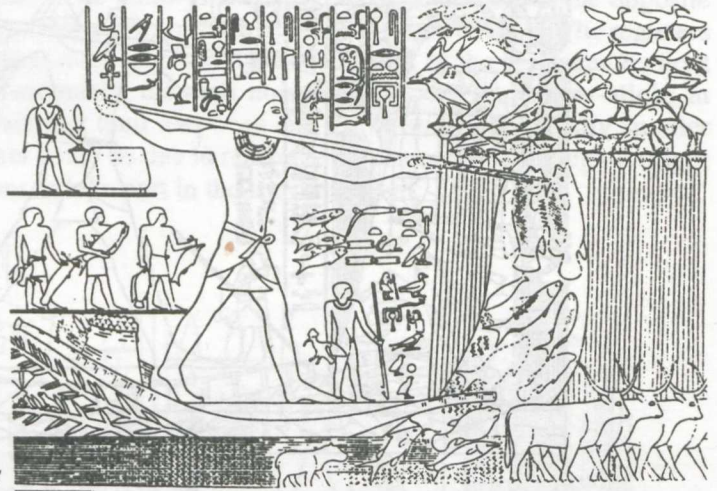


Fig.3

Djau of Deir el-Gebrawi spears fish hanging in the air, while his beloved son turns to him with fish and birds in this hands.<sup>18</sup> The usual river motifs may be seen in the five registers behind this scene.

In the tomb of Pepiankh Heneni in Meir the eldest son Heneni, identified by title and name, holds out a harpoon to his father as if he intended to give it to him.<sup>19</sup> Men with harpoons are to be seen in the registers behind, the spearing Pepiankh (Fig.4).

A fishing-scene shows Chnumhotep of Beni Hassan spearing fish in the company of his grown-up eldest son, who is holding birds, and an attendant carrying a harpoon in reserve.<sup>20</sup>

In the tomb of Henqu in Deir el-Gebrawi, a very small naked son (or daughter?) stands in front of his father, holding a goose by its wings and smelling a lotus blossom. The *z3.f smsw smr w<sup>c</sup>t mrjj r jm3h hr nb. <f>* Izi stands in full size behind his father. He is clad with a loin-cloth and holds a levelled harpoon in his right hand and a second, upwards pointing harpoon (or is it a staff?) in his left hand.<sup>21</sup> A small boy holding a lotus and a bird stands in front of Henqu. Behind these three persons filling the little papyrus-boat follows a woman

17) Gisa, 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; Junker, *Giza* IV, Abb. 8; Desroches-Noblecourt, *Kēmi* 13 (1954), 38.

18) 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *Deir el-Gebrawi* II, Pl. V.

19) *Meir* V, Pl. XXIV.

20) Khnumhotep. Beni Hassan. 12<sup>th</sup> dyn.; cf. n.5.2.1. In the bird-catching scene a servant holds a second throw-stick.

21) Late 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; *Deir el-Gebrawi* II, Pl. XXIII (shooting at the fish).

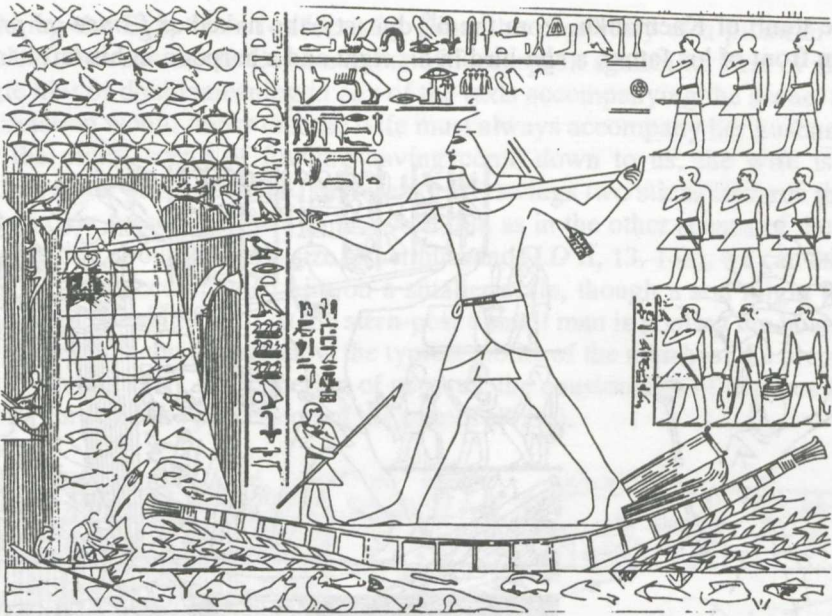


Fig.4

squatting in her own little boat, holding a big lotus- flower in her left hand and brandishing a stick or throw-stick above her head with her right hand. Though she is not mentioned in any of the inscriptions, it would appear that she is indeed the wife of the tomb- owner (Fig.5).

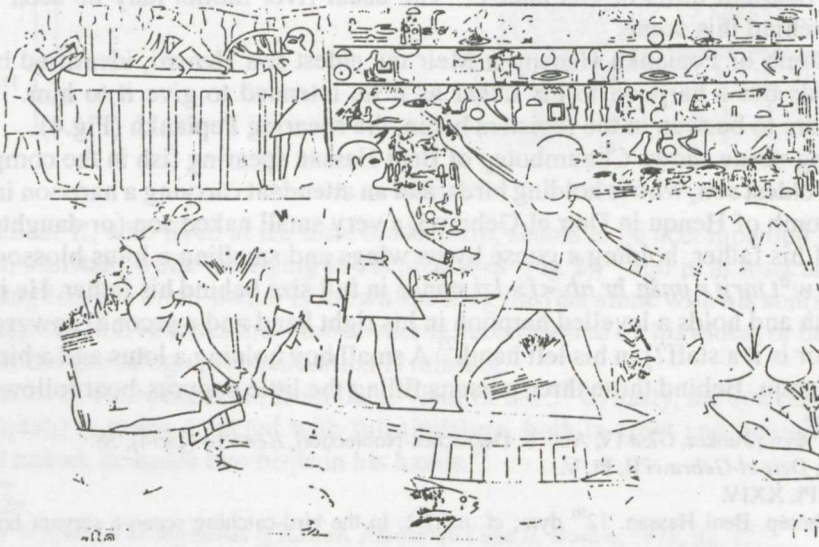


Fig.5



In the tomb of Rashepses of the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty his wife accompanies him, but stands behind him while holding on to her husband (Fig.6). The *z3.f smsw z3b smr z3-ntrw* User, clad in a loin-cloth, stands before his hunting father and holds a throw-stick in his hands as do the three sons or assistants standing in three superimposed registers behind the boat. The latter also hold the prey in their hands.<sup>22</sup> The tomb-owner is shown again gliding in the opposite direction, accompanied only by his son and not taking part in any kind of sport. The registers below this scene show the typical river-motifs, such as the return of the workmen by boat and the crossing of a ford. Presumably, the sons hold the harpoons and throw-sticks in reserve for their father. The fact that their harpoons and throw-sticks are usually smaller than those carried by their father could be due to reasons of representation, though it might express the intention of the sons to take part in the sporting event.

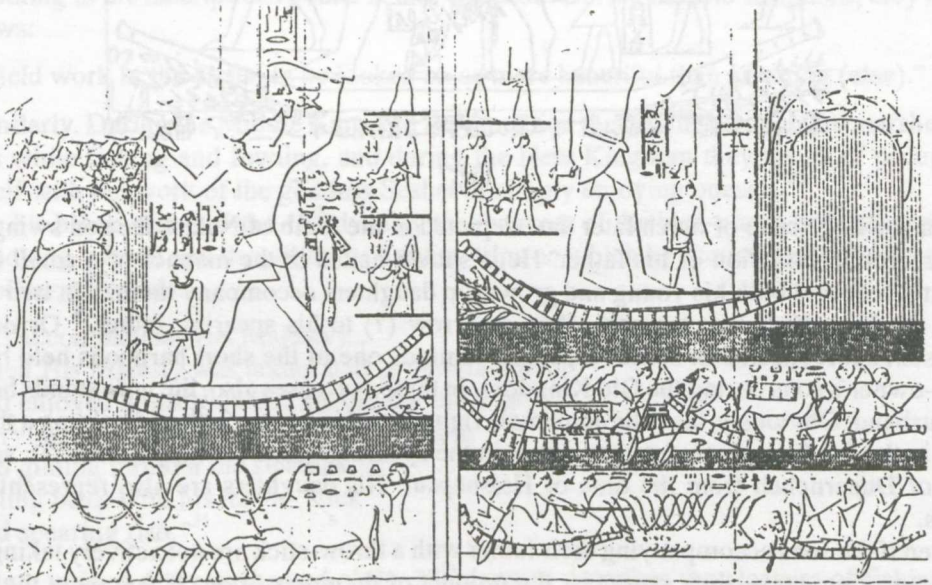


Fig. 6

A scene from the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty tomb of Ini-Snofru-ishedef in Dahshur points to the second interpretation. Here, the fully dressed little son stands before his father, spearing the fish and swinging his boomerang to throw it at the birds. The wife of the tomb-owner stands behind him and holds on to her husband, while the daughter squats between his legs in the bottom of the boat.<sup>23</sup>

In Deir el-Gebrawi the tomb-owner Aba is not only accompanied by his wife, daughters and sons on his fishing-party, but also by his eldest brother (Fig.7).<sup>24</sup>

22) Gisa; LD II, BL. 60.

23) Dahshur. 6<sup>th</sup> dyn.; CG 1775.

24) Deir el-Gebrawi I, Pl. III.

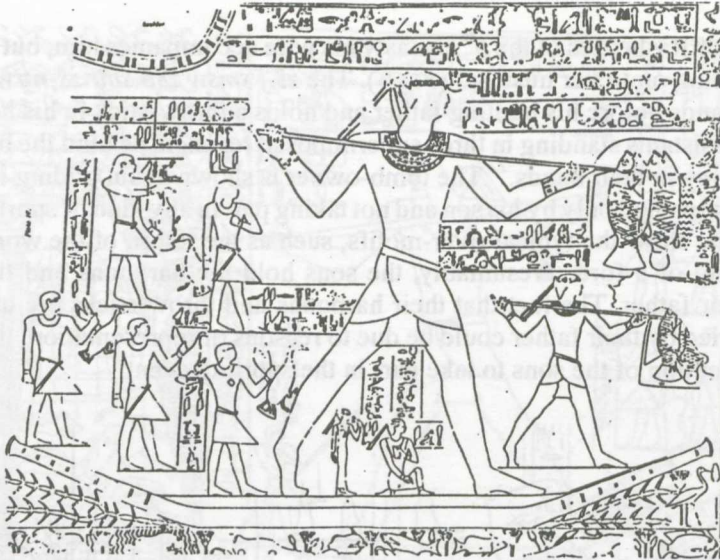


Fig. 7

In a fowling scene of much later date depicted in the tomb of Nakht, the son swings his throw-stick in imitation of his father. He is shown naked in the manner of a small child. Nakht's wife and both his young and grown-up daughters accompany them.<sup>25</sup> In two cases from the New Kingdom the son offers an arrow (?) to his spearing father.<sup>26</sup> Or does it represent short spears? In some respects it reminds one of the short harpoons held by the tomb-owner's sons during the Old Kingdom. In these two cases also, the wife stands behind her husband. Obviously, the little adult male figures clad in a loin-cloth and holding a throw-stick in the fowling-scene, resp. an arrow in the spearing-scene (of hippopotami?), are the sons of Duaerneheh from the time of Hatshepsut. His daughters are also represented as adults.

Even if the sons accompanying their father with a throw-stick are not actively taking part in the sporting game, they cannot be the product of the procreation. If that were the case, they certainly would not be holding the tool of reproduction or even use it themselves.

The sons shown spearing fish could not possibly be considered as procreators themselves, while the brother accompanying Aba does not fit into this context at all. And last not least: the position of the wife behind her husband, whose action is directed forwards, definitely speaks against the theory of Westendorf. As the goal of the action she should be standing in front of her husband.

The words of the adult „beloved daughter Mer (...)”, standing in her father's boat:

25) Davies, *Nakht*, Pl. XXII; Wresz., *Atlas I*, Pl. 174.

26) Both at the time of Amenophis' II. In the tomb of Nebenkemet, TT 256, and the tomb of Neferhotep, TT 257 (here the son holds a second arrow in his other hand).



„sr jn n.j gnw pn – o (thou) Nobleman, get me this oriole”<sup>27</sup>

are more expressive of hunting-pleasure than of a sexual act. They are about the same words as the ones used by Seshseshet when she asks her husband Mereruka „Meri, give me this... bird.” In the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty Pepiankh Heneni answers a similar request from his wife:

„I will do (it), to get (it) for you.”<sup>28</sup>

I. Gamer-Wallert's assumption that the fishing-scene enables resurrection after death through possession of the *tilapia* should be carefully considered.<sup>29</sup> Logically, the same interpretation should then also apply to the fowling-scene since the two scenes belong together and cannot be interpreted separately. As long as it cannot be proved that certain birds are guarantees of resurrection like the *tilapia*, this interpretation is not convincing.

Nothing in the inscriptions points in that direction. During the Old Kingdom, they run as follows:

„Field work in the Delta, to be looked on as more beautiful than anything (else).”

or similarly. During the Middle Kingdom they mention the gliding through the marshes and pools while fishing and fowling, and during the New Kingdom they speak of occupying oneself with the work of the goddess Seshet or simply enjoying oneself.<sup>30</sup>

On his block-statue of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty the overseer of the bird-ponds Sobekhotep talks of enjoying oneself and describes the hunting trips on which he accompanied the king with the following words:

„(I) accompanied (His Majesty)...  
when His Majesty was taking part in entertainment  
and enjoyed himself during his time in the boat,  
ferrying through the marshes of the Fajjum  
and gliding through the swamps,  
killing birds with his throw-stick  
and spearing fish.”<sup>31</sup>

A text written down at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty describes the pleasure of fishing and fowling in the marshes in the following manner:

27) Tomb B 4; time of Amenemhet II; Meir III, Pl. 6; Waltraud Guglielmi, *Reden, Rufe und Lieder ...*, TÄB I, 1973, 152. Guglielmi points to Edel, *Weltenkammer*, NAWG 1963, Nr. 4, 116 who identifies the bird as the oriole or Pirol.

28) Meir V, Pl. XXVIII. Transl. Guglielmi, *op.cit.*, 146 n. 437. Cf. Duell, *Mereruka* I, Pl. 17: Seshseshet says: „Meri, give me this bird.”, cf. Fischer, ZÄS 105 (1978), 45 sq.

29) Ingrid Gamer-Wallert, *Fische und Fischkulte im Alten Ägypten*, ÄA 21, 1970, 128 sq. She interprets the mouth-breeding *lates* as a symbol of rejuvenation. Cf. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Kêmi* 13 (1954), 38-42.

30) Guglielmi, *op.cit.*, 145. Cf. idem., *WdO* 7 (1974), 206-227, especially p.211 with n. 47, and p. 216 sq. with n. 82-84.

31) *Urk.* IV, 1587, 13 sqq.; Guglielmi, *WdO* 7, 218; Wolfgang Decker, *Quellentexte zu Sport und Körperkultur im Alten Ägypten*, Sankt Augustin 1975, 67 Dok. 22.

„A happy day when we go down to the marsh  
that we may snare birds...  
(and catch) many fish in the two waters.  
Let the fowl- and fish-catcher  
and the harpooner come to us,  
that we may draw in the nets  
....our skiff...”

The description of an offering to Sobek, Lord of the Fajjum Lake, follows and then continues:

„A happy day on which we give to everybody  
and our marsh-goddess is propitious.  
We shall bring and shall...  
we shall trap birds by the thousands,  
and shall light a brazier to Sobek,  
it beeing enlarged and expanded...  
(with variety) of roasts upon it,  
consisting of wedj-fish and geese,  
geese upon the fire, red fish upon...  
(namely a fair hecatomb slaughter) of feathers and scales.”

He watches on as the women rouse the birds from the cover and the children hurl throw-sticks at them, while he himself keeps an eye open for fish:

„A fish is pierced by the arrow.  
I kill at every thrust,  
there is no stopping for (my) shaft.  
I make bundles of bulti-fish...”<sup>32</sup>

In both literary texts the worldly hunting pleasure of killing fish and birds is described. The same kind of pleasure is meant when a pupil is warned not to go fowling in the thickets, but to concentrate on learning.<sup>33</sup>

A harim-woman's admonition of a man who has obviously neglected his wife points in the same direction and against the theory of procreation through his wife:

„Go, Au, and see this, thy grief-stricken wife,  
who weeps on account of thee  
because of thy fishing by night  
and thy fowling by day.”<sup>34</sup>

A description from the 22<sup>nd</sup> dyn. points to a festive event:

32) Caminos, *Lit. Frag.*, 7 sqq. and 5 sqq. 1 & 2. Translation by Decker, *op. cit.*, 33 sqq. Doc. 8 & 9.

33) pLansing 2,1; Lichtheim II, 168.

34) Hayes, *JNES* 7 (1948) 8.



„It never happened that I forgot a festive day,  
when I thought of those, lying in the tomb.  
I spend more time 'to sit in leisure'  
and traverse the bird-swamps, by this which I did,  
being drunk with the wine and beer,  
my shoulders being anointed with myrrh.”<sup>35</sup>

According to a Coffin Text the deceased is supposed to enjoy himself in the same way. The sportive hunt which the deceased is supposed to enjoy in the hereafter is being described. After Horus has revived and attended to the needs of his father Osiris, he enables him to move freely:

„May you find the valleys full of water  
for your washings in the cool water.  
May you pluck papyrus- plants,  
rushes, lotuses and lotus-buds.  
There shall come to you waterfowl in thousands,  
lying on your path.  
You cast your throw-stick at them.  
They are thousands felled by its wind...”<sup>36</sup>

In the tomb of Haremheb the activity is also transferred into the hereafter. In the scene of spearing the fish we can read:

„To enjoy oneself, to see the beauties,  
to be active in the work of Seshet,  
which is done there in the necropolis.”<sup>37</sup>

In both texts the events are transferred to the hereafter. The meaning of the activity in the hereafter, and therefore its inclusion in the tomb-decoration, is expressed by an inscription accompanying the scene in the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty tomb of Djau:

„(How nice it is) that Seshet, lady of the catch,  
comes loaded with fish and birds  
to the ka of Djau.”<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, an inscription in the tomb of Aba explains that in the work of Seshet, the fishing and spearing is done for his ka.<sup>39</sup> In the corresponding scene in the tomb of Senbi, assistants

35) CG 42231; Jansen-Winkel, *Biographie*, 196.

36) CT I, 269, sq.; partly Grapow, *ZAS* 47 (1910), 132 sqq.

37) Annelies und Artur Brack, *Das Grab des Haremheb*, TT 78, AV 35, 1980, S. 60 have – contrary to Helck (*Übers. Urk.* IV, 1593, 14-18) – given the right contents of the text, but they interpret it on p. 87 in the sense of Westendorf.

38) *Deir el-Gebrawi* II, Pl. V; Guglielmi, *op.cit.*, 209.

39) *Deir el-Gebrawi* I, Pl. III.

bring him birds as gifts (*jnw*) of Seshet for his ka.<sup>40</sup> In the tombs of Meir we can see birds and cattle or hunting game being brought to the deceased near the hunting- scene.

The inscription in the tomb of Ankhtifi in Moalla points in the same direction:

„Catch hold (i.e. spear at the head(?)), grasp it!  
The lady of the good offering cultivates the field  
for the ka of Ankhtifi, the excellent justified (one).“<sup>41</sup>

All these texts show that the deceased wants to catch fish and birds in the netherworld as he did in this world. The meaning of the scene is to be sought in the deceased's wish for pleasure as well as in his need of sustenance in the hereafter. This is why it was so popular in tomb decoration.

It has been stated that the skirt worn by the hunting tomb-owner is identical to the shendit of the king and that the scene therefore cannot depict an event of daily life, but must have a symbolic sporting value which the tomb-owner took over from the king. First of all, it should be noted that there are hardly any pictures of the king engaged in this kind of sport. The one and earliest scene always referred to has been preserved in the temple of Sahure. But the relief showing Sahure is not the first representation of that kind. The scene in the tomb of Nebemakhet, the son of Khefren and Meresankh III, cannot be later than the time of Mykerinos. This shows that the theme was already used by the nobles during the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Thus the theory that the scene was first used by Sahure and subsequently adopted by the nobles cannot be upheld. Only the second oldest scene from a private tomb belongs to the time of Sahure, i.e. the tomb of Neferiretenef from Saqqara, now in Brussels. Furthermore, the tomb-owner does not always wear the short skirt and, in cases where he does wear it, the front-part differs from the one of the shendit. Bonnet has already pointed out that the skirt with the trapezoid front-part is in no way the royal skirt, but rather that both skirts originated in the working kilt which allowed the necessary freedom of movement for sports.<sup>42</sup>

Keyser<sup>43</sup> draws our attention to the fact that throw-sticks were found in the royal tombs of the New Kingdom,<sup>44</sup> in the temple of Hathor in Serabit el-Khadim<sup>45</sup> and in the sacred lakes of the temple of Deir el-Bahari.<sup>46</sup> He rightly concludes from the latter that the king or

40) *El Berscheh* I, Pl. XX. Otherwise the gifts brought to the ka of the deceased consist of birds and cattle (*Meir* I, Pl. II-III; *Meir* II, Pl. XI), only cattle (*Meir* III, Pl. IV) and other kinds of fowl (*Meir* III, Pl. V).

41) Vandier translates *šḥr šḥt* with „(car) Sekhet frappe (des victimes)“. Guglielmi, following him, connects the scene with the killing of the rhinoceros in the Temple of Edfu. But *šḥr šḥt* has the meaning of „das Feld bestellen = to cultivate the fields“ (*Wb* IV, 257, 19: as the field from which the deceased gets his food is *šḥt* in *Pyr.* 1217, cf. also *BD* 173,16). In this case, it might refer to the seeds being thrown on the ground.

42) Hanns Bonnet, *Die Ägyptische Tracht bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches*, UGAÄ 7, 1964, 10. Staehelin, *Tracht*, 1 & 250 sqq. points to Bonnet, but mentions the similarity with the royal skirt.

43) Keyser, *CdE* 43 (1947), 42 sqq.

44) CG 46404-46418 Thutmoses IV, CG 24331-24347 Amenophis III. and Carter, *Tut-ench-Amun* III, Pl. 74-75. The returning boomerang was already known in Ancient Egypt, cf. Felix Hess, *Boomerangs, Aerodynamics and Motion*, Groningen 1975, 69 sqq. with quotations from Lane Fox, 1872, 324 and Hayes, *Scepter* I, 284 and reconstructions of boomerangs in the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

45) W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, London 1906, Fig. 144 [3].

46) Marcelle Werbrouck, *Le Temple d'Hatchepsout à Deir el Bahari*, Bruxelles 1949, 37.



his deputy performed ritual ceremonies involving fishing and fowling on the sacred lakes. In connection with the passage from the Negative Confession stating:

„I have not taken birds from the swamps of the gods  
and have caught no fish in their lagune,”

he comes to the conclusion that the deceased, in the tomb scenes, identifies himself with the king.<sup>47</sup> But he forgets to mention that the throw-sticks from the sacred lakes in Deir el-Bahari and Serabit el-Khadim were made of fayence and could thus only be used for symbolic fowling. The fayence throw-sticks should be distinguished from the wooden ones found in the Royal Tombs. The latter could have been used by the king in this world at a sporting game or be put at his disposal for hunting in the netherworld. The negation of having taken fish from the sacred lakes does not specify how those fish were caught, and I therefore cannot follow Keyser's arguments. The fact that this kind of fishing and fowling was performed as a worldly sport as well as a ritual act in ceremonies does not exclude the possibility that the nobleman could engage in the same kinds of sports. As it also contributes to the physical sustenance of the deceased with fish and fowl, this could explain the inclusion of the scene in the decoration of the passage in Theban Tombs.

47) Keyser, *op.cit.*, 48 sq. He is followed by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, *On Egyptian Representations of Hippopotamus Hunting as a Religious Motive*, Uppsala 1953, 42, and others.