

The Decoration of the Rock-cut Chapel of Khety II at Asyut*

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Abstract

The main interest of this article is the publication and study of the remaining decoration of the rock-cut chapel of the First Intermediate Period nomarch of the 13th nome of Upper Egypt, Khety II at Asyut. Facsimile drawings are produced for the first time and the previous hand copies of the tomb decoration are emended. Studying the military scene and the content of Khety II's biographical inscription in view of the recent discoveries at the site led up to some significant historical conclusions.

1 Introduction

Asyut emerged as the most important military stronghold in Upper Egypt during the latter part of the First Intermediate Period. It was allied with the northern kingdom of Herakleopolis and deeply involved in the final stages of the civil war between Herakleopolis and their Theban rivals¹. Much of our historical information dealing with this war which finally led to the reunification of Egypt by Mentuhotep II: Nebhepetre, is derived from the two Siutian tombs of Iti-ibi (Tomb III; N12.1)² and his probable son Khety II³ (Tomb IV; N12.2)⁴. According to D. Franke⁵, Iti-ibi served under the father of the Tenth Dynasty Herakleopolitan king Merikare. Allied with Merikare's father⁶, Iti-ibi was involved in the invasion of Thinis⁷, which corresponds to the "rebellion of Thinis" dated

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¹ For an analytical study of the historical documents dealing with the different stages of this civil war, see: J. Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für Merikare*, GOF IV/23, 1992, 98–113. For the related historical events up to the reunification of Egypt by Nebhepetre, see: L. Gestermann, *Kontinuität und Wandel in Politik und Verwaltung des frühen Mittleren Reiches in Ägypten*, GOF IV/18, 1987, 17–47.

² PM IV, 263; Griffith, *Siut*, III [1–71]. For the new numbering system adopted for mapping Asyut cemetery, according to which the tomb of Iti-ibi is numbered (N12.1) and that of Khety II is numbered (N12.2), see: J. Kahl / M. El-Khadragy / U. Verhoeven, in: SAK 34, 2006, 241–42.

³ In col. 19 of his biographical inscription, Khety II states that he is the son of Iti-ibi. Separated from each other by a partition wall, and having biographical inscriptions of identical character, Iti-ibi and Khety II were most probably a father and a son.

⁴ PM IV, 263–64.

⁵ D. Franke, in: SAK 14, 1987, 52.

⁶ Identifying the father of Merikare is disputed, and several names are suggested, e.g., *W3h-k3-r* (A. Scharff, *Der historische Abschnitt der Lehre für König Merikarê*, SBAW 8, 1936, 7–10; A. Volten, *Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften: Die Lehre für König Merikarê* (Pap. Carlsberg VI) und die Lehre des Königs Amenemhat, *AnAe* 4, 1945, 82–84), *Nb-k3-r* (J. von Beckerath, in: *ZÄS* 93, 1966, 20; H. Goedicke, in: *MDAIK* 24, 1969, 142) and *Mrj-jb-r* (J. Lopez, in: *RdE* 25, 1973, 190–91); cf. Quack, *Merikare*, 107.

⁷ The only available source referring to this invasion is the literary composition known as "Teachings for King Merikare", in which the father says: „I attacked Thinis (straight to) its southern border at T3wt, I engulfed it like a flood“ (M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*, 1973, 102 [73–74]; Quack, *Merikare*, 42–43, 179 [73–74]). For identifying the afore-mentioned place name T3wt, see: F. Gomaà, *Die Besiedlung Ägyptens während des Mittleren Reiches I*, TAVO Beiheft B/ 66 [1], 1986, 217–18. In his fragmentary biography,

to the 14th year of Nebhepetre⁸. In the next phase of this war⁹, Nebhepetre recaptured Thinis after his 14th year and before his 39th year¹⁰, and advanced northwards to the border line between the Tenth and Eleventh nomes of Upper Egypt wherein the locality known as *jnt Hẓj*¹¹. Rich information of the later phase of the war comes from the biography of Khety II, the nomarch of the 13th nome of Upper Egypt during the reign of Merikare. This biography, the scene of the marching soldiers and the fragmentary preserved inscriptions of the upper part of the southern outer pillar are the only remaining decorations of Khety II's tomb-chapel, which constitute the focal point of this study.

The remaining part of Khety II's biography occupies the easternmost third of the northern wall of his unfinished single-roomed rock-cut chapel¹², while the unfinished scene of the marching soldiers decorates the central part of the chapel's southern wall. The lost façade with the two thicknesses of the entrance doorway were inscribed with titles, epithets, offering formulae, warning to the visitors, ideal biography and some self-eulogizing phrases of historical interest. Two pairs of standing figures of the tomb owner were also among the decoration of both the façade and door thicknesses.

The decoration of this tomb was first copied by the French epigraphic Expedition to Egypt in 1799¹³. The publication of *Description de l'Égypte* followed by the decipherment of the hieroglyphic writing led some interested Nineteenth Century scholars to Asyut, producing copies and extracts of the tomb's decoration¹⁴. Consulting the earlier copies, F. LI. Griffith published a hand copy of the tomb's inscriptions in 1889¹⁵. P. Montet, amending Griffith's publication, produced another hand copy of the then remaining tomb inscriptions¹⁶. The lost inscriptions of the destroyed façade were the subject of a valuable study by E. Edel¹⁷, in which he sought to amend the published copy of *Description de l'Égypte* relying partly on the unpublished copy of J.G. Wilkinson¹⁸, and mainly on his long experience with the hieroglyphic writing.

Fortunately, two fragmentary papyri in hieroglyphic script dated roughly to the second century A.D. were found in Tebtunis on the southern fringe of Fayum in 1931, and were published later

Iti-ibi reports two successful battles against the Southern Nomes which had banded together from Elephantine to Thinis (Griffith, *Siût III* [16–37]; Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, § 60 [16–37], 79–81). For identifying Thinis in the forgoing inscription, see: Montet, *Géographie II*, 100; Gomaà, *Besiedlung I*, 197; K. Zibelius, *Ägyptische Siedlungen nach Texten des Alten Reiches*, TAVO Beiheft B/19, 1978, 281–82.

⁸ The main source referring to this rebellion dated to the 14th year of Nebhepetre is the stela of Intef: British Museum 1203 (Clère / Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire*, § 23, 19; Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, § 374, 226–28).

⁹ Franke, in: SAK 14, 1987, 52–53.

¹⁰ The reunification of Egypt by Nebhepetre is suggested to be some time between his 14th and 39th years (Quack, *Merikare*, 106).

¹¹ For *jnt Hẓj*, see: Gomaà, *Besiedlung I*, 243–44.

¹² For the architectural features of the tomb, see: M. El-Khadragy, in: BACE 17, 2006, 79ff. Excavating the tomb's forecourt, two small side chambers were lately discovered to the north and south of the central axis leading to the chapel's entrance, for which see: Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: SAK 36, 2007, 81–103.

¹³ Commission des monuments d'Égypte: *Description de l'Égypte ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française IV*, Antiquités: Plates, 1817, pls. 46 [1–8], 48 [3–5], 49 [1–4]; Antiquités: Descriptions, 1818, 125–57.

¹⁴ For those scholars, see: PM IV, 263.

¹⁵ Griffith, *Siût*, 11, pls. 13–14, 20 [upper].

¹⁶ P. Montet, in: *Kêmi* 3, 1930–35, 98–106.

¹⁷ E. Edel, *Die Inschriften der Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber in Mittelägypten aus der Herakleopolitenzeit*, ARWAW 71, 1984, 67–156; cf. Franke, in: SAK 14, 1987, 49–60.

¹⁸ John Gardner Wilkinson's copy is now in the possession of the Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum.

in 1998 by J. Osing¹⁹. Producing the now fragmentary copies of the inscriptions belonging to the walls and façades of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom tomb-chapels at Asyut, Osing used Khety II's fragmentary copy in reproducing the lost façade inscriptions of *Description de l'Égypte* and the related reconstruction of Edel²⁰. In fact, the practice of copying extracts of the hieroglyphic inscriptions decorating the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom tombs at Asyut, including the tomb of Khety II, is attested no later than the beginning of the New Kingdom²¹, and the frequent visits of scribes and school pupils with their teachers to the cemetery of Asyut are attested by the extensive graffiti written or drawn on the walls and pillars of the recently discovered tomb of Iti-ibi-iqer at the cemetery of Asyut²².

Nevertheless, the remaining part of the chapel's decoration has never been adequately recorded, neither photographically nor in facsimile drawings, and the recent discoveries in Asyut cemetery, including the tomb of Iti-ibi-iqer which was prepared for him by his son Mesehti-iqer, the direct successors of Khety II, who successively governed the 13th nome of Upper Egypt during the late First Intermediate Period might lead to a rather different explanation of the tomb's biographical inscription, and might reveal some of the still obscure historical events concerned with Asyut during that stormy period²³.

2 Representations and Inscriptions

2.1 The Northern wall (Figs. 1–3; Pls. 1–2)

All hieroglyphs on this wall are incised and filled with blue paint, the remnants of which are still visible, while the human figures are executed in sunk-relief with no trace of colour preserved. An incised *hkr*-frieze surmounting incised rectangles constitutes the upper border of the wall decoration. The first five columns of the biographical inscription are completely lost, much of columns 6–18 are also lost, while parts of columns 19–22 and 25–28 are damaged. Of the represented figures, the lower parts are destroyed by a later incompletely cut niche, while the eyes and hands are much damaged owing to the pitted rock surface therein.

To the left stands the tomb owner, facing right. He wears a shoulder-length wig, a beard, a broad collar, a bracelet around his remaining right wrist, a sash across his breast and a short, projecting kilt, and holds a long staff in his left hand and a *hwp*-sceptre in his right. In front of his face is the label identifying him in three vertical lines of hieroglyphs oriented towards the right,

¹⁹ J. Osing, in: J. Osing / G. Rosati (eds.), *Papiri geroglifici e ieratici da Tebtynis*, 1998, 55–100, pls. 6–13; cf. S. Quirke, in: *JEA* 89, 2003, 283–87.

²⁰ Osing, *Tebtynis*, 69–79.

²¹ See for example: Edel, *Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber*, 188–96; J. Kahl, *Siut – Theben. Zur Wertschätzung von Traditionen im alten Ägypten*, PÄ 13, 1999, *passim*.

²² Much of the scribes' graffiti is stereotyped in the formula „The scribe ... came to see the beautiful temples of ... in Asyut ...“, while teachings, prophecies, hymns, etc. are attested for pupils learning classical school texts (J. Kahl, in: *GM* 211, 2006, 25–29; Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: *SAK* 36, 2007, 81–103). For this discovery see the following note.

²³ The tomb was discovered by the members of the joint Egyptian-German expedition known as “The Asyut Project”, and will be published by the author, J. Kahl, and U. Verhoeven. The tomb bears our number (N13.1), and was constructed for „the hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of the priests of Wepwawet, Lord of Asyut, the overseer of the priests of Anubis, Lord of Ra-qereret, the overseer of the army of the whole 13th nome of Upper Egypt, Iti-ibi-iqer“ by his son, „the hereditary prince, the count, the overseer of the priests of Wepwawet, Lord of Asyut, the overseer of the priests of Anubis, Lord of Ra-qereret, Mesehti-iqer“. For a preliminary report concerned with this discovery, see: Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: *SAK* 36, 2007, 84–87.

they read: (1) *jrj p^ct h³ty-^c htm³tj-bjtj smr w^ctj* (2) *hrj-tp ^c3 n Ndft²⁴* (3) *w³h tpj t³ Htjj* – „(1) The hereditary prince, the count, the sealer of the king of Lower Egypt, the sole companion, (2) the great overlord of the 13th Nome of Upper Egypt, (3) the enduring one on earth, Khety“. Behind him stands a woman wearing long wig, long tight fitting garment with shoulder straps and collar. Her left arm extends forward with unpreserved hand, while her right arm hangs by her side with a tight fist hand. She is identified in three vertical columns of hieroglyphs above her head reading right to left: (1) *hkrt nswt w^ctt hm(t)-ntr Hwt-hr²⁵* (2) *jm³wt=s nt* (3) *r^c nb jm³hjt²⁶ Jt(=j)-jb(=j)²⁷* – „(1) The sole ornamented one of the king, the priestess of Hathor, (2) her well-disposed one of (3) every day, the honoured one, Iti-ibi“.

In front of the tomb owner and his female companion is the autobiographical inscription, which was originally arranged in 34 vertical columns orientated towards right²⁸. Following the same numbers adopted by Griffith, and reconstructing the missing parts after his publication²⁹, the text reads:

(1) [*m ... sp³wt qrh^t³⁰ nt rk ntr*] ... (2) ... [*w m*] ... (3) [*m^ct nswt-bjt Mrjj-k³-R^c*] ... (4) [*n tnw=s n^h r-d^b³¹ mwt (?) rdj sw³ (?)*] ... (5) [*m w³wt ht t³ n pr-hd=s n hzj tw*] ... (6) *n [Nn-nswt shr=k³² h³kw-jb h³h]* ... (7) *nb jdbw[j ntr mrw.tj šwt nt t³ r-dr=f]* ... (8) *n hq³ hq³ hq³w [z³ hq³ z³ z³t hq³ qrh^t nt jzw^t]* ... *hq³* (9) *db^ct nt zp tpj [s^ch nd mjt看 w.w(j) jb n mr.n=k ... k³-R^c ...]*³³

²⁴ Unlike the biographical inscription of Iti-ibi, the name of the nome lacks here the distinctive adjective *hntt* (cf. Griffith, *Sift III* [21]). However, although both the 13th and 14th nomes of Upper Egypt had the same designation *Ndft*, Khety II, in his biographical inscription, did not claim a jurisdiction beyond the 13th nome of Upper Egypt (cf. Gomaà, *Besiedlung I*, 262–64).

²⁵ The title *hm(t)-ntr Hwt-hr* lacks here the honorific transposition for Hathor, a feature which is attested in some examples ranging in date from the late Old Kingdom to the first part of the Twelfth Dynasty. For parallels and the other known priestesses of Hathor at Asyut up to the Middle Kingdom, see: M. El-Khadragy, in: SAK 35, 2006, 155 [5], 153–54, n. 40. For the cult of Hathor at Asyut, see: S. Allam, *Beiträge zum Hathorkult bis zum Ende des Mittleren Reiches*, MÄS 4, 1963, 95–96. For a comprehensive study of the priestesses of Hathor, lacking those of Asyut, see: R. Gillam, in: JARCE 32, 1995, 211–37.

²⁶ The voice change from *w>jj* attested here for the epithet *jm³hjt* proves that the tomb was not inscribed before the first change of Nebhepetre's Horus-name from *Sⁿh-jb-tšwj* into *Nhrj-hdt*, i.e., between his 14th and 39th years (W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien*, *Bonner Orientalistische Studien*, NS 13, 1962, § 16 [b], 51, § 58 [i], 144; Gestermann, *Kontinuität und Wandel in Politik und Verwaltung des frühen Mittleren Reiches*, 42).

²⁷ For this suggested reading of the name, which is attested for both men and women, see: D. Spanel, in: Or 58, 1989, 312–14.

²⁸ For the previous translations which are regularly consulted here, see: H. Brunner, *Die Texte aus den Gräbern der Herakleopolitenzeit von Siut*, ÄF 5, 1937, 27–35; Winlock, *Rise and Fall*, 23 [cols. 10–18]; Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, § 64, 86–89; Edel, *Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber*, 178–83 [cols. 15–16]; Franke, in: SAK 14, 1987, 59–60 [cols. 9–19]; É. Doret, *The Narrative Verbal System of Old and Middle Egyptian*, 1986, 163 (Exx. 295–296) [cols. 19–20, 31–34]; Quack, *Merikare*, 110–11 [cols. 9–19].

²⁹ Griffith, *Sift*, IV [1–34].

³⁰ According to Gardiner, *qrht* is clearly a spirit of a place or a family, conceived of in the form of a serpent, and the princes of ancient race regarded themselves as embodying the family spirit in their own persons (Admonitions, 55–56 [7, 5]; cf. Edel, *Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber*, 151–53). A related form of this epithet is attested for *Nhrj I*, the nomarch of the Hare Nome, who is described in his sixth year graffito at Hatnub: *qrht zpt ht t³ pn rmt nbt wsš* (Anthes, *Hatnub*, no. 20; cf. nos. 23, 26), the epithet which D. Doxey translates „Prince of an ancient family in this land, everyone (else) having died out“ (Egyptian Non-Royal Epithets in the Middle Kingdom: A Social and Historical Analysis, PÄ 12, 1998, 388).

³¹ For the reading, see: Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, 86, n. [c].

³² For the irregular usage of the second person pronoun in the narrative sequence here instead of the usual first person, see: Doret, *Verbal System*, 14; Brunner, *Siut*, 30, n. 1, 35. The second person pronoun in the first 19 cols. refers to king Merikare, and otherwise to Khety II (Doret, *Verbal System*, 163, n. 1961).

³³ The lacuna is reconstructed here *Mrjj-k³-R^c r*.



jrt.n=k n (10) *tzwt=k jr.n=k dj[j snd ht t3 sb3.n=k Šm^cw hr=f w^cjj rdj.n=k hntj=f k]fj n=f* (11) *pt t3 r dr=f h[n^c=f h3tjw^c nw Šm^cw bw3w nw Nn-nswt w^crt n]t hnwt t3³⁴ jj.t(j)* (12) *r hsf h^cd3 [t3 hr sd3 Šm^cw hr md3b rmt nb hr ssd njwwt hr] s^cb3* (13) *snd w3 [r h^cw=sn qnb³⁵ nt pr^c3 n sndt jmjw-st-jbw n šfjt] nt Nn-nswt* (14) *t3 hwt m [ns(r)wt=s qsn m-hr prt=s r s^c3 pt r jdb(?)=s hr] n[t]t mr pw* (15) *n hq3 [n p3(w) zp=s jw^t h3t h^cw r Š3s-htp³⁶ phwj=f r W-hwj³⁷ pt] m swt³⁸ [nt]* (16) *mhj[t w3dw h3jj hr mw mnj.n Nn-nswt njwt hr jj.w(j) h^c.tj m nb=s] z3 nb=s hm[w]t³⁹* (17) *šbn [m t3w j3w hr hrdrw z3 hq3 ph.n=f njwt=f ^cq r prw] jt=f nwj[=f]* (18) *tšwtjw m pr=sn qr[s=f j3jtt=f wn.n z m st=f] njwtjw hr sd3sw⁴⁰* (19) *nw nhh mn rwd mr.w(j) tw ntr[=k njwtjw Jt(=j)-jb(=j)] z3 Htjj hn.n=f tw dg3=f⁴¹ n m-[ht] r* (20) *sm3w hwt-ntr=f r [zt jnbw] n n[hh] z3tw⁴² nw zp⁴³ tp(j) r md q3hwt n(t) jswt* (21) *hw pt nt jr pt⁴⁴ qdt.n⁴⁵ [Pth m db^cw=f sn]tt.n Dhw^tj n Wp-w3wt nb Z3wtj*


³⁴ According to Franke, *hnwt t3* „Queen of the land“ should be understood as a designation of the residence, which probably refers here to the district of Memphis rather than Herakleopolis (SAK 14, 1987, 55, n. 10).


³⁵ A *qnbt* is mentioned in the biography of *‘nh.tj.fj* of Mo‘alla, where he states that he made the *qnbt* of the overseer of Upper Egypt which was at Thinis come to confer with (his predecessor and probable father) *Htp* (Vandier, Mo‘alla, 186 [5 II, 3–8, 2]). Another reference to the *qnbt* is attested from a fragmentary stela dated to the reign of Intef II (*W3h-‘nh*), where its unknown owner mentions some petitioners in the *qnbt* concerning the House of Khety (Fischer, in: JEA 61, 1975, 35–37, fig. 3, pl. 16 [2]). Interesting is the reference to the northern kingdom of Herakleopolis as the “House of Khety” on the afore-mentioned stela; this designation is attested twice again from other Eleventh Dynasty Theban documents (Clère / Vandier, Première période intermédiaire, § 18 [2], § 30 [3]; Fisher, in: JEA 61, 1975, 36–37 [g]; cf. Gomaà, Besiedlung I, 355–56).


³⁶ For identifying *Š3s-htp* with the modern town Shutb, which is situated ca. 5.5 km. to the south of Asyut and belonged to the 11th nome of Upper Egypt, see: Gomaà, Besiedlung I, 250–51.



³⁷ For the reading, see: Edel, Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber, 182. This unknown place belonged probably to the 11th nome of Upper Egypt. For other possible readings, see: Gomaà, Besiedlung I, 252. On his part, Franke identifies this place with “Wadi Hzf”, the border line between the 10th and 11th nomes of Upper Egypt, which constituted the northernmost limit of the Theban domain at the end of the reign of Intef II (*W3h-‘nh*) and the early part of Nebhepetre’s reign (SAK 14, 1987, 52).

³⁸ In the publication of Griffith,  should be corrected to  (Siût, IV [15]; cf. Montet, in: Kémi 3, 101 [15]).

³⁹ As correctly pointed out by Spanel, the phonogram  used for *hmwt* shows here and in cols. 25 and 33 a certain deviation from the standard shape of the sign, so as to resemble the female genitalia having a slit extending upwards from its curved bottom. This Palaeographic feature characterizes Asyut inscriptions during the Herakleopolitan Period (Or 58, 1989, 310–11 with refs.).


⁴⁰ The unidentifiable determinative of *sd3sw* in the copies of both Griffith (Siût, IV [18]) and Montet (Kémi 3, 1930–35, 101 [18]) is the book-roll .

⁴¹ The  sign of *dg3* shows here neither its usual bottom line nor its characteristic interior triangle, a Palaeographic feature which has already been noticed by Spanel for this tomb and other Herakleopolitan tomb inscriptions at Asyut (Or 58, 1989, 311 with refs.).

⁴²  of Griffith’s copy should be corrected into  (Siût, IV [19]; cf. Montet, in: Kémi 3, 1930–35, 102 [19]).


⁴³ For the reading *zp*, see: E. Blumenthal, Untersuchungen zum ägyptischen Königtum des Mittleren Reiches I: Die Phraseologie, ASAW 61, 1, 1970, 118; Doret, Verbal System, 163 [Ex. 295].

⁴⁴ For *hw pt nt jrj pt* as a name of the temple of Wepwawet at Asyut, see: Gomaà, Besiedlung I, 269. Noteworthy are the New Kingdom remains found in 1930 and probably belonging to the temple of Wepwawet at Asyut (S. Gabra, in: CdE 6, 1931, 237–243; cf. Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: SAK 33, 2005, 165–166). Of some interest is locating the temple to the south-west of the ancient town by some demotic documents dated to the Persian Period (D. Magee, Asyut to the End of the Middle Kingdom: A Historical and Cultural Study I, [microfilmed Ph. D. Thesis] (Oxford, 1988), 203 with ref.).

⁴⁵ The determinative of *qd* , which usually shows a man building a wall with both hands, was irregularly formed here showing the man with his near hand hanging by his side instead of being active in the building process. This Palaeographic feature, which is also attested for other Herakleopolitan inscriptions at Asyut, has been recognized by Spanel (Or 58, 1989, 312 with refs.).

m wd nswt (22) *hq3 t3wj nswt-bjt Mrjj-k3-R^c 46 jr.tw mnw⁴⁷ n [Wp-w3wt] ntr [c3] b3w [jr=f] n=f hhw nw rnpwt whm=f hbw-sd⁴⁸ (23) m hrpt rh.n nswt Jt(=j)-jb(=j) z3 Htjj hrj-tp^{c3} n Šm^cw mk wnn rn=k r nhh m hwt-ntr (24) nt [Wp-w3wt] s[h3]=k nfr(w) m jwnjtt⁴⁹ dd sw kt ht n kt {n kt}⁵⁰ h3t jr m-h3t mjn[=ff]⁵⁰ (25) m rnpwt kt šnt r-s3 kt šnt m^cnh w3h tp t3 wnn=k m hmsjw tp n jr n=k ... [f] st=k (26) nt sndm r jtw=k hprw m-h3t [3]w=f m qb^cw=f^c wj=k hr [h3wt(?)⁵¹ ... hr] htp (27) hntjj drp n=k špswt jhw rnpw zwr=k [h]3w n js...t ... 3w jb=k (28) r-gs šmsw=f² rdj=k (s)3h (?)⁵³ h3jj=k r-hnt m s^chw nw rk ntr jn.t(w)=k [š3]... r hr]t-jb=k (29) 3w=k n mrjj=k rš.w(j) wrw nw rk=k hprw n tzt=k 3w.w(j) jb n špswt=k hnrw[t]⁵⁴ (30) n Wp-w3wt m3w mnw=k m hwt-ntr nswt hr (dd): jr w3h hwt-ntr jj.t(w) hr jht=s⁵⁵ ph.n (31) nfrw=s pt nfr.w(j) hrpt m h3jj=k hr.w(j) njwt hr[=k] wnt š3t(t) m hr n [rmtw] (32) jr.n=k st hr tm3 rdj.n=k Z3wtj hr sd3s m s[h]r=k w^c.t(j) sdr rmtw nb r*


⁴⁶ For the metathesis of the *k3* and *mrjj* signs in the name of Merikare, which is well attested in the Herakleopolitan Period, see: Spanel, in: Or 58, 1989, 302, n. 4; idem, in: GM 78, 1984, 89–90, n. 29–31.



⁴⁷ The book-roll determinative  used for *mnw* here and in col. 30, and for other words in cols. 30–32, 34 shows no ties, the feature which has already been recognized for the inscriptions dated up to the end of the Eleventh Dynasty (Schenkel, Frühmittelägyptische Studien, § 2, 27–28; Spanel, in: Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson II, MFA, 1996, 767; idem, in: Or 58, 1989, 309). Noteworthy is the missing three vertical strokes determinative of *mnw* in Griffith's copy (Siût, III [22]; cf. Montet, in: Kêmi 3, 1930–35, 102 [22]).



⁴⁸ The text alludes here to the association of Wepwawet with the royal Sed-festival. This association is pictorially documented as early as the Fifth Dynasty, where a number of Wepwawet standards are shown carried or planted in the ground in the Sed-festival reliefs of Neuserre from his temple at Abû Ghurâb. For this association and the probable role assigned to the jackal god during the Sed-festival, see: T. DuQuesne, in: Discussions in Egyptology 57, 2003, 22–23 with refs.

⁴⁹ According to Magee, this passage probably implies that a statue or a stela of Khety II was placed in the hypostyle hall of Wepwawet's temple (Asyût I, 206). However, more statues of the tomb owner were mentioned in the "warning to the visitors", which was inscribed on the chapel's lost façade (Edel, Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber, 128–29 [col. 68], fig. 15). Depositing private statues in the temple of Wepwawet at Asyut is confirmed by the inscriptions of the Twelfth Dynasty nomarch Djefaihapi I (Griffith, Siût, I [290]).



⁵⁰ For the meaning of *mjn*, see: Schenkel, Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben, § 64, 88, n. [d].

⁵¹ Accepting Brunner's reconstruction of the almost lost sign (Siut, 56 [26]), the still remaining tips accord well with the upper part of the standardized half loaf characterizing the offering table sign , and its possible meaning agrees with the general concept of the passage (see n. 64 below).

⁵² The correct determinative of *šmsw* is  and not  as copied by Griffith (Siût, IV [28]; cf. Montet, in: Kêmi 3, 1930–35, 102 [28]).


⁵³ Most probably, this unidentifiable sign is not  as suggested by Griffith (Siût, IV [28, n. 28a]), and confirmed by Montet (Kêmi 3, 1930–35, 102 [28]). It seems that we have here an incompletely incised sign of some bird with a relatively small head and tall legs. The bird's head is still preserved, but the neck was never been chiseled out. Taking into consideration the incomplete shape of the bird and the probable meaning of this statement, the crested ibis sign  is suggested here, and the reading 3h „spirit“ or (s)3h „glorify“ is adopted. Noteworthy is the association of s3h with s^chw in the ninth contract of Djefaihapi I in his tomb at Asyut. The context refers to the glorification of the honoured dead: *hn^c rdjt nt=sn t3 gmht n hm-k3=f r-s3 s3h=sn sw mj s3h=sn sh^cw=sn* – „and their giving the candle to his ka-servant after they have glorified him as they glorified their dignitary ones“ (Griffith, Siût, I [314]; G. Reisner, in: JEA 5, 1918, 87).

⁵⁴ The title *hnrwt* refers to a company of dancers, singers and clappers attached to the temples of gods after the Old Kingdom (A. Blackman, in: JEA 7, 1921, 16; D. Nord, in: W. Simpson / W. Davies (eds.), Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan: Essays in Honor of Daws Dunham on the Occasion of His 90th Birthday, June 1, 1980, 1981, 137–145). For another suggested function of those *hnrwt* connecting them with the practice of midwifery, see: A. Roth, in: JEA 78, 1992, 113–147.

⁵⁵ For amending the probable scribal error  into , see: Brunner, Siut, 33, n. 49. For the suggested translation, see: Schenkel, Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben, § 64, 88–89 with ref.

*ḥꜥw=f⁵⁶(33) nn ḥ3 nn stt sšr n sh ḥrd r-gs mwt=f nds r-gs hmt=f nn ḥꜥd3 (34) jht m mrrt nn 3wh
r pr=f hr sšm tw ntr=k njwtj jt=k mrr tw*

„(1) ... [nomes, the serpent-spirit of the time of the god] ... (2) ... (3) [Maat. King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Merikare] ... (4) ... [her/its number, who lives instead of dying, who causes to pass] ... (5) [on the ways through the land for its treasury, because ... praises you] ... (6) for [Herakleopolis, you (i.e., Merikare) have overthrown the rebels, efficient (?)] ... (7) Lord of the [Two] Banks (i.e., Egypt), [the well-beloved of the god, shadow of the whole land] ... (8) for the ruler, the ruler of rulers, [the son of ruler, the son of a ruler's daughter, the serpent-spirit of the ancient times] ..., the ruler (9) of the seal of the first time⁵⁷, [the dignitary, few of equals. How joyful is the one whom you loved, Merikare], concerning what you did for (10) your troops!⁵⁸ You acted when [fear] was given [through the land. You instructed Upper Egypt when its face was alone. You caused him to sail upstream]. Sky was [cleared] for him. (11) The whole land was [with him: the counts of Upper Egypt and the magnates of Herakleopolis. The district of] the Queen of the land came (12) to drive away the robber/robbery. [The land trembled, Upper Egypt was bailing (i.e., Upper Egypt was sinking)⁵⁹, every one was flashing (i.e., they were afraid and their behaviour was full of fear), the towns] equipped themselves (with weapons)⁶⁰. (13) Fear fell [into their bodies; the council of the Great House was in fear and the favorites of the majesty] of Herakleopolis (likewise) (?). (14) The land was burnt by [its (i.e., Herakleopolis') flame. It was painful in its coming out (i.e., the troops of Herakleopolis) in order to enlarge the heaven (i.e., their territory) in relation to its shore (i.e., to the south), because] it is a canal (15) of the ruler (?)⁶¹. [Its (i.e., Herakleopolis') fault did not come; the head of the fleet extended to Shutb, and its end to *W-ḥwj*, heaven] was blowing (16) the north wind, [so that papyrus fell on the water. Herakleopolis was landing. “Welcome”, the town (i.e., Asyut) cried jubilantly to its ruler], the son of a ruler. Women (17) were mingled [with men; grown up and children. The ruler's son (i.e., Khety II) reached his town, and entered] his father's (i.e., Iti-ibi) [territory. He] brought (18) the refugees back into their houses. [He buried his old people, the man was in his place (i.e., the respected man was in a proper place)]⁶², and the people of the town were in a good state (19) for ever, and prosperity endured. How [your city]-god loves you, Khety, son of [Iti-ibi]! Because he saw the future, he (i.e., Wepwawet) entrusted you [with] (20) restoring his temple, with [setting up the walls] for [eternity] and the flooring for primeval time, as deep as the ground of yesterday⁶³. (21) (the temple called) „the heaven of the one who made the heaven“, which [Ptah] erected [with his fingers], which Thot [founded] for Wepwawet, lord of Asyut, and was protected by a decree of (22) the king of the

⁵⁶ Having a clear vessel hanging by a rope attached to some elongated vertical object with two upright side-projections, this obscure determinative of *ḥꜥw* resembles some irregular writings of the scribal palette  attested from other sites (e.g., Fischer, Dendera, 179 [d]; E. Brovarski, *The Inscribed Material of the First Intermediate Period from Naga-ed-Dêr*, [microfilmed Ph. D. Thesis] (Chicago, 1989), 786).

⁵⁷ For the translation, see: Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, 86.

⁵⁸ For translating *ḥwt* as „troops“, see: Quack, *Merikare*, 110.

⁵⁹ For this explanation, see: Quack, *Merikare*, 110, n. 21; cf. Schenkel, *Memphis – Herakleopolis – Theben*, 87.

⁶⁰ For translating *sꜥb3* as „equipped with weapons“, see: Quack, *Merikare*, 110.

⁶¹ Translated after Quack (*Merikare*, 110). Perhaps, *mr* refers here to Bahr Yusuf, the waterway to Herakleopolis diverging from the Nile in the neighbourhood of Asyut and running to Fayum. At present, this branch leaves the Main River at Dairût, north of Asyut (K. Butzer, “Bahr Jussuf”, in: *LÄ I*, 601).

⁶² For this explanation, see: Quack, *Merikare*, 111.

⁶³ Following Doret's translation of this passage (*Verbal System*, 163 [Ex. 295]).

Two Lands, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Merikare. Monuments were erected for [Wepwawet], the god [mighty] of power, [that he gives] him (i.e., the king) millions of years, that he continues to hold the Sed-festivals (23) under the direction of the one whom the king knows, Khety, son of Iti-ibi, the great overlord of Upper Egypt. Behold, your name will be in the temple (24) of [Wepwawet] forever, your [memory] will be good in the pillared hall. One generation will hand it over to the next generation. After [he] has honoured (you) (25) with one „hundred of years“ after the other „hundred of years“ in life and duration on earth, you will be among those who are sitting (in the beautiful west/in the pure places which are in heaven) (?)⁶⁴. The best of what was made for you ... [he] will (make?) your residence (26) more (preeminent) than that of your fathers, who lived earlier. He is generous. Your arms will be on the [offering table (?)]. ... (27) after the *špst*-jars and young cattle are offered to you. You will drink a [bowl] of ... You are joyful (28) in the presence of his followers. You caused your praised one to be glorified among the dignitaries of the time of the god⁶⁵. You were brought ... according to your [desire]. (29) You are generous to your beloved one. How glad are the great ones of your time, who became (great) because of your elevation! How joyful are your noblewomen and chantresses (30) of Wepwawet, who saw your monuments in the temple! The king (says): Make the temple endure, one comes because of its condition. Its beauty reached (31) heaven. How beautiful was that which happened in your time! How happy was the city (i.e., Asyut) under [you (i.e., Khety)]! What seemed difficult to [people] (32) you did (it) on the mat (i.e., effortlessly). Through your [counsels] alone you put Asyut in order; with the result that everyone spent the night in his (proper) place, (33) and there was no fighting, no shooting of arrows⁶⁶. The child was not beaten in the presence of his mother or the citizen in the presence of his wife. There was no plundering (34) of properties in the street, and there was no act of violence against his house, because your city-god guided you, your father who loves you“.

2. 2 The South Wall (Figs. 4–5; Pls. 3–4)

The central part of the south wall is devoted to a scene of marching soldiers, which is bordered at top by an incised *hkr*-frieze surmounting incised rectangles. The scene is executed in sunk-relief and shows no trace of colour. The remaining part of the scene depicts three rows of soldiers, the third row of which is unfinished showing the red outlines of one more soldier below the rightmost soldier of the other two rows. More red lines detected above the soldiers of the uppermost row reveal the intention of having inscriptions, identifying probably the scene or some of the represented individuals, which were also left unfinished. Proceeding towards the left, and excluding the first man in the upper row, characterized by holding his arms to his chest being probably the

⁶⁴ It seems possible that cols. 23–26 are mere re-editions of the customary funerary wishes meant to be understood as gifts of Wepwawet for the welfare of Khety II in the afterlife in return for his pious act of restoring the god's temple. These funerary gifts are followed here by offerings and ceremonies, the details of which are unidentifiable because of the lacunae interrupting the text (cols. 26–27). These gifts start here with a promise of attaining a very good old age (cf. Barta, *Opferformel*, 39 [5a]; G. Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, SDAIK 21, 1986, § 341–§ 346, 202–204). The next gift is ambiguous, but it might be related to the funerary wish of joining the honoured ones in the beautiful west or in the pure places which are in heaven (cf. Barta, *Opferformel*, 39 [12 a–c], 40 [33 a, c–d]; Lapp, *Opferformel*, § 82, 53). On the other hand, having a preeminent position in the necropolis seems to be the following gift dealt with in cols. 25–26 (cf. Barta, *Opferformel*, 41 [47 a]).

⁶⁵ Resuming the customary funerary services in the necropolis, in which the „dignitaries of the time of the god“ were buried, is probably meant here; for a halt of these services seems possible during the fight, and afterwards they had to be reorganized such as everything else at Asyut (cols. 31–34).

⁶⁶ For the translation, see: Doret, *Verbal System*, 163 [Ex. 296].

overseer, all the other men hold with their left hands large, full length pointed-top shields⁶⁷ and carry in their right hands long-handled convex-bladed battle-axes. All the warriors have close-cropped hair, and while the foremost man of the upper row wears a short, projecting kilt, no details of the other men's clothes can be recognized because of their body-sized shields, which hide the greater part of their bodies. Regardless of their state of preservation, the upper two rows show remnants of thirteen soldiers each, while the lower register retains remnants of five soldiers out of the originally six soldiers.

Consistent with such troublous time of civil war is such a motif of military implication characterizing Khety II's decoration and some other Herakleopolitan Period tomb-chapels at Asyut⁶⁸. The study of such military scenes might reveal some of the still ambiguous historical events with which we are concerned here. Of these scenes, the local prototype⁶⁹ comes from the lately uncovered painted fragment decorating the northern wall of the chapel of Iti-ibi (Tomb III; N12.1)⁷⁰. This fragment depicts a hand-to-hand combat, in which a warrior smites the head of a kneeling enemy with some unidentifiable weapon having a long handle and a curved upper terminal⁷¹. Most probably, this scene records some stage of one of Iti-ibi's battles against the Theban rivals referred to in his biographical inscription⁷².

Belonging to the Siutian repertoire of military scenes are two unpublished scenes decorating the tomb-chapel of the late Herakleopolitan Period nomarch Iti-ibi-iqer (Tomb N13.1)⁷³. On the eastern wall of the chapel is a fragmentary scene showing four registers of spearmen and archers, the upper three of which are headed by a large figure of the troop-commander. On the northern wall is a badly damaged scene depicting warriors on two registers. Armed with bows and battle-axes, one of the archers is shown shooting an arrow, while some others are shown in a variety of attitudes attacking some enemy, now lost. Presumably, this scene represents military training, or perhaps the limited area devoted to this theme dictated such an abbreviated battle scene⁷⁴. Of particular interest is the inclusion of Nubian archers among those soldiers, of whom the foremost archer of the lower register who has a feather on his head and wears the distinctive Nubian dress consisting of a short kilt provided with a sash and a central pendant piece⁷⁵. More Nubian archers are represented in a desert hunting scene on the chapel's southern wall. This argues against Bietak's

⁶⁷ For the characteristics and different types of Egyptian shields, see: A. Nibbi, in: *ZÄS* 130, 2003, 170–81.

⁶⁸ For the scanty evidence of the Middle Kingdom battle scenes in other sites, see: A. Schulman, in: *JSSEA* 12, no. 1, 1982, 165–183.

⁶⁹ Of the earlier representations of private battle scenes dated to the Old Kingdom and the early part of the First Intermediate Period, see: A. McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara: Kaiemheset, Kaipunesut, Kaiemseni, Schetepu, and Others*, *ACER* 20, 2003, pl. 48 [*Kaiemheset at Saqqara – Fifth Dynasty*]; N. Kanawati / A. McFarlane, *Deshasha: The Tombs of Inti, Shedu, and Others*, *ACER* 5, 1993, pls. 26–27 [*Inti at Deshasha – Fifth Dynasty*]; Vandier, *Mo'alla*, 126–29, figs. 61–63 [*Ankhtyfy at Mo'alla – Eighth Dynasty / Ninth Dynasty*]; H.G. Fischer, in: *Kush* 9, 1961, 63, fig. 5 [*Set-Ka at Qubbet el-Hawa – early First Intermediate Period*].

⁷⁰ The tomb will be published by J. Kahl. For a preliminary report publishing a facsimile drawing of this fragment, see: Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: *SAK* 36, 2007, 91 fig. 2.

⁷¹ For the different kinds of Ancient Egyptian weapons, see: R. Partridge, *Fighting Pharaohs: Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Egypt*, 2002, 21–74.

⁷² Griffith, *Siut III* [16–37]. For the validity of such representation as recording historical events, see: G. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 1976, 138–41.

⁷³ See n. 23 above.

⁷⁴ A close parallel of a naval engagement overlooking the representation of the attacked enemy is attested from the early Eleventh Dynasty Theban tomb of Intef, whose tomb was decorated during the early part of Nebhepetre's long reign (B. Jaroš-Deckert, *Grabung im Asasif 1963–1970, V: Das Grab des Jn-jtj: Die Wandmalereien der XI. Dynastie*, *AV* 12, 1984, pl. 14).

⁷⁵ For the distinctive First Intermediate Period Nubian dress, see: Fischer, in: *Kush* 9, 1961, 56, 62–75.

theory that the use of Nubian bowmen spread gradually from South to North⁷⁶ from the First Intermediate Period onwards up till the beginning at the Twelfth Dynasty, and that those Nubian mercenaries were not attested at Asyut before the end of the Eleventh Dynasty⁷⁷.

Closely related to this group of military scenes is the scene of the marching soldiers decorating the southern wall of the so-called "Northern Soldiers-Tomb" (Tomb M11.1), which dates to the later part of Nebhepetre's reign⁷⁸. It shows four rows of men holding with the left hands their body-sized shields and carrying in their right hands half-moon bladed battle-axes. Slanting all the shields in the same direction, diagonally, across the bodies of the soldiers, this scene is almost a replica of the military scene of Khety II's chapel.

To be considered here are the two sets of wooden models representing a troop of Nubian archers and another troop of Egyptian spearmen belonging to the Siutian nomarch Mesehti⁷⁹. Each composed of forty soldiers arranged in four equal rows; each Nubian archer is shown holding his bow upright before him with the left hand and grasping a bundle of arrows in the other. Characterized by their black skin colour, each archer wears a filleted short curled wig, and a short kilt provided with a sash and a central pendant piece. Each of the Egyptian spearmen is holding a large, full length pointed-top shield with his left hand, while holding his spear upright before him with the right hand. Distinguished with the light red coloured skin, each spearman wears a short wig and a *šndjt*-kilt.

A comparison of the whole Siutian military scenes reveals that all of their owners were nomarchs, and each of them had a local troop of soldiers under his command. Excluding Mesehti, all the others were either involved in the civil war between Herakleopolis and Thebes or, at least, witnessed it. On the other hand, none of the other known Twelfth Dynasty Siutian nomarchs had such a motif of decoration in his chapel⁸⁰. Striking is the close resemblance of the military scenes of the chapel of Iti-ibi-iqer (Tomb N13.1) and the models of Mesehti (CG 257, 258); both are distinguished from the others in having representations of Nubian archers and Egyptian spearmen. Iti-ibi-iqer's tomb was prepared for him by his son Mesehti-iqer, and the epithet *jqr*, as pointed out by Fischer, might sometimes be added to and sometimes omitted from the name of an individual⁸¹. The tomb-chapel of Mesehti, the owner of the models (CG 257, 258) is undecorated, differing thereby from all the other known Siutian Twelfth Dynasty nomarchs⁸². Mesehti prepared for himself a large rock-cut chapel, which excludes the lack of means as a possible cause of having such undecorated chapel. On the other hand, the good workmanship attested for Mesehti's models

⁷⁶ Although it seems a favourite theme at Asyut, the marching soldiers are attested only once more from the tomb of *Ankhtyfy at Mo'alla (Vandier, Mo'alla, 96–100, pl. 35). Nonetheless, almost contemporaneous and closely related are the stelae of some Nubian mercenaries and other Egyptian soldiers, on which armed individuals are depicted (J. Vandier, in: CdE 17, no. 35, 1943, 21–29; Fischer, in: Kush 9, 1961, 44–80). For a study of those stelae attributed to Gebelein, see: S. Kubisch, in: MDAIK 56, 2000, 239–65.

⁷⁷ M. Bietak, in: Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar I, 1985, 87–97.

⁷⁸ El-Khadragy, in: SAK 35, 2006, 150–52, 154–55, fig. 6, pl. 12.

⁷⁹ PM IV, 265; CG 257, 258; Bietak, in: Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar I, 1985, 97, pls. 1–4.

⁸⁰ A. Roccati, in: OrAnt 11, 1972, 41–50 [ʿAnu – early Twelfth Dynasty]; Griffith, Siût, 10, pls. 10, 20 [bottom left]; Montet, in: Kêmi 3, 1930–35, 86–89 [Djefaihi II – early Twelfth Dynasty]; Griffith, Siût, 9–10, pls. 1–10 [right], 20 [bottom middle]; P. Montet, in: Kêmi 1, 1928, 54–68, pls. 3–6; idem, in: Kêmi 3, 1930–35, 45–86, pls. 2–10; M. El-Khadragy, in: GM 212, 2007, 41–62 [Djefaihi I – Senusret I]; PM IV, 264; P. Montet, in: Kêmi 6, 1936, 134–35; R. Moss, in: JEA 19, 1933, 33; Magee, Asyût II, 27–28 [Djefaihi III – probably reign of Amenemhat II].

⁸¹ Fischer, in: Kush 9, 1961, 59.

⁸² É. Chassinat / Ch. Palanque, Une campagne de fouilles dans la nécropole d'Assiout, MIFAO 24, 1911, v.

and coffins⁸³, and the presence of skilful craftsmen attested at Asyut throughout the Herakleopolitan Period and the Middle Kingdom⁸⁴ exclude the lack of adequate local craftsmen as a possibility for the absence of decoration. This leaves two other possibilities both leading to a date for Mesehti during the turbulent time, which lasted for at least 60 years⁸⁵; either he prematurely died, or he enjoyed a short time of governorship until he was deposed by the victorious king Nebhepetre. Identifying this Mesehti with the other Mesehti, the son of Iti-ibi-iker, is a possibility which can not be determined before clearing the shafts of the father's tomb⁸⁶. In all probabilities, Mesehti (CG 257, 258) lived during the end of the Herakleopolitan Period and was the last known descendent of this powerful family which governed Asyut during the Tenth Herakleopolitan Dynasty⁸⁷.

2. 3 The Southern Outer Pillar (Pl. 5)

Of the broken away southern pillar of the easternmost pair of pillars which once supported the ceiling of the chapel's rectangular hall, a small suspended block of its upper part is still remaining. Its northern, southern and western faces show that they were framed by incised rectangles surmounted at top by incised *hkr*-frieze. Below the border of the pillar's southern face are remains of incised hieroglyphs arranged in columns, of which *jrj p^ct* is still preserved at the top of the first column, and *Wsjr* can be detected at the top of the following one.

3 Historical Conclusions

Alluding to Nebhepetre's assault on Asyut, the biography of Khety II referred to Siutian refugees who were returned by Khety II (cols. 17–18), a probable destruction of Wepwawet's temple, which Khety II later had to restore (cols. 19–22), a probable halt of the funerary services in the cemetery (col. 28)⁸⁸, fighting and shooting arrows within the city (col. 33), beating people, whether young or grown up (col. 33), plundering of properties in the street (cols. 33–34), acts of violence against houses (col. 34). These conditions could only have occurred as a result of the capture of Asyut by Nebhepetre's troops following the recapture of Thinis after Nebhepetre's 14th year⁸⁹, and hence the death of Iti-ibi in this fight. That Iti-ibi was the victim of this assault on Asyut can be deduced from some evidence derived out of his tomb-chapel, wherein his original biographical inscription was substituted by some ideal autobiography⁹⁰. Most probably, Iti-ibi realized the improbability

⁸³ PM IV, 265; CG 28118 (JE 30966), CG 28119 (JE 30966); P. Lacau, *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire II*, 1906, 101–33, pl. 9.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Sculpture*, 231; A. Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture II*, 1966, 148.

⁸⁵ According to Quack, the war between the northern kingdom of Herakleopolis and their Theban rivals began early in the fifty-year long reign of Intef II, and continued up to the reunification of Egypt by Nebhepetre dated sometime between his 14th and the 39th years (Merikare, 98–113).

⁸⁶ Both individuals bore the titles: *jrj-p^ct*, *h³tj-^c*, *jmj-r hm(w)-ntr n Wp-w³wt nb Z³wtj*, *jmj-r hm(w)-ntr n Jnpw nb R-qrrt* (cf. Lacau, *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire II*, 101–33, pl. 9; Kahl / El-Khadragy / Verhoeven, in: SAK 36, 2007, 81–103).

⁸⁷ Schenkel dates Mesehti on epigraphic grounds to the very end of the Eleventh Dynasty or the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty (Frühmittelägyptische Studien, § 44 [a], 117–118). Assigning the coffins of Mesehti to his "Type V", H. Willems suggests a date not earlier than the middle of the Twelfth Dynasty (Chests of Life, in: JEOL 25, 1988, 103–104). On the other hand, Brovanski suggests that Mesehti was contemporaneous to Nebhepetre, and that he was a successor of the Asyut nomarchs of the Tenth Dynasty (Brovanski, *Naga-ed-Dêr*, 1064–65).

⁸⁸ See n. 65 above.

⁸⁹ Franke, in: SAK 14, 1987, 52–53.

⁹⁰ F. Griffith, in: *The Babylonian and Oriental Record* 3, 1889, 127–29; idem, *Siût III* [41–56].

of repulsing Nebhepetre's attack, thereupon he decided to hide his original text referring to his earlier successful actions against the Thebans⁹¹.

Among others, Merikare accompanied with him the *ḥ3tjw-^c nw Šm^cw* „the counts of Upper Egypt“ (col. 11). According to Helck, *ḥ3tj-^c* is the most characteristic for nomarchs during the First Intermediate Period and the Eleventh Dynasty⁹². In reference to their role in this campaign, the biography states that „the towns equipped themselves (with weapons)“ (col. 12). This statement confirms that the Herakleopolitan Kings had to rely on the troops of the loyal nomarchs as a result of having no great standing army capable to fight the Theban troops⁹³. Related to both statements is the title *ḥrj-tp ^c3 n Šm^cw* „great overlord of Upper Egypt“ held by Khety II (col. 23). That this title refers to an actual supervision of those nomarchs of Middle Egypt is attested from the only other known holder of that title, Intef-^cAa of Thebes⁹⁴. He was probably the predecessor of Mentuhotep-^cAa, founder of the Eleventh Dynasty⁹⁵, and as „great overlord of Upper Egypt“, Intef-^cAa's power extended as far north as Dendera, where an overseer of priests evidently acknowledged his authority. The involvement of the nomarchs of Middle Egypt and their troops in this battle might explain the actual reason of holding such unusual title by Khety II; it would be quite reasonable to think that in a fight for Asyut the high command should be in the hand of its nomarch.

A reference to some land, which was burnt by Herakleopolis' flame while proceeding towards Asyut might be hinting to some troubles, which hindered Merikare's military campaign (col. 14). Taking into consideration the frequent reference to rebels (*sbjt*) in the treatises on kingship addressed to Merikare by his unknown father⁹⁶, the reference could be alluding to some rebellion, which both Merikare and Khety II had to suppress. This finds support in describing Merikare as he who overthrew the rebels (*ḥ3kw-jb*) for Herakleopolis (col. 6), while the enemy whom Merikare and his ally had to drive away was described as *ḥ^cd3* „robber/robbery“ (col. 12). Such a rebellion could be related to that attested for the nomarch of the Hare Nome *Nḥrj I*⁹⁷, to whom a date in the Herakleopolitan Period is suggested⁹⁸, although a rather later date is also proposed⁹⁹. Significant

⁹¹ Siüt III [16–37].

⁹² Helck, Verwaltung, 206–9.

⁹³ For the organization of the Egyptian army throughout the different periods, see: R. Faulkner, in: JEA 39, 1953, 32–47.

⁹⁴ The title is recorded for the *ḥrj-tp ^c3 Šm^cw Jnj-jt=f ^c3* on a biographical fragment found in the cemetery of Dendera (G. Daressy, in: ASAE 18, 1919, 186). Fischer identifies him with the owner of the stela MMA 14.2.7 (Clère / Vandier, Première période intermédiaire, § 14; Fischer, Dendera, 203).

⁹⁵ Fischer, Dendera, 203.

⁹⁶ Quack, Merikare, 164–200 [49–50, 134].

⁹⁷ Anthes, Hatnub, nos. 14, 16, 17; R. Faulkner, in: JEA 30, 1944, 61–63. For identifying *Nḥrj* (*ms.n Kmj*) referred to in graffiti nos. 14–28 with the owner of Bersheh tomb 4, see: Schenkel, Frühmittelägyptische Studien, § 32 [b], 87–88. For tomb 4 at Bersheh, see: Griffith / Newberry, El Bersheh II, 29, pls. 10–11.

⁹⁸ Anthes dates *Nḥrj I* to the end of the Herakleopolitan Period in the time of the Theban wars (Hatnub, 92–93; ZÄS 59, 1924, 100–108), while Faulkner dates this rebellion not long before the Theban war (JEA 30, 1944, 63). On the other hand, E. Brovanski assigns *Nḥrj I* to the Herakleopolitan Period or the Eleventh Dynasty (Studies in Ancient Egypt in Honor of D. Dunham, 1981, 26–30).

⁹⁹ Schenkel, who connects such a rebellion with the events surrounding the death of Amenemhat I, suggests that *Nḥrj* served from year 6 to year 14 of Senusert I (Frühmitteläg. Studien, § 33–34, 89–93). However, E. Blumenthal who studied carefully the date of *Nḥrj*'s graffiti (AoF 4, 1976, 35–62) seems to favour the early date suggested by Anthes (refer to the preceding note) rather than that suggested by Schenkel. On the other hand, H. Willems, who reconsidered all the previous suggestions concerning the nomarchs of the Hare nome, dates *Nḥrj I* to the reign of Mentuhotep IV, and connects the rebellion of *Nḥrj I* to a proposed disorder at the end of the Eleventh Dynasty, but he specified no particular reason which led to such a rebellion and offered no explanation of the contradictory statements of *Nḥrj I* and his two sons of being afraid of the royal palace on the one hand, and the friendly character

is the title *ḥ3tj-ḥ Šmꜥw* „count of Upper Egypt“ attested for *Nḥrj* I from the graffiti of Hatnub¹⁰⁰. This title is not attested elsewhere during the First Intermediate Period¹⁰¹, and seems contradictory to the authority of Khety II as *ḥrj-tp 3 n Šmꜥw* „great overlord of Upper Egypt“. Acknowledging the king's sovereignty by *Nḥrj* I's overseer of ships *Nṯrw-ḥtp* in the fourth year graffito¹⁰², it seems possible that the denying of the authority of Khety II led *Nḥrj* I to such a rebellion.

Although the instruction of Khety II in the royal court¹⁰³ seems to be a feature of some new Herakleopolitan strategy outlined two generations earlier¹⁰⁴, Khety II enjoyed probably some special royal favours. Unlike all the known Herakleopolitan Period nomarchs of Asyut, he was distinguished by holding the two titles *ḥrj-tp 3 n Šmꜥw* „great overlord of Upper Egypt“ and *ḥrj-tp 3 n Ndft* „great overlord of 13th Upper Egyptian Nome“, the second of which related probably to installing him as a nomarch by the king himself (cols. 16–17). Directing Merikare's Sed-festivals was also a further royal favour granted to Khety II (cols. 22–23). Nonetheless, Khety II, who lived long enough to restore the temple of Wepwawet at Asyut (cols. 19–25) and to reorganize the town (cols. 31–34), seems to have enjoyed a short tenure of governorship. This is evident from his unfinished tomb¹⁰⁵ and by the two Herakleopolitan Period Siutian nomarchs who succeeded him, *Iti-ibi-iqer* and his son *Mesehti-iqer*¹⁰⁶, with a possibility of having a third successor, *Mesehti* (CG 257, 258), if the future excavations at Asyut will prove that he should not be identified with this *Mesehti-iqer*¹⁰⁷.

of the relationship between them and the king on the other hand (JEOL 28, 1983–1984, 80–102; Chests of Life, 70–71).

¹⁰⁰ Anthes, Hatnub, nos. 20, 22, 25.

¹⁰¹ Brovarski refers to the only known holder of the closely related title *jrj pꜣt Šmꜥw* „the hereditary prince of Upper Egypt“, whom he dates to the First Intermediate Period (E. Brovarski, in: *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* I, 1985, 136; cf. N. Kanawati / A. McFarlane, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom* I, ACE: Studies 2, 1992, 149–150). However, some Twelfth Dynasty examples of such a type of titles are cited by Schenkel (*Frühmittelägyptische Studien*, 85).

¹⁰² Anthes, Hatnub, no. 14.

¹⁰³ Attested from a self-eulogizing phrase recoded for Khety II on the lost façade of his chapel (Edel, *Grabfronten der Siut-Gräber*, 137–38 [77]; Osing, *Tebtynis*, 74 [74]).

¹⁰⁴ Outlines of some new strategy adopted by later Herakleopolitan kings are detectable from the fragmentary biography of Khety I, the predecessor of Khety II's father. Making Asyut the southernmost defensive buffer state responsible for warding off the attacks of the ambitious Theban rulers of the early Eleventh Dynasty, those Herakleopolitan kings followed three significant principles: (1) educating the future nomarchs in the royal court to guarantee their loyalty, (2) establishing Asyut as the most important military stronghold at the South by having effective military troops and fleet, (3) improving the province's economy by active plans ensuring sufficient harvest in bad years (cf. Griffith, *Siut V* [3ff.]).

¹⁰⁵ For some evidence suggesting that Khety II was buried in his tomb, see: El-Khadragy, in: *BACE* 17, 2006, 83–89.

¹⁰⁶ See n. 23 above.

¹⁰⁷ See the discussion of the wooden models of Mesehti above.

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Plate 4 Khety II, chapel, south wall, marching soldiers, detail (© Jochem Kahl)

Plate 5 Khety II, chapel, suspended part of the southern outer pillars (© Jochem Kahl)

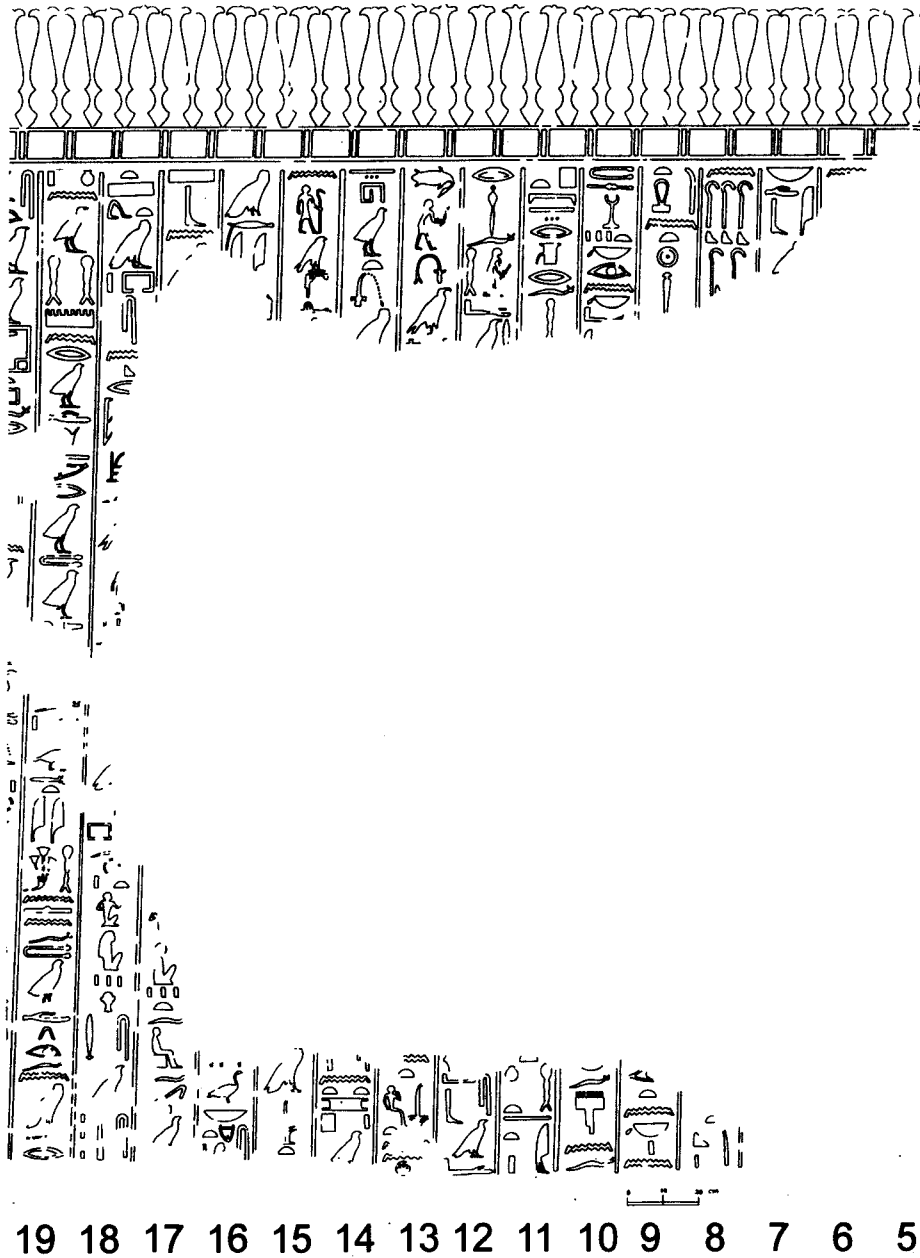


Fig. 1: Khety II, chapel, north wall, biographical inscription, eastern section

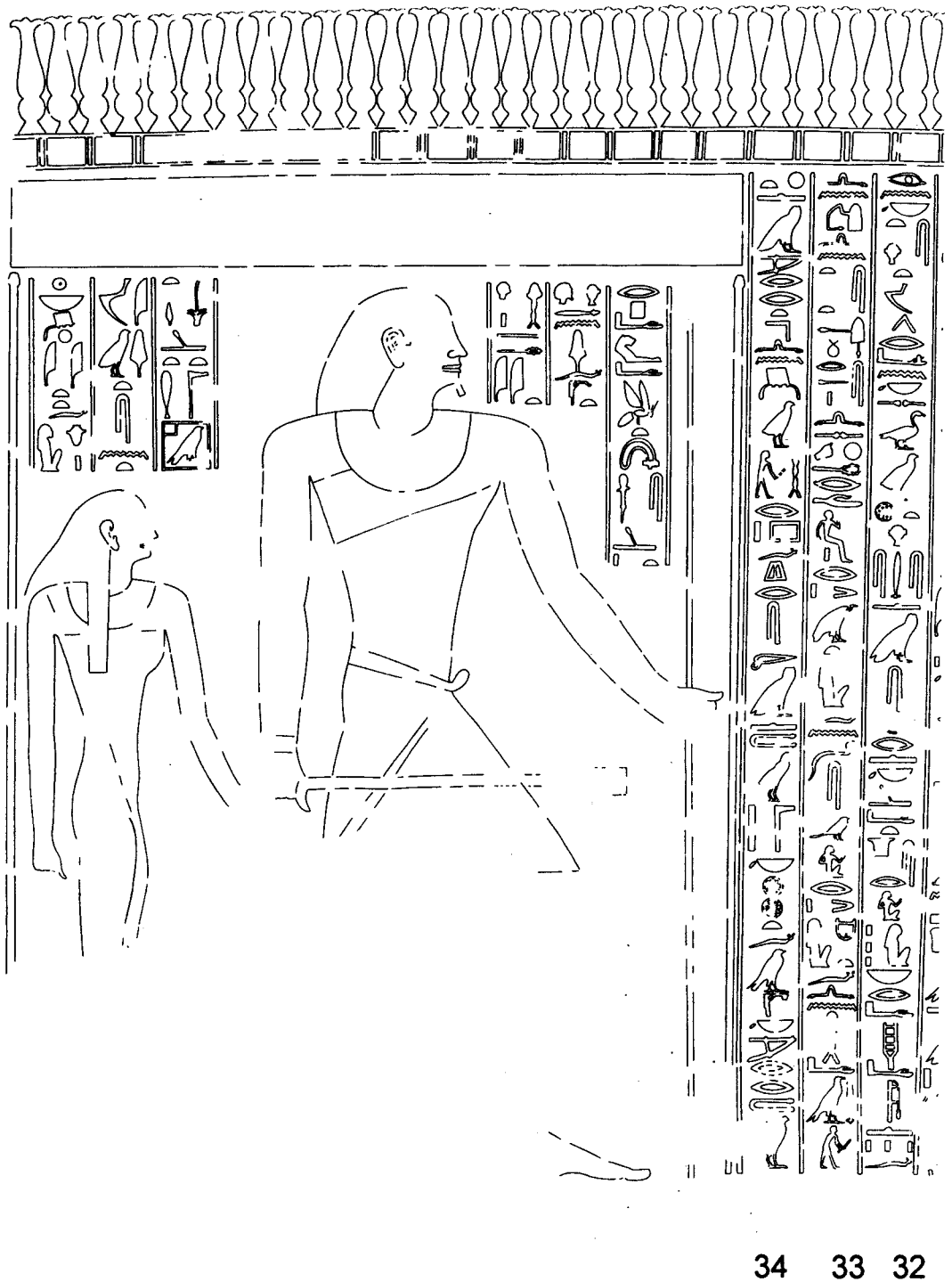


Fig. 2: Khety II, chapel, north wall, biographical inscription, western section



Fig. 3: Khety II, chapel, north wall, biographical inscription, middle section

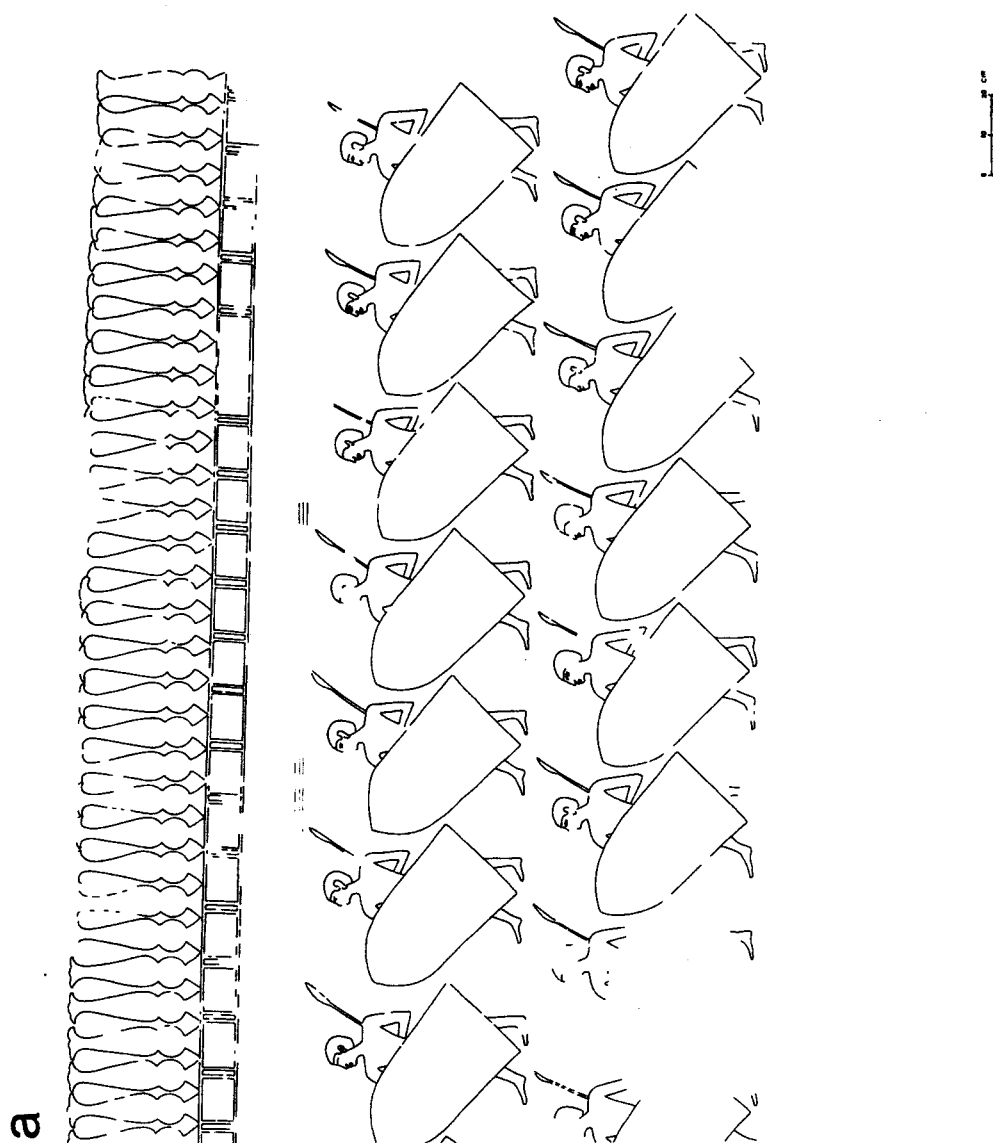


Fig. 4: Khety II, chapel, south wall, marching soldiers, western side

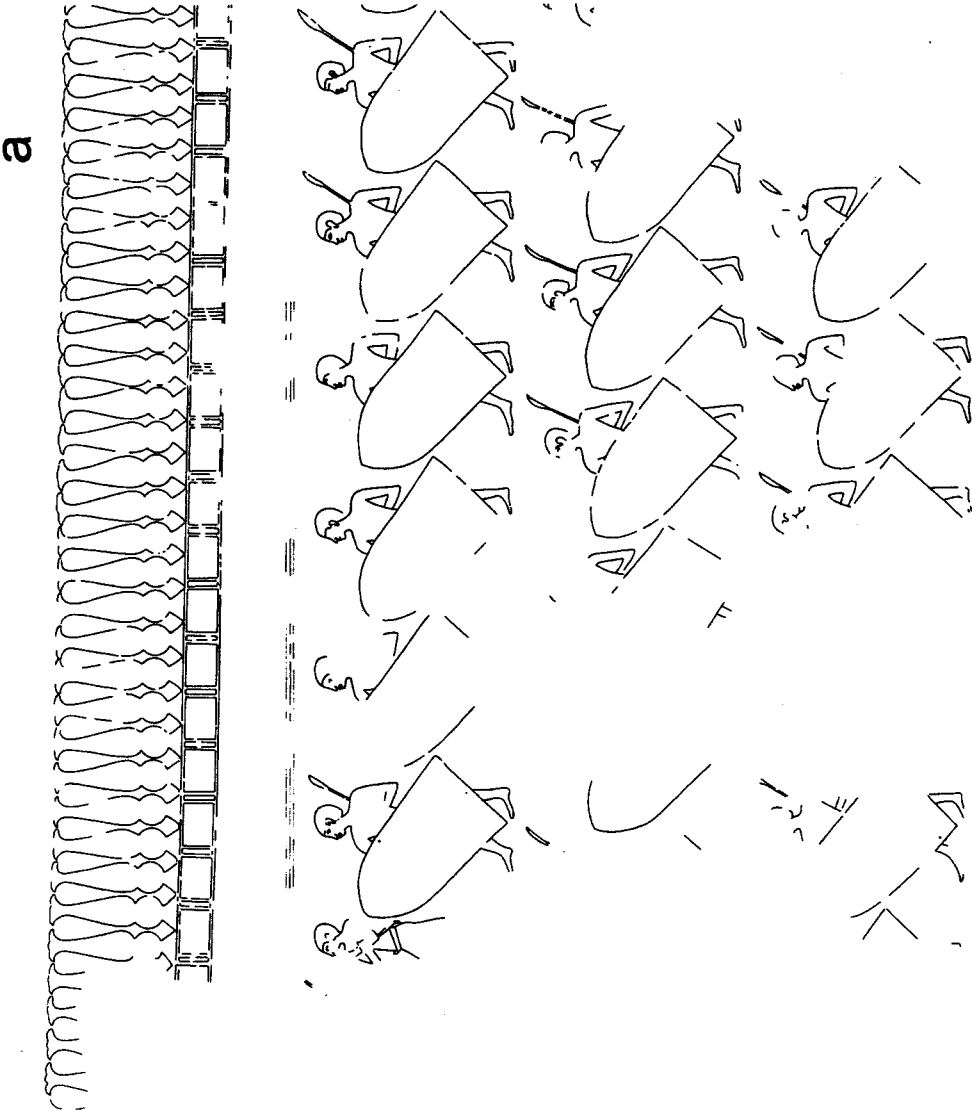


Fig. 5: Khety II, chapel, south wall, marching soldiers, eastern side

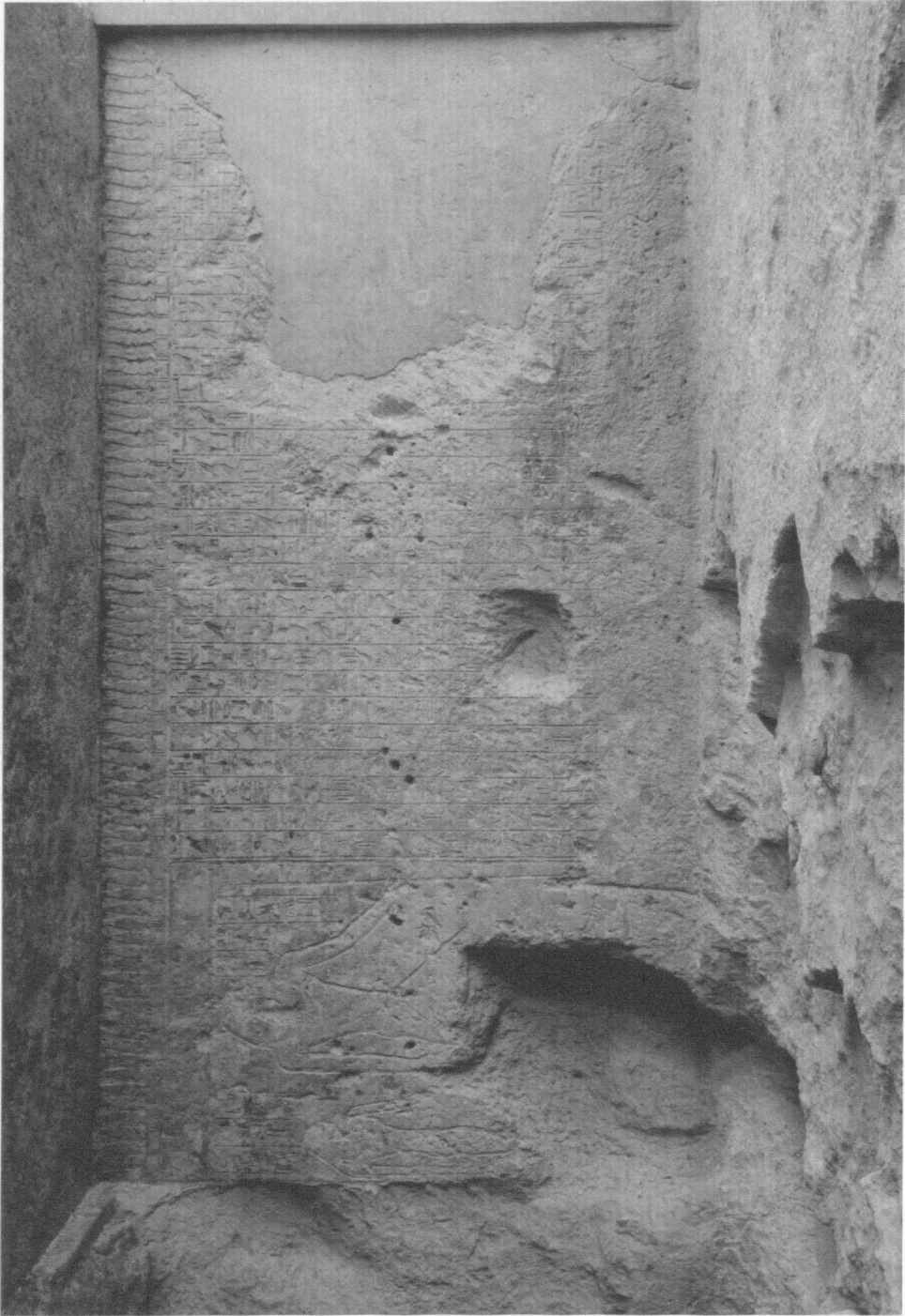


Plate 1: Khety II, chapel, north wall, biographical inscription (© Fritz Barthel)



Plate 2: Khety II, chapel, north wall, biographical inscription, detail (© Jochem Kahl)

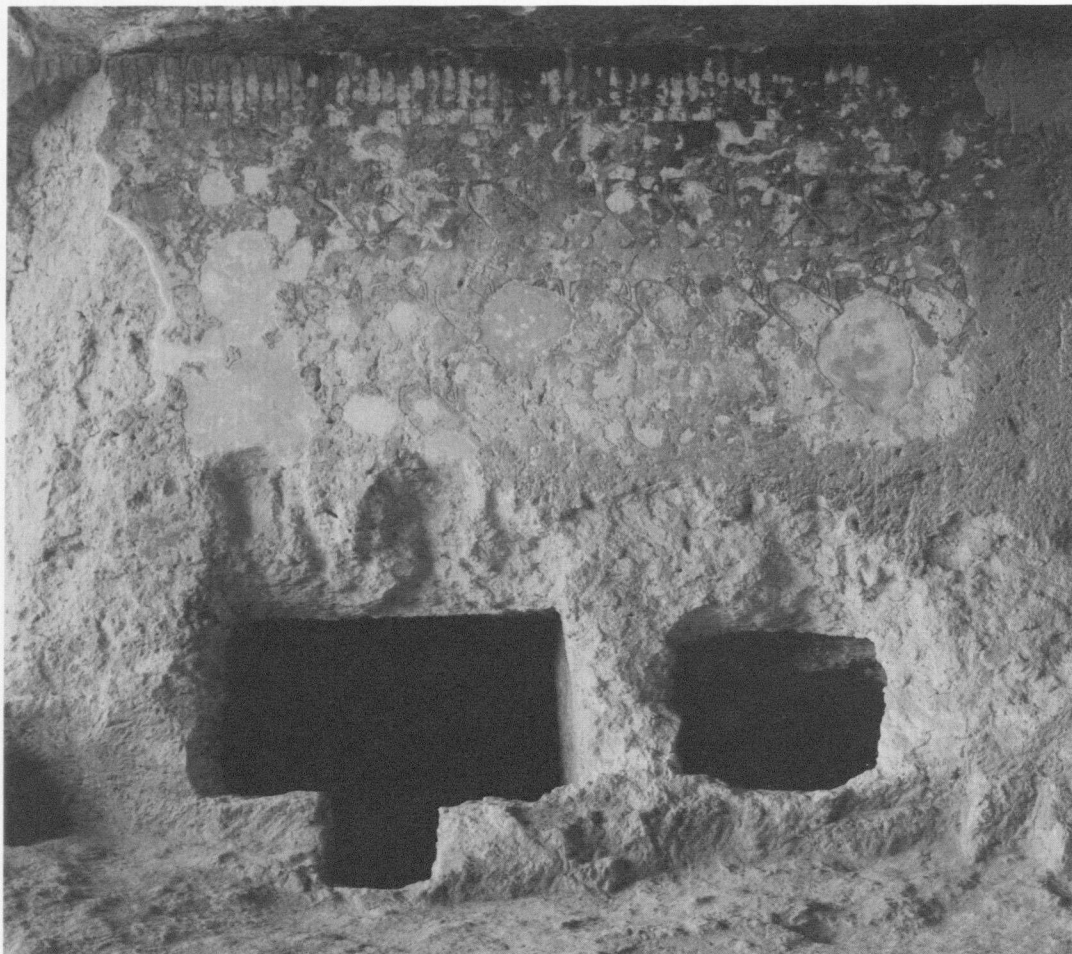


Plate 3: Khety II, chapel, south wall, marching soldiers (© Fritz Barthel)



Plate 4: Khety II, chapel, south wall, marching soldiers, detail (© Jochem Kahl)



Pl. 5: Khety II, chapel, suspended part of the southern outer pillars (© Jochem Kahl)