

Presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner

Hartwig Altenmüller

1. Introduction

The scenes of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner belong to the most popular subjects of the Old Kingdom tomb decoration. Three main groups can be differentiated. The first type represents the delivery of offerings from the funerary estate to the tomb owner. The offerings consist mainly of desert animals, cattle and fowl which come from villages in the country and are assigned to the invocation offering (*pwt-hrw*).¹ The second type depicts the procession of the personified domains who transport bread and beer and other comestibles to the offering place in long files.² The third type finally consists in various processions of offering bearers who bring different kinds of food to the tomb.³ All three types depict persons who are about to greet (*nd-hr*) the deceased with the offerings they have in their hand. Therefore the term *ndt-hr* rightly describes the oblation as a salutation-gift (*ndt-hr*) which is offered to the deceased.

Our interest lies in the investigation of the development of the scenes of the first type depicting the offering of desert animals, cattle and fowl to the tomb owner. This type is preserved in many tombs of Giza and Saqqara, but rarely in the provincial cemeteries.⁴ In general, a distinction can be made between a long and a short version of the scene.

2. The long narrative version

The long version of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner is recorded for the first time as early as at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty in the tomb of the Vizier Nefermaat at Giza (LG 57; G 7060).⁵ It is represented on the east wall of the cult chamber. To the right, the tomb owner and his wife are represented in a standing attitude, to the left the *ndt-hr*-offerings are depicted in a tableau of four horizontal registers. The top register shows the handing over of the document by four scribes – the much destroyed scene can be restored from the better preserved parallels in the Giza tombs of the Fifth Dynasty, the lower three registers depict from top to bottom the bringing of cattle, the introducing of desert animals and the presenting of fowl consisting of cranes. The text in the vertical line in front of Nefermaat reads: 'Viewing the *n[dt-hr]*-offerings which are brought from the [villages] of his funerary estate (*m33 n[dt-hr] jnnt m [njwwt] nt pr=f dt*)'.

A further development of the subject matter may be observed in the tombs of the Fifth Dynasty at Giza. Very close parallels are known from the tombs of the Western cemetery at Giza, especially from the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family and of Iymery. An early depiction comes from the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080),⁶ which can be

¹ Vandier, *Manuel V*, 13ff. ('les défilés').

² Jacquet-Gordon, *Domaines*; cf. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I*, pl. 9.

³ The tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqara is exceedingly rich in scenes of the delivery of *ndt-hr*-gifts by offering-bearers: N. Kanawati, A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara II*, ACER 9 (1997), pls. 43–51.

⁴ Some instances are: N. Kanawati, *The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish I* (Warminster, 1980), fig. 14 (Ka-hep); II (Warminster, 1981), fig. 26 (Kheni); *Deir el Gebrâwi I*, pl. 11 (Ibi); II, pl. 9 (Djau).

⁵ PM III², 183 (1); LD II, pl. 17b.

⁶ PM III², 146 (2); N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza II*, ACER 18 (2002), pl. 62.

dated to the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty.⁷ It has nearly the same layout as the earlier tomb of Nefermaat (G 7060). The differences mainly concern the orientation of the relief and the internal disposal of the subject within the register area. Some close parallels⁸ are recorded in the tomb of the Vizier Seshemnefer III (G 5170),⁹ the son of Seshemnefer II (G 5080), and in the tomb of Iymery at Giza (LG 16, G 6020).¹⁰

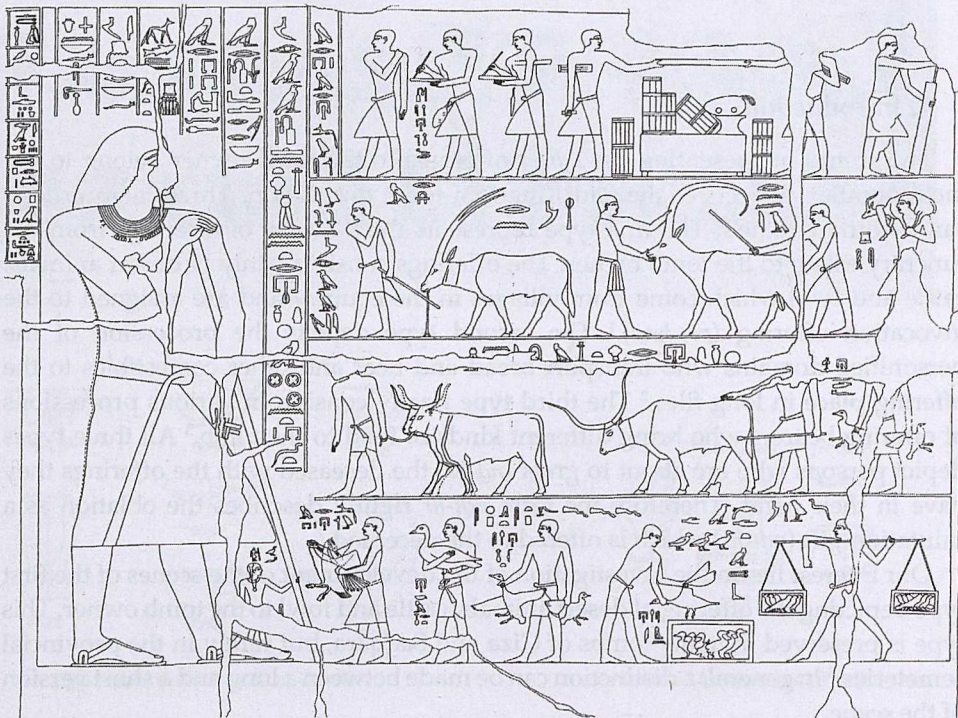


Fig. 1 Viewing the documents of the *ndt-hr*-offerings from the tomb of Seshemnefer III at Giza (G 5170) (Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptische Grabkammer Seshemnefers III.*, Beilage 1)

In the well preserved tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) the tomb owner is depicted leaning on his staff, while viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings which are pictured in a tableau of four registers (fig. 1). The top register represents the drawing up and handing over of the document, which certainly contains the account of the delivery. The second register shows the conducting of the desert animals, the third one depicts the bringing of the oxen, the bottom register, finally, shows the presentation of fowl.

The wording of the vertical line in front of the tomb owner is similar to that of the tomb of Nefermaat (G 7060). It reads: 'Viewing the documents of the *ndt-hr*-offerings, which are brought for the invocation offering from the villages of the funerary estate (*m33 sš n ndt-hr jnt r prt-hrw m njwwt nt pr-dt*)'. The inscription supplies the important information that the *ndt-hr*-offerings are assigned to the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*). The same statement is found in a short caption above the oxen of the 3rd register saying: 'The conducting of the oxen as an *ndt-hr*-gift for the invocation offering (*jnt jw3 m ndt-hr r prt-hrw*)'.

The same layout is repeated in various tombs at Giza. Very frequent is the sequence of (1) handing over the papyrus scroll,¹¹ (2) presenting the desert animals,

⁷ The early dating depends from the dating of the mastaba of Seshemnefer III to the reign of Neferirkara: N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et Hypogées d'Ancien Empire. Le Problème de la Datation* (Brussels, 1989), 227; M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, BdE 126/2 (1999), 577 [220]. Usually a later dating to the middle of the Fifth Dynasty is proposed.

⁸ Junker, *Giza III*, 1938, 71–77, fig. 8a–b and 201–204.

⁹ PM III², 154 (1); E. Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptische Grabkammer Seshemnefers III. aus Giza* (Mainz, 1977), 19f., colour plate II, Beilage 1.

¹⁰ Iymery (a): PM III², 173 (12); LD II, pl. 54; K. R. Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000 including G 6010 (Neferbaupth); G 6020 (Iymery); G 6030 (Ity); G 6040 (Shepseskafankh)*. *Giza Mastabas 5* (Boston, 1994), figs. 41–42.

¹¹ P. Der Manuelian, 'Presenting the Scroll: Papyrus Documents in Tomb Scenes of the Old Kingdom', in P. Der Manuelian, ed., *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Vol. 2 (Boston, 1996), 561–588.

(3) conducting the cattle, and (4) bringing the fowl.¹² In a few tombs, some minor transpositions occur. A not infrequent transposition consists in the reordering of the registers as (1) presenting the scroll, (2) conducting cattle, (3) desert animals and (4) fowl¹³ or, alternatively, as (1) presenting the scroll, (2) fowl, (3) oxen and (4) desert animals,¹⁴ or presenting (1) fowl, (2) desert animals and (3) oxen,¹⁵ or, finally, presenting (1) desert animals, (2) fowl and (3) cattle.¹⁶ Sometimes the sequence appears in an abbreviated form so that only two types of animals are presented, whether fowl and cattle¹⁷ or desert animals and cattle.¹⁸

Similar scenes of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings are to be found at Saqqara in the tombs of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. A good example comes from the tomb of Nefer and Kahay.¹⁹ In the eastern section of the south wall of this tomb, Nefer is depicted seated under a canopy in the company of his wife who is kneeling at his feet. He receives an account, apparently of the *ndt-hr*-offerings, by three scribes. One is shown in a striding stance and hands over the scroll, two assistants are seated behind him and write down the amount of the gifts. The *ndt-hr*-offerings consist in fowl, cattle and desert animals. They are enumerated in the same sequence as in the tomb of Nefer I from Giza (G 4761).²⁰

The delivery of desert animals, cattle and fowl presented as *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner is depicted at Saqqara frequently in a very elaborated and extended manner.²¹ Such an elaborated but still traditional scene is preserved on the south wall of the offering hall of the high official Manofer (LS 17) (fig. 2).²² The tomb owner is shown at the right end of the decorated area and views the scroll of the *ndt-hr*-offerings, as is stated in the vertical line in front of him: 'Viewing the [*ndt-hr*-offerings] consisting of desert animals, oxen and birds, which are brought to him from the villages of the funerary estate (*m33* [*ndt-hr m*] *wt, jw3, 3pd jnnw m njwwt nt pr-dt*)'. The animals introduced to him are itemized, each animal having a separate

¹² Kapi (G 2091); PM III², 70 (9); A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants including G 2084–2099, G 2230 + 2231, and G 2240. Giza Mastabas 6* (Boston, 1995), 103–104, fig. 167; Kahif (G 2136): PM III², 76 (8); Junker, *Giza VI*, 127, fig. 40; Kaemnofret (LG 63): PM III², 209 (3); LD II, pl. 91.

¹³ Nefermaat (G 7060): LD II, pl. 17b; Iymery (G 6020) (b): PM III², 171 (2), LD II, pl. 49a; Weeks, *Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 26–29; Sekhemankhptah (G 7152): PM III², 191 (2); A. Badawy, *The Tombs of Iteti, Sekhemankh-Ptah, and Kaemnofret at Giza* (Berkeley, 1976), fig. 20. Cf. Seshemnefer IV (LG 53): PM III², 226 (21); Junker, *Giza XI*, 213, fig. 82.

¹⁴ Iymery (c) (G 6020): PM III², 171 (4); LD II, pl. 50b; Weeks, *Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 31; cf. Nefer I (G 4761): PM III², 138 (3)–(4); Junker, *Giza VI*, 63–66, fig. 16.

¹⁵ Tjenti (G 4920): PM III², 142 (2), LD II, pl. 31.

¹⁶ Senedjemib Inti (G 2370): PM III², 86 (9)–(10); E. Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex Part I: The Mastabas of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370), Khnumente (G 2374), and Senedjem Mehi (G 2378), Giza Mastabas 7* (Boston, 2001), figs. 50–51.

¹⁷ E.g. Mersyankh III (G 7530–7540): PM III², 198 (9); D. Dunham, W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, Giza Mastabas 1* (Boston, 1974), fig. 4. The presentation of the scroll and the presenting the desert animals is found on both entrance thickness of the tomb: *ibid.*, figs. 3a, 3b.

¹⁸ Kanofer (G 2150): Boston MFA 34.58; PM III², 77 (1d); Reisner, *Giza I*, 441, fig. 262; Sekhemka (G 1029): PM III², 53 (1)–(2); W. K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery I, Giza Mastabas 4* (Boston, 1980), fig. 4; Iasen, (G 2196): PM III², 82 (2); Simpson, *Western Cemetery I*, fig. 31; Neferkhuu (G 2098): Roth, *Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, fig. 194; Niuti (G 4611): PM III², 133 (2)–(3); LD Erg., pl. 30; Idu I (G 5550): PM III², 165; Junker, *Giza VIII*, 85, fig. 36. Similar abbreviations occur at Saqqara, e.g. Akhtihotep at Saqqara, with the sequence of (1) desert animals and (2) fowl: PM III², 599 (9); Davies, *Ptahhetep and Akhetetep II* (London, 1901), pls. 18+19.

¹⁹ PM III², 540 (5); A. M. Moussa, H. Altenmüller, *The tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay, AV 5* (1971), pls. 24–25.

²⁰ PM III², 138 (3)–(4); Junker, *Giza VI*, fig. 16.

²¹ Some instances are: Raemka (D 3): PM III², 487 (2); Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep: PM III², 643 (22), (23); Akhtihotep (E 17): PM III², 634 (4)–(5); Ti (D 22): PM III², 474 (37); cf. Kagemni: PM III², 523 (20); the sequence of scribes, desert animals and cattle occur in the tomb of Kaemnofret (D 23): PM III², 467 (3); Ihi/ Idut: PM III², 619 (24); etc.

²² PM III², 576 (4); LD II, pls. 69–70.

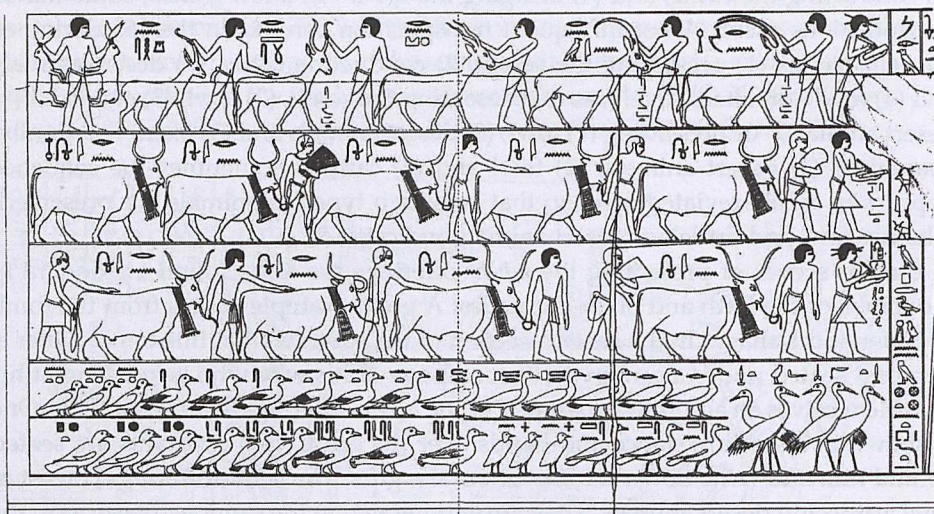


Fig. 2 Viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings from the tomb of Manofer at Saqqara (LD II, pls. 69–70)

caption. In the top register, the oryx-antelope (*m3-hd*), the ibex (*nj3w*), the Mendes-antelope (*nwdw*), the hartebeest (*šs3*) and the gazelle (*ghs*) are specified, only the hare at the end of the register is left unlabelled. The second and third registers contain fattened cattle, each marked as a ‘young oxen’ (*rn jw3*). The bottom register, finally, is filled up with various birds, all labelled by their specific names. Each register, except the bottom register, starts with a scribe who is writing down the amount of the *ndt-hr*-offerings.

In the tomb of Ptahhotep (D 62) at Saqqara which dates from the end of the Fifth Dynasty (fig. 3) the representation of the *ndt-hr*-offerings reaches a new dimension.²³ The variety of animals is increased, their quantity augmented. The offerings come from different institutions throughout the country. This is indicated by the fact that nearly each register has its own label. Above the head of Ptahhotep is written: ‘Viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings and the tribute of the domains and villages from Lower and Upper Egypt of the funerary estate by (the tomb owner) Ptahhotep (*m33 ndt-hr jnw n hwwt njwwt mhwj šmꜥw pr dt (jn Pth-htpw)*’.

In the top register of the wall the bringing in of desert animals is depicted. Among the wild animals being conducted, a lion and a lioness, each in a cage on a sledge, are pulled before the tomb owner. This is a unique variation. In the later tombs of Kagemni and Mereruka occur another variant of the presentation of the desert animals. The wild animals are kept in stables, fastened by a leash in front of their feeding trough, among them the hyenas which also belong to the *ndt-hr*-offerings and are about to be fattened by their respective keepers.²⁴ Another solution is found in the provincial tombs of Ibi²⁵ and Djau²⁶ at Deir el Gebrâwi where the procession of the wild animals is substituted by a real desert hunt.²⁷

A similar expansion occurs with the presentation of the cattle. In the tomb of Ptahhotep the procession of the oxen starts with a scene of cattle-breeding.²⁸ A variant to this is found again in the tombs of Kagemni and Mereruka at Saqqara, where the oxen of the *ndt-hr*-offerings are shown in their stables being fed by their herdsmen.²⁹

The great extent of the expansion of the scenes of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings becomes particularly clear in the scene of the delivery of the fowl. In the tomb of

²³ PM III², 602 (18); Paget, Pirie, in Quibell, *Ramesseum*, pls. 35, 31.

²⁴ Kagemni, Room IV: PM III², 523 (20); Mereruka, Room XIII: PM III², 532 (76).

²⁵ PM IV, 244 (11), *Deir el Gebrâwi* I, pl. 11.

²⁶ PM IV, 245 (7), *Deir el Gebrâwi* II, pl. 9.

²⁷ An earlier record comes from the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Nimaatra at Giza (G 2097), where the presenting of oxen, fowl and desert animals is supplemented by a desert hunt: Roth, *Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, 132–133, fig. 189.

²⁸ For this kind of scenes see Vandier, *Manuel* V, 58–96.

²⁹ Kagemni, Room IV: PM III², 523 (20); Mereruka, Room XIII: PM III², 532 (76).

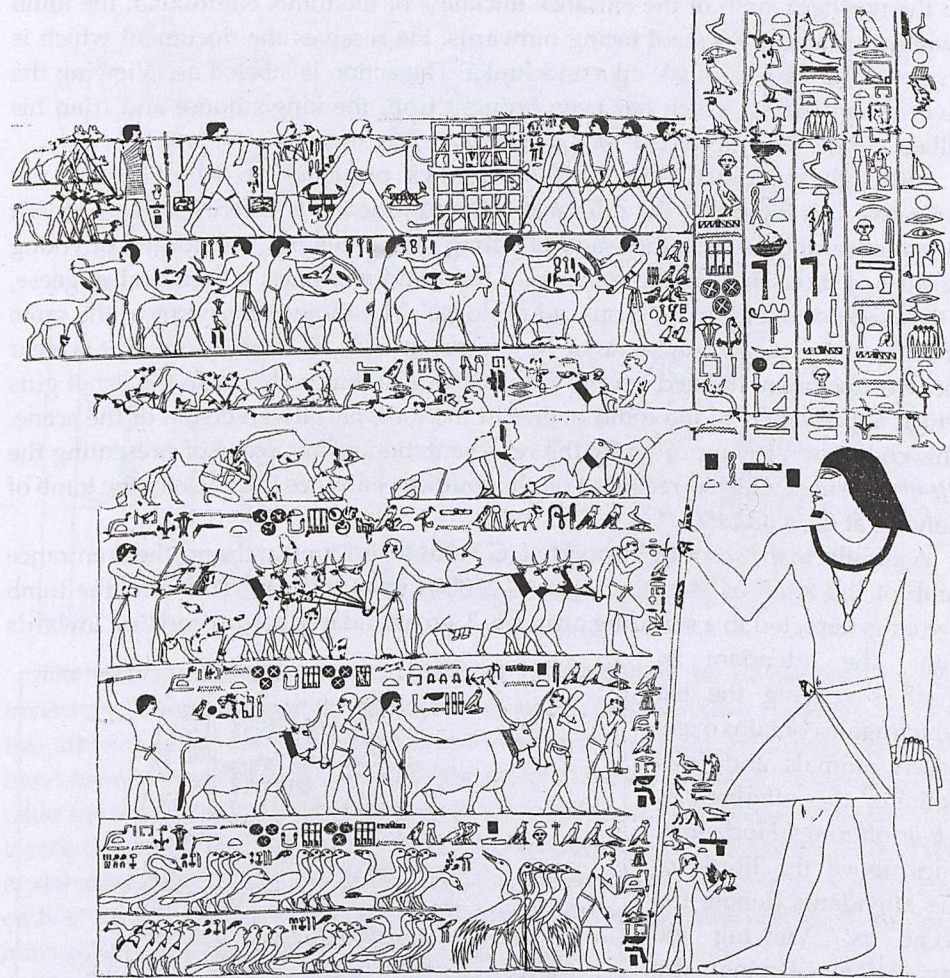


Fig. 3 Viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings from the tomb of Ptahhotep at Saqqara (Paget, Pirie, in Quibell, *The Ramesseum*, pl. 35+31)

Ptahhotep the birds are arranged to groups according to their species, each species being counted by an exact number. In the upper section of the bottom register the first and second group of birds consists in 121,200 birds, the third group counts 11,110, the fourth group 1,225 birds. A similar amount is recorded for the fowl in the lower section of the bottom register. The first group contains 120,000 geese, the second one consisting probably in ducks reaches 121,022 specimens, the third group, probably of doves, counts 111,200 birds. The high quantity of birds is easily to explain by the corresponding representations of the *ndt-hr*-fowl from the tombs of Kagemni and Mereruka at Saqqara. In these tombs the birds serving as *ndt-hr*-offerings are depicted as coming from the poultry farm.³⁰

The increased amount of the *ndt-hr*-offerings is recorded by scribes. The handing over of the documents is a statement of accounts and has the aim to keep the *ndt-hr*-offerings at the constant disposal of the tomb owner. The scroll represents therefore a kind of deed for the eternal ownership of the *ndt-hr*-offerings put at the tomb owner's disposal by the funerary estates for the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*).

3. The short narrative version

It is not surprising to find an abbreviated version of the scene of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner in some early tombs. Such a specimen indicating the names and the amount of the entries of the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) is preserved in the tomb of Khufukhaf at Giza (G 7130–40).³¹ The document is placed

³⁰ Kagemni, Room IV: PM III², 523 (20); Mereruka, Room VI: PM III², 529 (33).

³¹ PM III², 189 (4c), W. K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, Giza Mastabas 3* (Boston, 1978), fig. 29.

on the northern jamb of the entrance thickness of the tomb. Khufukhaf, the tomb owner, is seated on a stool facing outwards. He receives the document which is given to him by his sons Wetka and Iunka. The action is labeled as: 'Viewing the invocation offering which has been brought from the king's house and from his villages of the funerary estate (*m33 prt-hrw jnt m pr-njswt m njwwt=f pr-dt*)'.

Although the exact term for the offerings presented to Khufukhaf is not indicated, it is clear that the offerings belong to the *ndt-hr*-offerings. They consist in 'a thousand of oxen, a thousand of young oryx antelopes, a thousand of young gazelles, a thousand of young ibexes, a thousand of cranes, a thousand of geese, a thousand of ducks and a thousand of doves'. The same items occur in the same order in the presentation scene of Nefermaat at Giza (G 7060)³² so that it is clear that the document handed over to Khufukhaf is nothing other than the list of gifts which is presented to the tomb owner in the long narrative version of the scene. This conclusion is supported by the representation of this scene of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings which is recorded on the southern entrance thickness of the tomb of Kanofer at Giza (G 2150).³³

A parallel to the scene of Khufukhaf (G 7130–40) is found at the northern entrance jamb of the tomb of Merib at Giza (G 2100-Annex) (fig. 4).³⁴ This time the tomb owner is depicted in a standing attitude. Two attendants are proceeding towards him.

The attendant in front is reading the list which again contains oxen, desert animals and fowl defining the offerings as *ndt-hr*-offerings. Horizontal lines above the heads of the attendants denote the scene as: 'Viewing the invocation offering (by the tomb owner) which is brought from the king's house and consisting of a thousand of young cattle, a thousand of young oryx antelopes, a thousand of young gazelles and a thousand of cranes and a thousand of geese and ducks (*m33 prt-hrw jnt m pr-njswt rn jw3 h3, rn m3-hd h3, rn jb3w h3, rn ghs h3, d3t h3, r3 trp h3*)'.

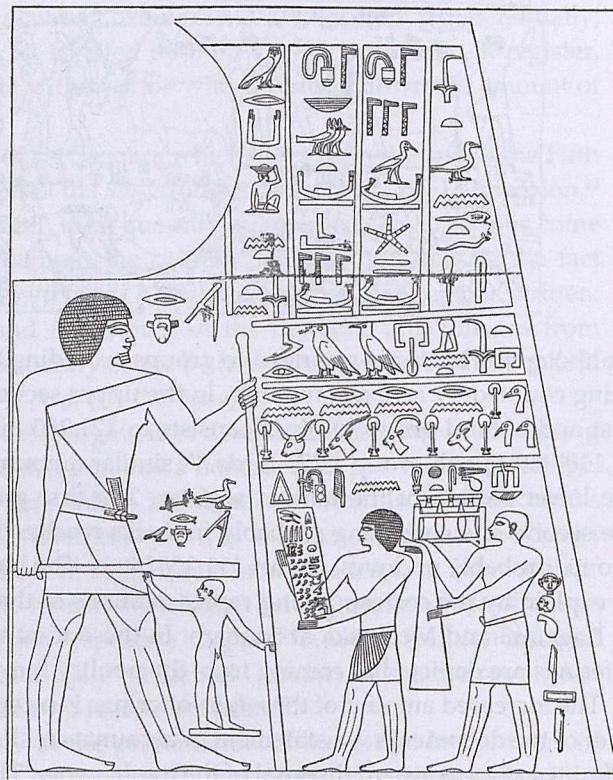


Fig. 4 Viewing the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) from the tomb of Merib at Giza (G 2100-Annex) (Junker, *Giza II*, 129, fig. 11)

4. The list form of the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*)

The long and short versions of the scenes of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner confirm unanimously that the *ndt-hr*-offerings belong to the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) which in its complete form contains an oblation of bread and beer, of alabaster vessels and clothing, of oxen, desert animals and fowl. All these items occur on the early slab stelae and false door tablets since their first appearance mostly in connection with the table scenes.³⁵

³² PM III², 183 (1); LD II, pl. 17b.

³³ PM III², 77 (1d); Reisner, *Giza I*, 441, fig. 262.

³⁴ PM III², 71 (1d); LD II, pl. 22b; Junker, *Giza II*, 129, fig. 11.

³⁵ P. Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*, PPYE 7 (2003), *passim*.

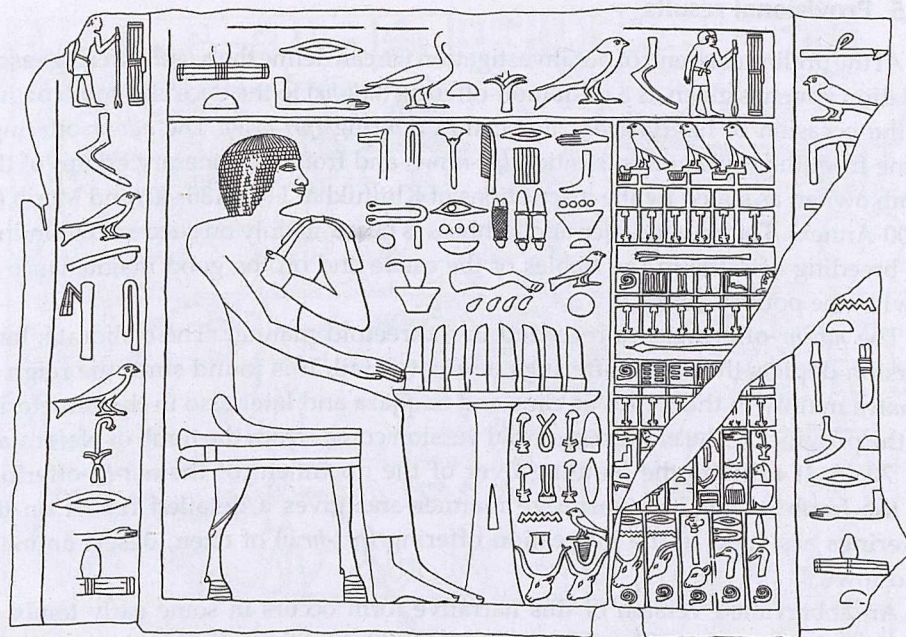


Fig. 5 False door tablet of Rahotep at Meidum, Brit. Mus. 1242 (James, *Hieroglyphic Texts I*, pl. 1)

The different entries of the invocation offering may be exemplified by the inventory list of the false door tablet of Rahotep at Meidum (BM 1242) (fig. 5).³⁶ On this tablet Rahotep is exhibited seating on a stool facing right. He extends his right hand towards the offering table with the stylized loaves of bread. Underneath the table the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) is recorded in an abbreviated spelling. The inscription starts from right to left with '1,000 of bread and 1,000 jars of beer, 1,000 of alabaster vessels and 1,000 of clothing' (*t 1,000, hnkt 1,000, šs 1,000, mnht 1,000*) and ends at the lower frame of the tablet with 'male and female cattle (*ng3 wr jdt*, without numerals)' written from left to right.

The area to the right of the table scene is occupied by the compartment list which in its upper part contains a linen list recording various clothes of different quality and width and in its lower part a list of furniture. In the lowest compartments, independent from the upper linen and furniture lists, the *ndt-hr*-offerings of the invocation offering are continued from the lower area underneath the offering table. Starting with 'male and female cattle' (*ng3, wr jdt*), the *prt-hrw*-list continues with '100 of young oxen (*rn jw3*), 100 of young oryx antelopes (*rn m3-hd*), 100 of *hrj-db^c*-cattle, 100 of *r3*- and *trp*-geese and 100 of *d3t*-cranes'. It is obvious that these offerings enumerated in the lower zone of the tablet of Rahotep belong to the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) of which the *ndt-hr*-offerings of oxen, desert animals and fowl form a part.

All entries of the Rahotep invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) are already known from much earlier times. A good example is known from the slab stela of Sehefener from the Second Dynasty where the same entries occur.³⁷ A similar, but not identical wording is to be found on the slab stela of Sisi from Helwan³⁸ which is dated to the Third Dynasty and which already contains a complete list of the *ndt-hr*-offerings. In two Old Kingdom tombs of Fifth Dynasty date a selection of items of the early invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) is appended to the ritual offering list naming 'geese and doves (*smn mnwt*), cattle of different kind (*ng3, jw3, hrj-db^c, jdt*) and desert animals (*ghs, htt*).³⁹

³⁶ Medum, pl. 13; T. G. J. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae etc. of the British Museum*, vol 1, 2nd ed. (London, 1961), 1, pl. 1; Manuelian, *Slab Stelae*, 233 fig. 299.

³⁷ Cairo JdE 44135; PM III², 436; Quibell, *Archaic Mastabas*, pl. 26–27: from the tomb S 2146E at Saqqara.

³⁸ Saad, *Ceiling Stelae*, pl. 27; J. Kahl, N. Kloth, U. Zimmermann, *Die Inschriften der 3. Dynastie*, *ÄgAbh* 56 (1995), 178–179.

³⁹ Seshathetep (G 5150), Nefernesut (G 4970): Junker, *Giza III*, 74–75, fig. 9a–b; Hassan, *Excavations at Giza VI.2*, pl. 6.

5. Provisional results

At the preliminary end of our investigation we can define the *ndt-hr*-offerings as an oblation which is given as a salutation-offering (*ndt-hr*) to the deceased tomb owner at the occasion of his funerary invocation offering (*prt-hrw*). The *ndt-hr*-offerings come from the royal administration (*pr-njswt*) and from the funerary estates of the tomb owner, as stated by the inscriptions of Khufukhaf I (G 7130–40) and Merib (G 2100-Annex). Their abundance and richness is based mainly on successful hunting, on breeding of cattle in the stables of the estate and on the good maintenance of fowl in the poultry farms.

The *ndt-hr*-offerings are recorded in a threefold manner. The elaborate, long version depicts the *ndt-hr*-offerings in great detail. It is found since the reign of Khafra mainly in the tombs at Giza and Saqqara and later also in the cemeteries of the provinces. The earliest pictorial version comes from the tomb of Nefermaat (G 7060). It exhibits the handing over of the document of the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner in a narrative manner and gives a detailed report on the offerings assigned to the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) of oxen, desert animals, and fowl.⁴⁰

An abbreviated version of this narrative form occurs in some early tombs of the Fourth Dynasty at Giza (Khufukhaf, G 7130–40; Merib, G 2100-Annex).⁴¹ This version displays mainly the handing over of the written document to the tomb owner. The document contains the names of the *ndt-hr*-offerings consisting of oxen, desert animals and fowl as part of the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*).

The shortest version occurs as early as the Second Dynasty and is connected with the table scene. It lists the names of the *ndt-hr*-offerings as a part of the invocation offering (*prt-hrw*) and connects each entry with a numeral quoting the quantity, with preference in the range of thousands. Sometimes the names are inserted in the compartment lists of the Third and Fourth Dynasties (Rahotep).

6. The *ndt-hr*-offerings as represented in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep

In considering the transmission of the presentation of the *ndt-hr*-offerings in three versions – (a) in a narrative long version, (b) a narrative short version, (c) and in a list form – it is possible to explain an abnormal illustration of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings in the vestibule of the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara as a variant of the narrative long version (fig. 6).⁴² The scene displays the viewing of the *ndt-hr*-offerings from the villages, certainly of the funerary estate, by Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep and therefore belongs to 'type I' of this complex of scenes. The inscription records in a vertical line in front of the tomb owners the subject matter: 'Viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings which are brought from all his (!) villages and heaping up the foodstuff at the Red House (*m33 ndt-hr jnnt m njwwt=f nbt tzt jht bnrt r pr-dšr*)'.

The picture is composed in the same way as the well known representations of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings at Giza and Saqqara, but differs essentially in the types of the gifts which are presented. In the top register three men are depicted elevating jars of wine (*jrp*), figs (*d3b*) and raisins (*wnšj*). To the right of them heaps of grapes, raisins (*wnšj*), nuts (*prt šn*), juniper berries (*prt w'n*), figs (*d3b*), and *jšd*-fruits are piled. At the outer right side of the register some large jars filled with comestibles are to be seen.

⁴⁰ Some earlier references but of different layout can be found in the tombs at Meidum; cf. Rahotep: Petrie, *Meidum*, pls. 11, 14; and Nefermaat, *ibid.*, pls. 24, 28.

⁴¹ The short version of Kanofer (G 2150) is composed along the same lines.

⁴² PM III², 642 (9); A. M. Moussa, H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, AV 21 (1977), 101–105, pl. 34, fig. 13. The tomb is dated to the reign of Nyusera or Menkauhor at the end of the Fifth Dynasty.

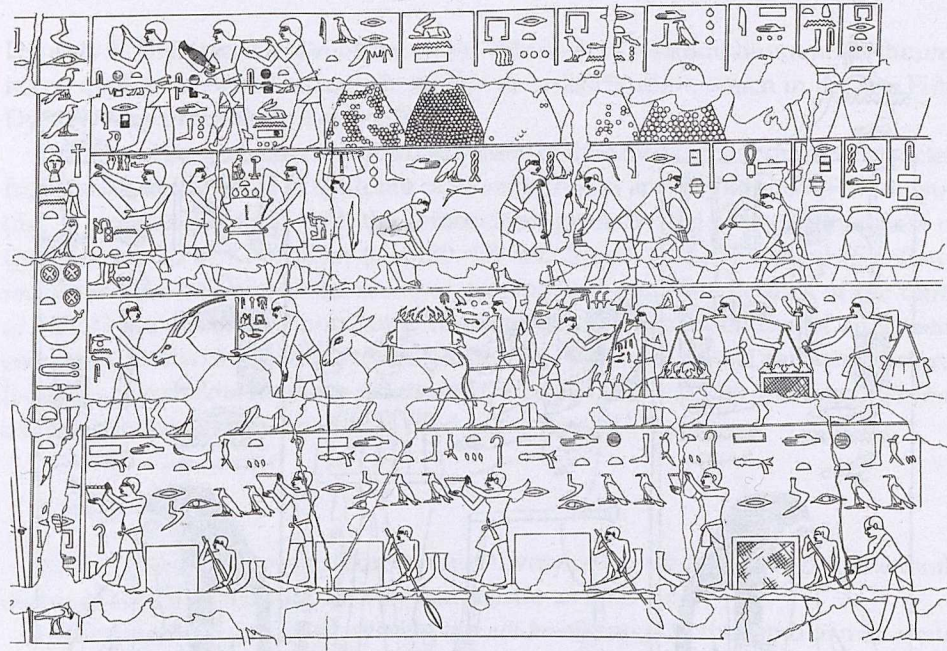


Fig. 6 Viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings from the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara (Moussa, Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, fig. 13)

The second register continues with the delivery of foodstuff. At the left end a scribe is presenting the 'document of food (*zš n jht bnrt*)'. To his right the 'filling of figs (*mḥ d3b*)' in small bags and 'the counting of figs (*h3j d3b*)' is visualized. It follows at the right end the filling of wine in jars and the sealing of the wine jars.

The third register deals with the desert animals. At the left end of the register an oryx antelope is guided to the tomb owners, followed by a donkey transporting a crate containing young desert animals. Some other young gazelles and antelopes are carried in cages which are fixed on the yokes of two desert dwellers, 'coming from the west (*jw t m jmnt*)'. The feed for the young animals is prepared by a herdsman. It is tasted by the animal keeper in the middle of the register who approves: 'this is very tasty (for the young animals) (*jw nn ndm wrt*)'.

The bottom register finally shows 4 barges⁴³ transporting foodstuff in rectangular cases placed in the middle of the ship. The ship commander is elevating a vessel containing food, as is indicated in the concomitant inscription which alludes to 'viewing of the food (by the tomb owner) (*m33 jht bnrt*)'.

The interpretation of the scene has two difficulties. It displays an anachronistic feature when stating, that the *ndt-hr*-offerings of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep are collected at the institution of the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*) which is mentioned for the last time in the reign of Djoser and therefore probably was an obsolete term in the time of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep.⁴⁴ The other difficulty arises from the fact that a direct parallel to this type does not exist.

A possible solution for both problems comes from the compartment lists of the slab steles and false door tablets of the early Old Kingdom which possibly preserve a kind of prototype for the narrative format of the scenes of viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings presented to the tomb owner, as just has been stated. So it seems possible that some of the *ndt-hr*-offerings presented to Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep have their prototype in the compartment lists of the Third Dynasty when the *pr-dšr*-institution was still working.

Two of these compartment lists, both preserved in the offering niches of Khabausokar and his wife Neferhetepathor in Saqqara (CG 1385–1387) (fig. 7),⁴⁵

⁴³ For this special type of barge see Fischer, *Dendera*, 124–125.

⁴⁴ For the different functions of the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*), see in general W. Helck, *Untersuchungen zur Thinitenzeit*, *ÄgAbh* 45 (1987), 200–201.

⁴⁵ Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I*, pls. 1–2; Kahl, Kloth, Zimmermann, *Inschriften der 3. Dynastie*, 186–197.

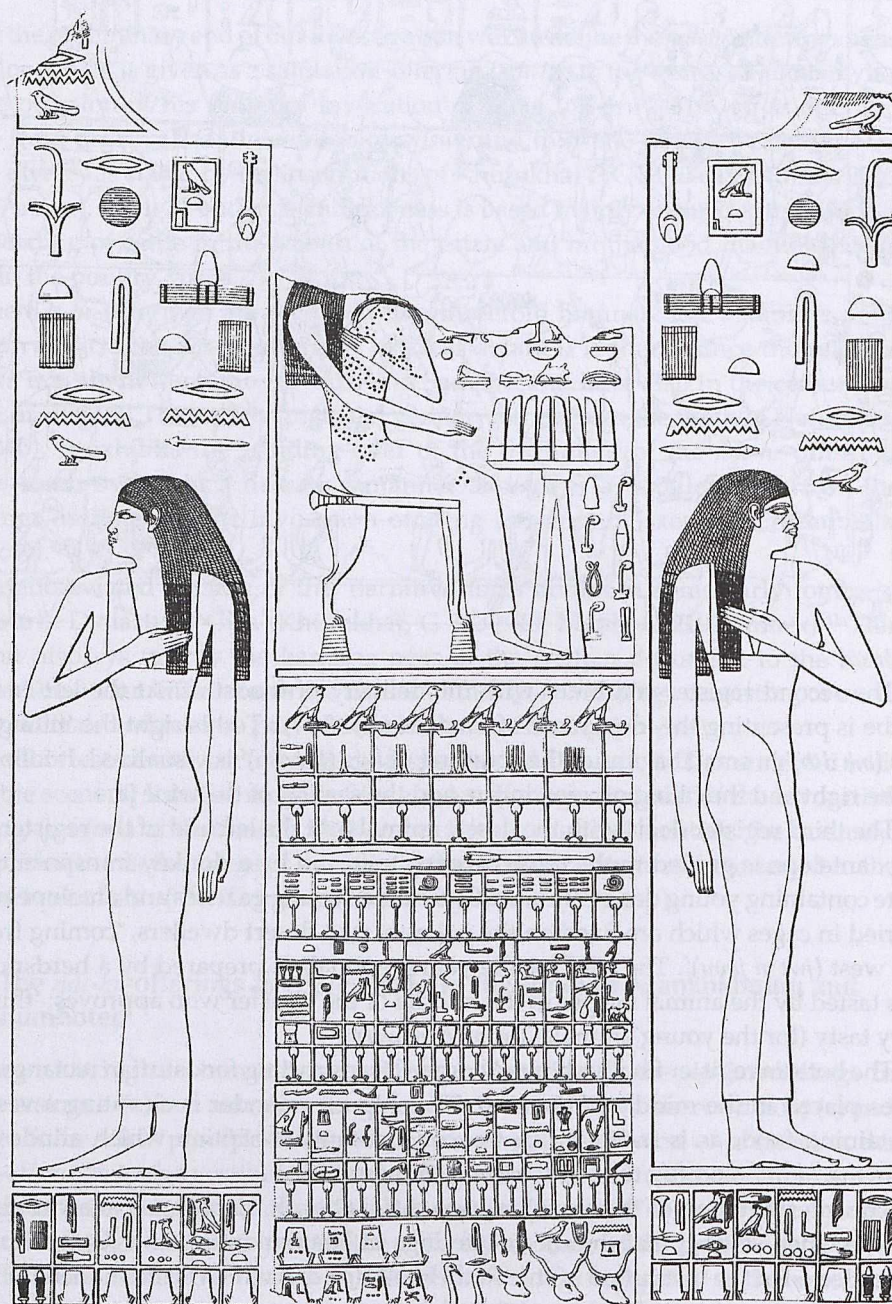


Fig. 7 The offering niche of Neferhetepthor (Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I*, pl. 2)

contain exactly the names of the food offerings (*jht bnrt*) which are registered among the *ndt-ḥr*-offerings of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep. The food-offerings in question are 'wine (*jrj*), *jšd*-fruit, *nbs*-fruit and figs (*d3b*)'.

The piling up of food offerings at the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*) makes then good sense. For the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*) is known to have been a kind of magazine where different goods of the food production were collected in the first dynasties of the Egyptian history. All records concerning the *pr-dšr* indicate that the term originally designated an institution of the food administration. It belonged to the *jz-df3* – 'the workshop of provision of food' – and was a department of the 'kings house' (*pr njswt*), as can be proved by the seal impressions of late Second Dynasty type.⁴⁶ This role of the 'Red house' (*pr-dšr*) however ended in the early Third Dynasty. Therefore the mention of the *pr-dšr*-institution in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep must be an archaic expression alluding to conditions of the Third

⁴⁶ Helck, *Thinitenzeit*, 200.

Dynasty.⁴⁷ The presentation of the *ndt-hr*-offerings to Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep depicts therefore an archaic system of redistribution, which in the late Fifth Dynasty was probably out of use.⁴⁸

Looking at the archaic redistribution system of the Third Dynasty as reconstructed from the representation in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara (fig. 6) and comparing it with the information given by the entrance thickness of the Giza-tombs of Khufukhaf (G 7130–40) and Merib (G 2100-Annex) (fig. 4) we reach the conclusion, that the scene of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings of the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep transmits and visualizes entries of an ancient compartment list of the early Third Dynasty (fig. 7) in the form of a narrative picture. It alludes to a remote funerary practice of the early Old Kingdom and demonstrates a redistribution system which was used in the time of Djoser.

7. Final results

At the end of our investigation on the delivery of the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner of the Old Kingdom we may summarize as follows:

1. Three types of scenes presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings to the tomb owner are to be distinguished. The scenes of 'type 1' display the conducting of desert animals, cattle and fowl by different attendants, 'type 2' shows the procession of the personified domains, and 'type 3' deals with the offerings presented to the tomb owner by offering bearers. All *ndt-hr*-offerings which are brought before the tomb owner probably are part of the invocation offering (*pwt-hrw*).

2. The *ndt-hr*-offerings of 'type 1' may be recorded in a long or short narrative version or in a list form. The long version is conceived as narrative and shows desert animals, oxen and fowl presented to the tomb owner under the supervision of scribes. The short narrative version reduces the long narrative version to the depiction of the tomb owner and the scribes presenting the scroll. The list form contains a short list of the entries which were presented to the tomb owner.

3. The long and short narrative versions are both recorded in the Old Kingdom tombs since the Fourth Dynasty whereas the list form can be traced back to early dynastic times. The earliest records of it occur in the entries of the table scenes on slab stelae and false door tablets of the Second and Third Dynasties.

4. The 'viewing the *ndt-hr*-offerings' in the vestibule of the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara can be classified as a narrative version belonging to the scenes of presenting the *ndt-hr*-offerings of 'type 1'. It depicts the piling up of different kinds of food at the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*). Considering the fact that the 'Red House' (*pr-dšr*) was an institution of the food administration of the first dynasties and had disappeared already by the beginning of the Old Kingdom,⁴⁹ the idea of an interdependence of the late narrative scenic version of the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep and the early entries of the archaic compartment lists of the first dynasties is strongly supported.

⁴⁷ In the tomb of Mehu at Saqqara from the Sixth Dynasty occurs a *hwt dšr* – 'Red Domain', which certainly had a similar meaning as the *pr-dšr* and designates a kind of magazine: H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara*, AV 42 (1998), 93, pl. 7.

⁴⁸ The transmission of archaic terms into the Fifth Dynasty is not quite unfamiliar to the tomb decoration of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara, for on the west wall of the vestibule of this tomb an archaic list of unguents and oils is recorded. The only parallel comes from the tomb of Hesira dated to the Third Dynasty: H. Altenmüller, 'Das Ölmagazin im Grab des Hesire in Saqqara (QS 2405)', SAK 4 (1976): 1–29.

⁴⁹ Its function was taken over by other institutions of the royal administration, such as the double institutions of 'the granary' (*šnwtj*), 'the treasury' (*prwj-hd*); 'the house of income' (*pr ʕt*) and 'the house of abundance' (*pr bʕht*); cf. W. Helck, 'Wirtschaftliche Bemerkungen zum privaten Grabbesitz im Alten Reich', MDAIK 14 (1956): 64–65.